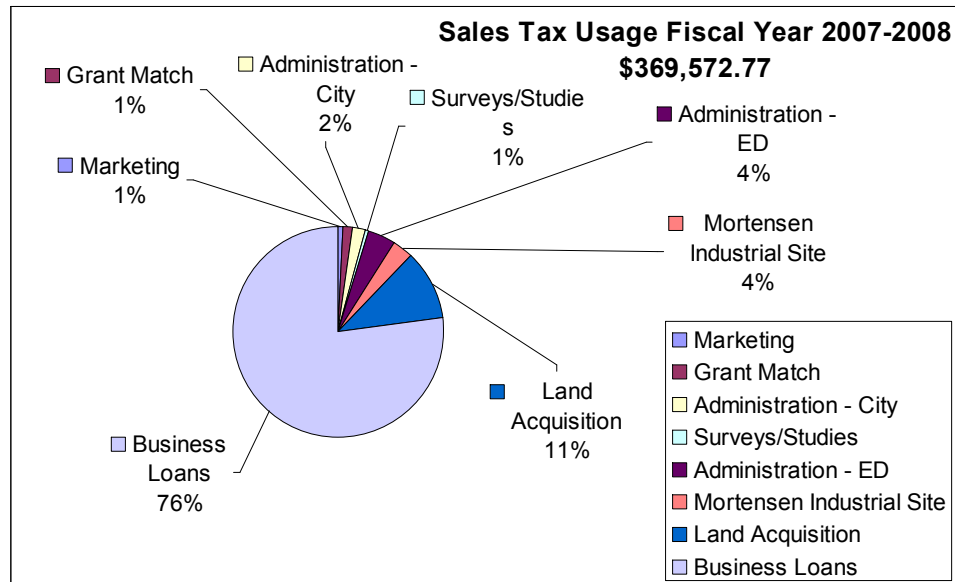


1. Sales Tax Expenditures FY 2007-2008

Marketing	\$3,300.00
Grant Match	\$5,000.00
Administration - City	\$7,173.27
Surveys/Studies	\$2,000.00
Administration - ED	\$15,000.00
Mortensen Industrial Site	\$13,088.50
Land Acquisition	\$39,011.00
Business Loans	\$285,000.00
Total Usage	\$369,572.77



2. Housing

- a. CDBG Owner-Occupied Homeowner Rehab Grant – Ord has been granted the release of funds on a \$250,000 owner-occupied rehab grant for the improvement of current homes. Approximately 10 applications have been picked up since the release of funds in February.
- b. New Neighborhoods Initiative II – The Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the City of Ord, the Investment Club and VCED have begun initial planning for the new housing development at Rolling Hills. It is anticipated that in total a release of \$750,000 will be granted in total to Ord. It is anticipated that the City of Ord will begin initial planning and infrastructure development this summer.

3. Sales Tax Fund – For the **first quarter of the 08-09 fiscal year:**

- a. Sales Tax Income
 - i. Balance of ED Loans 12/31/08 = **\$915,003**
 - ii. Total Receipts through 12/31/08 = **\$100,389**
 - iii. Total Disbursements = **\$21,577**
 - iv. Approved Administrative Expenses = **\$6,494**
 - v. New Loans in FY2008-2009 = **\$95,000**
 - vi. Total All Funds Available for ED (12/2008) = **\$1,329,634**
 - vii. Total Assets = **\$2,471,427**
- b. Report on loan approvals and payments
 - i. Loans requests that have been approved in the past 6 months = 2
 - ii. Loan requests pending – none
 - iii. Loan Payments – at this time one loan delinquent, one loan in default; both in repayment negotiation
 - iv. Total Sales Tax Funds Committed (3/19/2009) = **\$439,000**
 - v. Current Sales Tax Funds Available for Use (3/19/2009) = **\$119,032**

4. **2009 Strategic Action Plan Conducted** – January 23rd VCED/Ord Area Chamber of Commerce conducted a strategic planning session in partnership with NEDED and NPPD. A joint action plan was adopted by VCED and the Chamber at the Joint Board meeting March 18th. The full report can be viewed at: [www.ordnebraska.com/2009 Action Plan.pdf](http://www.ordnebraska.com/2009%20Action%20Plan.pdf)
5. **VCED/Ord Area Chamber Annual Banquet** – VCED/Ord Area Chamber of Commerce organized and celebrated a year of success with over 150 in attendance. Tom Chapman of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce gave the keynote on developing entrepreneurship ecosystems and support mechanisms.
6. **Hamilton Contact Center Lease Buyout** – VCED negotiated the buyout of the 3-year lease with Hamilton Communications. The Hamilton Building is owned by GLVA and initial conversations are in progress to find a tenant.
7. **Legislative Testimony (LB 525)** – Caleb Pollard testified to the Nebraska Legislature’s Urban Affairs committee **in support of LB 525**. LB 525 would make several changes to LB 840, the statute that granted local municipalities the ability to create sales tax loan funds, allowable by a vote of the public. The changes in LB 525 would allow communities the ability to use 5/10 (or ½) of 1% of their total valuation for economic development activities. Allowable activities would also be expanded to community marketing, private tourism developments, and workforce retention and attraction. These changes, if LB 525 is to pass, **would need approval by a vote of the public**.
8. **New media campaigns initiated** – Several new media campaigns have been initiated to move overall VCED/Chamber/Tourism marketing and information to digital formats. A new blog, www.ordsunshinepumpers.wordpress.com has been initiated with over 4,500 unique page views to date. A formal RFP process was conducted to redesign www.ordnebraska.com. Eleven potential vendors submitted their proposals, with only two from Nebraska-based businesses. Rural Designs was selected as the vendor of choice for the redesign and launch. Plans are tentatively set for June 2009 as new site launch. March also was a historic month for www.ordnebraska.com – 82,537 hits was the biggest month in the history of the website.

