

NeighborWorks worth \$100 million to economy

By JEFFREY ROBB

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

NeighborWorks Omaha, a community development organization based in north Omaha, has meant more than \$100 million to the local economy in recent years, according to a new study from Creighton University's College of Business Administration.

Formerly known as New Community Development Corp., NeighborWorks has spent \$31.7 million on its single-family home and multifamily housing projects

going back to 2001.

Its projects include the trendy Long School live-work townhouses, the Miami Heights market-rate housing development and Salem Village senior community.

Beyond that, NeighborWorks directly put another \$17 million, including staff salaries and purchases, into the economy.

All told, the report says, the organization had an impact of \$116.1 million from 2001 through 2009, considering its direct spending and secondary

spending as those dollars spread through the economy.

NeighborWorks, which changed its name last year when it affiliated with the NeighborWorks America network, has three areas of focus: affordable housing, business development and a lead-safe housing program.

The report says that with NeighborWorks' new affiliation, it is positioned to extend its reach across the city.

The organization is headed by

Ken Lyons, a former plastics executive and a vice president of First National Bank of Omaha. The board of director's chairman is Dr. Robert Lewis of the Eppley Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Other leaders include Brenda Council, legal counsel and a state senator; Ben Gray, a board member and Omaha city councilman; and Nate Dodge, a board member and president of N.P. Dodge Management Co.

The report's authors say the

organization has a small but efficient staff, committed leadership and numerous partnerships that allow it to leverage an abundance of resources.

NeighborWorks Omaha, which is partially funded through grants and private donations, has given out 82 micro-business loans and trained 944 entrepreneurs, the report says. Its lead-abatement efforts have addressed lead problems in 94 homes.

Contact the writer:
444-1128, jeff.robbs@owh.com