

Omaha Executives Association working to add member companies

by **Matrissa Leggett**

Omaha Executives Association would like to increase its membership from 82 member companies to 85 or 88 in the current year, according to Executive Director Lynne Mancuso. The association provides networking opportunities for Omaha business leaders to develop business leads, contacts and referrals.

Mancuso said the group's numbers have stayed steady during the past two years, and although some member companies have left recently because of unfavorable economic conditions, new members have joined.

"We have our group membership committee working on open classifications," she said. "We have members go after companies in those classifications to get them involved."

Member firms represent an exclusive classification based on the main product or service it provides. The firms are represented by the CEO, key manager or top decision maker in the company. Companies are eligible for membership based on referrals, according to Mancuso.

Mancuso indicated revenue for association comes only from member dues, which were raised in January to cover meeting room fees. Dues are currently \$232 each quarter.

"Members are required to attend at least 60 percent of meetings," Mancuso said. "We feel if members are not there then the others will not be able to get to know them, and the more other members get to know them, the more likely they will be to do business with them."

She said a driving factor for membership retention and recruitment for OEA is that member businesses know they can call on each other for services and feel as though they can rely on each other.

"I believe our group is very strong, and I only see it getting stronger," she said. "We have a lot of members that have been with us a very long time. New members experience these benefits and bring in others."

According to Mancuso, J.P. Cooke Co. and Chicago Lumber Co. are OEA's only charter members — having been members of the association since the Omaha group was founded in 1924.

OEA has luncheon meetings each Thurs-

day at Regency Lodge to share business leads and listen to members speak about their businesses for 20 to 25 minutes, followed by a five-minute question-and-answer period. Outside speakers are brought in two or three times during each six-month presidential term period. These speakers address such topics as Omaha's economic climate and areas of development within the city, Mancuso said.

According to Mancuso, leads have been down for the real estate and construction industries, and she has not noticed increases in leads for any classifications.

Mancuso is the only employee for the association, which has an office at 1941 S. 42nd St., Suite 526. She is responsible for the daily operations. OEA also has an 18-member board of directors that includes five past presidents. Current president is Dr. Judy Belitz of Belitz & Belitz Dentistry, and past president is Lee Ehlers of Investors Realty.

Mancuso has been with Omaha Execu-

Omaha Executives Association

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Address: 1941 S. 42nd St., Suite 526,
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Founded: 1924

Goal: Increase membership by 5 percent

Industry outlook: "I believe our group is very strong and only see it getting stronger."

Website: www.omahaexec.com

tives Association for five years, and was a stay-at-home mom previous to this position. She was originally made aware of the group because her brother-in-law was a member and asked her to help out temporarily.

"I ended up staying," she said. "It is a great group of people."

This form of association originated in San Francisco in 1916. There are currently just more than 100 chapters across the nation.



Executive Director Lynne Mancuso ... Focusing on growing association's membership by three to six member companies.