

GO!

Defense and Aerospace Industry Success

One of the “mission critical” goals for the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership (GO!) is to increase jobs and investments in the Greater Omaha area by targeting and growing specific sectors of the economy.

In 2004, GO! identified the **defense and aerospace industry** as an area for expansion with a two-fold strategy:

- Be an advocate for Offutt Air Force Base to help increase its strength and importance.
- Increase the depth of Department of Defense contractors, suppliers and vendors that complement the missions of USSTRATCOM, Air Force Weather Agency and the 55th Wing at Offutt.

To accomplish this strategy, the Chamber focused on relationship- and image-building tactics including: employing staff, engaging volunteers and implementing a wide variety of marketing and communication efforts.

Relationship Building

The GO! partnership formed a **Military Affairs Target Advisory Group (TAG)** of 30 volunteers and funded a full-time economic development professional charged with creating leads, developing long-term relationships and serving as an advocate for missions associated with Offutt AFB.

Relationship building with military personnel, defense contractors and elected officials is essential and on-going. Every year, our staff and volunteers attend approximately 60 meetings to form and enhance these relationships. This includes regularly-scheduled trips to Washington D.C., one-on-one meetings at Space Foundation conferences, headquarters trips and other mission-attraction meetings with the most recent focus on permanent placement of the cyber command in the Greater Omaha area.

Image Building

GO! sponsors and representatives attend the annual **National Space Symposium** in Colorado Springs as well as the **Strategic Space and Defense Conference** in Omaha, which is considered the premier U.S. space policy and program forum and one of the best vehicles to personally reach this specialized audience.

Sponsorship in these events supplies targeted visibility. This, along with hosting special one-on-one executive briefings and CEO roundtable luncheons, affords unique access to a very exclusive audience of military and defense-related leadership. Our strong Omaha presence at these venues has continued each year, with relationships continuing to grow.

Image was also boosted with a variety of marketing materials. GO! funded the development of numerous marketing pieces including the **“Omaha: Heart of America’s Defense” brochure** and the **“Land in Omaha”** and **“Good to Go” DVDs**. These materials won national marketing awards and were distributed to individuals and organizations worldwide.



Targeted print advertisements in publications like *Space News* and *Aviation Week* and **ads on business incentives and opportunities** for defense-related companies were placed in *Business Facilities*, *Corporate Real Estate Leader* and *Space News*. Editorial placement also played an important role. For example, during the Strategic Space and Defense Conference, an article appearing in *Space News* highlighted the Nebraska Advantage Act and the valuable incentives it provides to defense-related businesses moving to and expanding within the state. These efforts have resulted in more than 2 million impressions against these target audiences since initiating the campaign in 2004.

Ensuring Future Expansion

In 2007, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, through resources provided by the Omaha Development Foundation, successfully closed on the purchase of a 135-acre farm immediately south of Offutt AFB to protect the base from further encroachment. This preserves this property for future base expansion, allowing additional missions to locate there.

Return on Investment

Between 2004 and 2007 GO! funded approximately \$850,000 in space- and defense-related marketing, networking and relationship building activities. The return on this investment includes:

1. Twenty-one companies expanded or located operations in the Greater Omaha area including:

21st Century Systems, Inc.	McCallie Associates
All Native Systems	Northrop Grumman
ARINC	Raytheon
ATK Thiokol	SAIC
Booz Allen Hamilton	SCITOR
CSSS.NET	Software Engineering Services
Harris Corporation	Sparta
Hawkeye Vision, Inc.	Spiral Solutions and Technologies, Inc.
ITT/Advanced Engineering & Services	Sterling Computers
Lockheed Martin	Veteran Defense Services, Inc.
Master Solutions	
2. Completed a baseline review of defense industry growth in our local area noting a 110 percent growth in employment from May 2003 to May 2006 which can be directly attributed to STRATCOM, the 55th Wing and Air Force Weather Agency missions.
3. During the period, the economic impact of our base increased by nearly \$0.75 billion. The two most recent fiscal years averaged an annual impact of \$2.5 billion which can be evidenced by numerous funded and completed military construction projects, vital and expanding missions and the increased contractor presence.

