

Profile

Chamberlin Helps 'Rebuild Nebraska'

She didn't start out to build an "incredibly flexible program," she said. It just happened. Luckily though, Lynn Chamberlin, architect for the Nebraska Energy Office and program contact for **Rebuild Nebraska**, knows how to make the most of a good thing.

Now in its second year, Rebuild Nebraska has 65 local partners with a total of 224 buildings. Ten are marketing partners, like Nebraska Public Power District (a statewide wholesale and retail electric utility) and the City of Beatrice, who encourage their own customers and clients to join [Summer 1997 *Partner Update*].

The other 55 are building owners, for whom Rebuild Nebraska conducts free energy audits and provides reports detailing energy-saving opportunities.

"We provide building owners with options, information and financing opportunities," Chamberlin said, "and they make the decisions."

Rebuild Nebraska's partners include traditional main street "mom & pops," housing authorities and small-building owners all across the state. They aim for 25 percent cost savings per building, depending on the building's condition.

"We're right in there," Chamberlin said, adding she expects to work on long-term savings and data compilation this year.

Local Contacts Help Rebuild Nebraska Succeed

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Finding Local Champions

At first, Chamberlin and her partner Kirk Conger, Energy Office staff engineer, didn't know who their partners would be. So they recruited champions like regional utilities and went around the state promoting the value of energy efficiency to small-building owners. What they found was the value of working directly with business owners.

"In one small town with four businesses on main street, one business owner called us and we went down to audit her building," Chamberlin said. "We ended up helping three of the four because she took us around and introduced us."

Now, Chamberlin said, she knows "it's incredibly helpful to have someone who knows the people and buildings – to have someone local."

Local partners are doing so much, in fact, that Chamberlin and Conger do very little marketing. After helping the Scottsbluff Housing Authority, for example, the Authority's



Lynn Chamberlin

director was invited to speak at a statewide meeting of housing authorities. Five joined Rebuild Nebraska in the next three days.

building owners were high school students. It was a busy week – we audited seven buildings, taught science classes and took students on field trips," she said.

Rebuild Nebraska also trains undergraduate architecture students in energy efficiency through a year-long internship, Chamberlin said. "Most of our graduates are architects who are getting hired because of their energy background."

A Lifetime of Learning

Chamberlin has a background in architecture, which she practiced for six years before joining the Energy Office nine years ago. She's also a Certified Energy Manager and Certified Lighting Energy Professional. She puts those skills to work on her house, she said, when she's not taking care of her dogs Reao and Mimi or traveling to see her family.

Her familiarity with intensive studying also helps her interact with the students she works with. "We did an Energy Week in Chadron, Nebraska, and the people signing up

Building Awareness

Chamberlin and Conger both expect Rebuild Nebraska to keep growing. They have already seen "a shift in the culture – a main-street awareness of reducing energy costs," they said.

"What amazes me about the program is it continues to evolve," Chamberlin said. "Our marketing partners all look at different angles and think, 'this is a good time for this.'"