



July 2, 2008

**SAVE THE DATE:
JULY 31**

July 31, 2008, would have been Milton Friedman's 96th birthday. To honor his vision and the impact he has had on our society, the Platte Institute will be holding a luncheon from 11:45-1:30 on Thursday, July 31, at Omaha Regency Marriott.

Guest speakers will be announced soon. For more information, please contact the Platte Institute at (402) 452-3737 or at feedback@platteinstitute.org. We look forward to seeing you there.

**MEDIA
INFORMATION**

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**PLATTE
CHAT**

**STATISTICS SHOW NEBRASKA'S
FIREWORK REGULATIONS ARE A
COMPLETE FAILURE**

*Berk Brown
Platte Institute*

It is time for Nebraska to adopt the same consumer permitted firework regulations as Missouri.

Why? Because the laws and regulations in place in Nebraska are not doing what they are designed to do – keep people safe. The tighter restrictions also lead to:

- Lost sales tax revenue when Nebraska residents spend their money in Missouri.
- Increased cost for the state to enforce regulations.
- Lost revenue for countless local businesses and organizations which reinvest profits locally.

If Nebraska's restrictions were keeping citizens safer, then keeping the status quo would make sense. Unfortunately, that's not the case according to data from both the [Nebraska State Fire Marshal's office](#) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. In fact, the data reveals that while firework-related injuries are on the decline nationwide, they are on the increase in Nebraska.

According to a [U.S Consumer Product and Safety Commission report](#), injuries per 100,000 people sat at 4.3 in 1991 and had dropped to 3.1 in 2006. Meanwhile, in Nebraska, firework injuries have grown more than 140% in the same time with a total of 61 injuries in the state in 1991 to 147 in 2006.

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Donate to the Cause

To make a tax-deductible contribution to the Platte Institute for Economic Research and help promote free enterprise in our state, you can do so online at platteinstitute.org or you can send contributions to:

Platte Institute
for Economic Research
10050 Regency Circle Ste 120
Omaha, NE 68114



How You Can Help

The Platte Institute receives its operating revenue from private donations and private sector grants. It accepts no government funding or government related grants. As promoters of free enterprise ideas we need to operate under these same principles.

An investment in the Platte Institute through a donation is leveraged against the many private sector grant opportunities from foundations and institutes promoting the free market and free enterprise principles that made this country great.

Thank you for your generosity and thank you for caring about Nebraska.

Statistics also reveal that Missouri, with its less severe regulations on fireworks, has less firework-related injuries than the more stringent Nebraska on a per-capita basis.

According to data from Missouri, The Show Me State had one firework-related injury for every 14,609 residents in 2006. Nebraska's ratio in 2006 was one for every 11,564 residents. Nebraska and Missouri were nearly identical from 2002-2006 with Nebraska having an injury for every 2,492 residents and Missouri one for every 2,601.

Plain and simple, Nebraska's more restrictive regulations are not keeping residents safer than Missouri or national averages. Nebraska's firework injuries are trending up while the national average is trending down. Even with the time and money the state invests to set-up car checks for illegal fireworks coming into the state from Missouri, Nebraskans still suffer more injuries than residents of states with less restriction.

The safety numbers aren't the only ones that don't add up. Neither does the cash into local coffers. The amount of revenue Nebraska loses because of residents buying fireworks in Missouri is impossible to measure. A pretty good indicator, however, is the number of businesses who set themselves up to profit from firework sales.

Consider that Atchison County in Missouri – with a population of approximately 6,100 - has 14 locations where fireworks are being sold this holiday season, including seven which are open year-round. Meanwhile, in the two Nebraska counties which border Missouri – Nemaha and Richardson – there are a total of five firework stands, according to the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's office. Nemaha and Richardson have a combined population of roughly 16,000. So, the Nebraska counties have one firework stand for every 3,200 residents while Atchison has one for every 435.

To further the point, the combined population of Merrick and Hamilton Counties in Nebraska is roughly 1,000 people higher than the combined total of Nemaha and Richardson, yet they have twice as many firework stands (10-5). Put simply, firework stand owners don't see the point in setting up shop in Southeast Nebraska while there is plenty of profit to go around in Northwest Missouri.

In conclusion, Nebraska's current set of regulations is not keeping Nebraskans safer. It is also keeping the state from reaching its full economic potential. Currently, there isn't even a good balance of the two. Right now, our safety numbers are trending the wrong direction and money is flowing in the wrong direction - out of the state and into

Missouri. As we prepare to celebrate our independence this 4th of July, it's time to call our firework restrictions and laws what they are – a complete failure. Therefore, it is time for Nebraska to adopt the same consumer permitted firework regulations as Missouri.

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