

North Omaha: Moving Forward – Transformation 2030 Sparks Momentum for Change

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, March 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On

Saturday, March 8, more than 100 business owners, residents, community leaders and policymakers gathered to outline a strategic vision for North Omaha's future during North Omaha: Moving Forward – Transformation 2030. Backed by the [Empowerment Network](#), the

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Willie Barney, CEO and founder, Empowerment Network

summit addressed policy, economic development, education, housing, safety, and entrepreneurship, and served as a powerful catalyst for action.

“To truly transform North Omaha, we must continue moving forward with a united front,” said Willie Barney, CEO and founder, Empowerment Network. “This summit reinforced that when we align our efforts and remain strategic, we can secure the investments, policies, and opportunities needed to bring about real change.”

North Omaha: Moving Forward – Transformation 2030 featured key discussions on legislative and policy matters,

with speakers emphasizing the need to prepare for the 2026 legislative session. Topics included juvenile justice reform, sentencing laws for minors, and securing funding for community initiatives. Attendees were urged to engage in interim hearings and advocate for policies that support North Omaha's growth.

Presenters included State Senators Ashlei Spivey and Terrell McKinney and County Commissioner Chris Rodgers, as well as representatives from Davis Contracting, Creighton University, Hayes & Associates, Malcolm X Foundation, Omaha Northwest High School Principal Dr. Kimberly Jackson and the Empowerment Network's Skill Up/Power Up Omaha Program.

The theme of economic empowerment reverberated across discussions throughout the morning. Leaders stressed the need for a comprehensive development plan, ensuring that North Omaha has access to critical funding and business resources.

Omaha's Inland Port Authority and the Airport Business Park programs were highlighted as key projects that will drive job creation and economic growth. Designed to manage inland port districts, the Inland Port Authority can enhance economic activity, attract businesses and improve freight transportation efficiency. As a commercial and industrial development located near an airport, designed to attract logistics companies, manufacturers, and businesses that benefit from proximity to air transportation, the Airport Business Park program intends to attract new industries and jobs to the Omaha market.

Entrepreneurship remains a central pillar of transformation. During the summit, attendees learned about

financial literacy tools, access to capital and programs designed to support the growth of Black-owned businesses. According to data from the Brookings Institute, between 2017 and 2022, the number of Black-owned businesses with employees increased by 95 percent in Omaha, representing a significant rise in Black entrepreneurship during that period. This data reinforces the potential for sustained economic expansion.

With the goal of increasing North Omaha's graduation rate from 70 to 90 percent in the next five years, education leaders discussed strategies including mentorship programs, career pathways and financial literacy training for students. Through programs like Cradle to Career, a community initiative spearheaded by Empowerment Network and aimed at guiding Omaha youth from early childhood to successful career placement, students are provided with resources and a pathway to achieve academic success.

Efforts to increase affordable housing, homeownership opportunities and revitalization projects were a focal point, alongside discussions on community safety. North Omaha is experiencing increasing growth with private developers that grew up in the neighborhood.

A united approach to violence prevention and justice reform was emphasized, with speakers calling for greater community involvement in advocacy efforts and accountability. The next meeting in April will bring the community together to finalize the plans.



Held March 8, the North Omaha: Moving Forward – Transformation 2030, supported by Empowerment Network, brought together residents, community leaders and business wonders to discuss policy, economic development, education, housing, safety, and entrepreneur

"We've had more than 500 leaders, residents and stakeholders engage in the Transformation 2030 meetings this year," said Barney. "Thousands have provided input over the past year through summits and conferences. The community has helped to establish goals, review and add solutions, discuss policies and produce initial priorities. Next month we will move to budgets and finalizing the strategic plan and immediate actions."

The Empowerment Network plans to formally launch the Transformation 2030 plan at its annual Rebuilding the Village Conference on Friday, May 16.

The annual summit is supported by community partners and initiatives, including Charles Drew Health Center, Inc., Family Housing Advisory Services, Inc., Great Plains Black History Museum, Metropolitan Community College, Omaha 360, Omaha Economic Development Corporation, Step-Up Omaha and Urban League of Nebraska.

As an organization dedicated to building safe and thriving communities through economic, educational and social success, Empowerment Network is also supported in part by the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, a program of The Obama Foundation. Initiatives like The State of North Omaha annual summit promote supportive communities for boys and young men of color, ensuring they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity.

About the Empowerment Network

The Empowerment Network is a nonprofit organization committed to advancing economic, social and civic progress within Omaha's African American community, North Omaha and the region. Through collaborative efforts and innovative initiatives, the Empowerment Network strives to create opportunities for empowerment and transformation in every zip code and neighborhood in the City of Omaha and other national communities.

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