

State of North Omaha Summit Highlights Progress, Unity and the Launch of Transformation 2030

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, January 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 19th Annual State of North Omaha Summit took place this past Saturday, Jan. 24, at the Swanson Conference Center, bringing together over 250 community members in person and nearly 100 virtually, local leaders and strategic partners for a powerful day of reflection, partnership and progress toward a shared vision for North Omaha's future.



“The State of North Omaha continues to be an essential gathering for residents and leaders alike,” said Willie Barney, CEO and president of the [Empowerment Network](#). “Bringing together nearly 350 residents, both in person and online, demonstrates the deep commitment of this community to collaborate, address gaps and celebrate the progress we’ve made. We’re energized by the collective focus on Transformation 2030 and the actionable steps we’re taking together. We are ready to build on the momentum.”

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In 2025, we showed what was possible when we worked together. Imagine what could be possible over the next five years.”

*Willie Barney, CEO,
Empowerment Network*

With a focus on the completion of Transformation 2025 and launch of Transformation 2030, this year’s summit offered a forum to assess community outcomes, analyze data and identify actionable priorities across key focus areas, including employment, housing, health, safety, education, entrepreneurship and culture. Residents and

stakeholders were able to listen to important updates from leaders in each sector and find ways to engage in achieving the collective goals and work together on collaborative solutions that move the community forward.

Attendees participated in networking, heard updates from Empowerment Network and received insights from elected officials and community partners aimed at fostering alignment and accountability around the long-term Transformation 2030 strategy for North Omaha. The summit also featured exhibitors and community resources, equipping participants with tools, information and opportunities to engage year-round.



This year's speakers included:

- Mayor John Ewing
- State Sen. Terrell McKinney
- State Sen. Ashlei Spivey
- Matthew Ray, superintendent, Omaha Public Schools
- LaVonya Goodwin, city council member
- Chris Rodgers, Douglas County commissioner
- Todd Schaderer, chief of police
- Michael Maroney, CEO, Omaha Economic Development Corporation
- Precious McKesson, executive director, North Omaha Neighborhood Alliance



Community members, leaders and partners gather at the 19th Annual State of North Omaha summit to reflect on progress, align priorities and advance the Transformation 2030 vision for North Omaha.

During the summit, Mayor John Ewing highlighted the city's measurable progress in youth employment and entrepreneurship:

"The Brookings Institution, just last year, showed and highlighted that Omaha has had a 95% increase in the number of Black businesses with employees," said Mayor Ewing. "That's creating jobs. As of this year, Omaha will have produced 10,000 jobs and internships for our youth, working together. That is absolutely amazing, and a testament to this community recognizing that we can get great things done."

Senator Spivey echoed the importance of civic action and community ownership in shaping the future of North Omaha:

"We've got to lean in and figure out," said Sen. Spivey. "How do we build our political power? We have to operate outside of our political institutions and say, 'what do we want for our community?' How do we actualize that? And then, how do we influence it? How do we fund it,

and how do we ensure that people who are actively working for our community are in the right seats?"

"As we conclude 2025, we have shown what is possible when we work together," said Barney. "We've seen an 80% reduction in gun violence in the Northeast precinct. That includes reductions in youth arrests and detention. We've also seen increases in employment and jobs. More than \$1.5 billion has been invested in our community, public and private. Imagine what's possible over the next five years with even more residents and partners working together and the leadership we have in place."

In addition, more than 2,500 new housing units have been developed. North Omaha also welcomed more than 50,000 visitors to 24th and Lake, which has led to the reemergence of the arts, culture, entertainment and business district.

The annual summit is supported by community partners and initiatives, including 100 Black Men of Omaha, Charles Drew Health Center, Family Housing Advisory Services, Great Plains Black History Museum, Malcolm X Foundation, Department of Economic Development, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Metropolitan Community College, Omaha Economic Development Corporation, One Omaha, North Omaha Neighborhood Alliance, Inland Port Authority-Community Advisory Council, Step-Up Omaha, Omaha 360 and Urban League of Nebraska.

The State of North Omaha Part II is scheduled for Saturday, February 14th at Omaha North High School from 8:30 am to Noon. This forum will allow additional updates from community partners and deeper strategic and actionable conversations to reach the Transformation 2030 goals.

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.

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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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