

# Johanns hopes to attract residents to heart of city

By JOSH FUNK  
Senior Reporter

Mayor Mike Johanns wants to pump some fresh blood into the heart of Lincoln.

The city plans to use education and financial incentives to encourage people to buy homes in the city's older neighborhoods in hopes of revitalizing those areas.

"We want to show that Lincoln's existing neighborhoods are a great place to live and raise a family," Johanns said at a news conference Tuesday afternoon.

The conference was held at the home of Gary and Becky Martin in the Woods Park neighborhood, near 33rd and O streets, where they have lived for 17 years.

The Martins invited the city into their home for an afternoon to show some of the benefits of Lincoln's older neighborhoods.

The goal of the Heart of Lincoln program is to increase home ownership by educating the buying public and offering financial assistance, said Coleen Seng, city councilwoman and steering project committee member.

The program will be funded by the community development block grant program, which Johanns said has worked well in the city.

In the past, these grants have been used to develop other areas of the city.

The grants will be used to provide low-interest loans to people buying homes in Heart of Lincoln neighborhoods.

The city also wants to increase buyer awareness of these neighborhoods with events such as home tours.

The first tour is scheduled for June.

Seng offered a top 10 list of rea-

sons to move to older neighborhoods, which was gathered in a survey of 200 Heart of Lincoln residents.

The top reason was that people feel welcome there, and others were the homes' central locations, proximity to great schools and parks, affordability and diversity.

"Home ownership leads to stronger neighborhoods, and stronger neighborhoods will make Lincoln stronger," Seng said.

The program targets 11 Lincoln neighborhoods: University Place, East Campus, Clinton, Malone, North Bottoms, Downtown, Everett, Woods Park, Near South and South Salt Creek.

Residents of those neighborhoods look forward to the benefits of the program.

When Conley Hinrichs and his wife graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University 60 years ago they started their lives together in the University Place neighborhood.

Although careers took them away from Lincoln, the Hinrichses retired to the University Place neighborhood.

For them, retirement has meant involvement in community organizations such as their neighborhood association.

Hinrichs was there to show his neighborhood's support of the program.

Many groups came out to support the program, including neighborhood groups. Police, fire fighters and others filled the Martins' front lawn.

Some of the neighborhoods used the news conference to officially welcome some of their newest residents.

Bob and Gina Egenberger moved their family 12 blocks into the Woods Park neighborhood four months ago.

Said Bob Egenberger: "We moved from the liver of Lincoln into the heart."

# Museum flying high again

By ADAM KLINKER  
Staff Reporter

ASHLAND - With a new building, a new location and an SR-71 jet greeting visitors at the main gallery, the Strategic Air Command Museum reopened to the public Wednesday.

Beginning March 1996, the museum, once housed at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, began moving aircraft and other Air Force memorabilia to a new location three miles south of Ashland, next door to Mahoney State Park.

Though the grand opening will not be celebrated until Armed Forces Day May 16, Wayne Schmidt, the executive director of the museum, said that yesterday's "quiet opening" was better for the general public.

"You can plan a lot, but little glitches start to come in anyway," Schmidt said.

With three aircraft still in the assembly and restoration phase and another awaiting delivery from Offutt, Schmidt said the opening was an "excuse our dust" ordeal.

But with 30 aircraft on display, both hangars open and a cafeteria and gift shop running, he said it was still a success. Aircraft on display include a B-17 bomber used during World War II and an FB111 that was used during the Gulf War.

About 40 airplane enthusiasts wandered around the new museum Wednesday afternoon.

Schmidt and Dennis Haun, director of preservation and restoration, credited the hard work of the crew involved in rebuilding and refurbishing the aircraft.

"You can't say enough about the staff," Haun said.

Restoration of airplanes, Haun said, can take anywhere from six months to five years, depending on the condition of the aircraft.

"It's unique because these aircraft were in bad condition," Haun said. "If they were kept outside any longer they would have deteriorated to a point where we couldn't fix them."

With the help of three other full-time restoration staff members, Haun said, the project will be completed in a little more than two years.

Also assisting in the process were members of the Arnold Air Society of the Air Force ROTC at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The society is a community service organization.

Cadets helped one Saturday in March with finishing touches, such as sanding aircraft and sweeping the floor of the restoration gallery, where the planes were being renovated.

"It was a great experience," said Cadet Christian Prasch, a freshman architecture major.

The members were also given a preliminary tour.

"Architecture-wise, it's very advanced," Prasch said. "They put a lot of new ideas into the building. ... It's going to be a great spectacle, especially seeing (the view) from the highway."

The museum will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children ages 5-12, and free for children under 5. Military personnel and senior admission is \$5.

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