An asset mapping and positive image campaign was initiated in February. New steps have been taken to advocate the assets and amenities in the area through positive amenity appreciation. These amenities will be digitized and shared through digital channels. Ord public school 7th graders were approached by VCED to begin an asset mapping beta test for the initial steps in this campaign. Submissions had been received at time of report and will be ported to blog and new website in April.

A new Escape to Loup Valley Facebook page was initiated in March to market the area to the college demographic as well. 51 individuals are now fans of the Loup Valley with over 100 unique visitors to our page. This effort will be fully utilized during May to market to younger audiences in Nebraska post-secondary institutions.

9. **Rural Entrepreneurship Program Investigated** – VCED met with area schools and an area financier to investigate the opportunity for a community-wide business start-up competition. Plans are being formulated and financial support secured in principle. More details on the project will emerge in April.
10. **Speaking engagements** – Caleb Pollard presented economic development strategies to young professionals in the metro at the Omaha Young Professionals Summit. An estimated 1400 participated

in the luncheon and over 200 attended Mr. Pollard's presentation. Caleb also traveled to Wayne, NE to share on best practices to organize young professional groups in rural communities.

11. **Loup Valley Jaycees reorganized** – Caleb Pollard assisted, along with Chamber support, in the organization of the Loup Valley Jaycees. Ambitious plans have been made to provide civic, social and leadership development opportunities to area young people ages 21-40.
12. **LVRPPD, Valley County and VCED Submit REDL&G Grant Application** – VCED, in partnership with LVRPPD and Valley County submitted a \$300,000 funding request to USDA Rural Development's Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program for matching funds for courthouse renovations. If this grant is won, \$300,000 will be placed in a revolving loan fund for use by LVRPPD customers for economic development purposes. This fund will act in ways similar to our local sales tax loan program.
13. **Valley County selected as national pilot for people retention and attraction campaign** – The Heartland Center for Leadership, in partnership with the Nebraska Community Foundation and Hometown Competitiveness, asked Valley County to submit their support and participation in a national pilot project to address and combat the affects of rural depopulation. The USDA's Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) application was submitted by the NCF/HTC with VCED's support. If selected, Valley County, along with one Nebraska community and two South Dakota communities will develop strategies to address rural depopulation. This pilot works well with our current strategic plan and offers an increase of resources to programmatic work already underway.
14. **New Executive Director Business Visits** – Caleb Pollard visited with nine additional businesses in January and February prior to the April BRE visits. To date, Mr. Pollard has visited over 20 area businesses and plans to continue his monthly outreach to the private sector.
15. **Business Retention & Expansion Visits** – In March, VCED organized BRE logistics to meet with approximately 30 county businesses in the month of April. Valley County will pilot a new digitized collection methodology with NEDED. Results of this effort will be known by May.
16. **Publications and Reports** – Several reports and publications have been released in the past 3 mos. NPPD released Valley County's Economic and Demographic Trends report, found at: <http://sites.nppd.com/aedc/TrendStudy/Valley09.pdf>

The University of North Carolina's School of Government recognized Ord as one of 50 national models for rural development excellence. Ord was the only Nebraska community showcased. The report can be found here: <http://ordsunshinepumpers.wordpress.com/2009/03/14/new-report-touts-ord-as-national-model-of-excellence/>

Finally, Ord received significant statewide recognition for the launch of the new blog in the Omaha World Herald and reprinted in the Grand Island Independent. The article can be found here: [http://www.ordnebraska.com/Ord%20OWH%20Opinion%20Article%20\(3-1-09\).pdf](http://www.ordnebraska.com/Ord%20OWH%20Opinion%20Article%20(3-1-09).pdf)

17. **2nd Edition of ESCAPE** - The second edition of the *ESCAPE to the Scenic Loup River Valley and Calamus* travel guide was released in late January. The publication can be found here: <http://www.ordnebraska.com/2009%20Escape%20to%20Loup%20Valleys.pdf>

Questions?

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