



**July 30, 2008**

**CELEBRATE  
FREEDOM...**

...by sharing the legacy and ideas of Milton Friedman. He would have turned 96 on July 31, 2008. To honor the vision and impact this Nobel Laureate has had on our society, the Platte Institute for Economic Research cordially invites you to a luncheon from 12:00-1:00 p.m. on July 31, at Omaha Regency Marriott.

**Cost:**

\$25 per person payable at the door.

**Keynote Speaker:**

Nebraska Senator Tony Fulton.

**Friedman Legacy Speaker:**

Bellevue University Professor Judd Patton, Ph.D.

**To RSVP:**

[rsvp@platteinstitute.org](mailto:rsvp@platteinstitute.org)

**For More Information:**

(402) 452-3737

**MEDIA  
INFORMATION**

If you are a member of the media and would like more information on anything in this e-newsletter, please email Berk Brown at

[Media@PlatteInstitute.org](mailto:Media@PlatteInstitute.org) or call (402) 452-3737. Members

**PLATTE  
CHAT**

**NEBRASKA'S CELL PHONE TAXES  
AMONG HIGHEST IN NATION**

*Alek Blankenau*

*Platte Institute*

Cell phones have become an integral part of everyday life throughout the country and world. Every time we turn on the television, we are bombarded with advertisements from companies claiming they have the best service or price. The handiness of cell phones has even driven some people to abandon the traditional land line in their houses in favor of an all wireless approach. But with this communication revolution comes a price—taxation.

Most Nebraskans may not realize that their home state is consistently ranked in the upper echelons of cell phone taxation nationwide. In fact, Forbes Magazine and USA Today have listed Nebraska in the top five for having the highest cell phone taxes in recent years. This year, a CTIA-The Wireless Association survey rated Nebraska as having the highest cell phone taxes in the country. According to the survey, Nebraskans pay 22.54 percent, well above the national average of 15 percent, in cell phone taxes and fees. This is due to federal fees, state fees, state sales tax, fees for emergency communications, and in some cases, local sales taxes and occupation taxes.

To read the rest of this article and to see how we compare with Iowa, [CLICK HERE](#).

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## **PAY IT FORWARD**

Do you like the Platte Chat? If so, forward the email on to others you think may like it or direct them to sign-up for My Platte on [our web site](#).

## **ARE YOU NEW TO PLATTE CHAT?**

If you are new to Platte Chat and are wondering what you may have missed from earlier editions, don't worry, simply [CLICK HERE](#) to view our Platte Chat archives.

### **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](http://platteinstitute.org) or you can send contributions to:

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



**THANK YOU.**

## **THE CIVIL SERVANT YARDSTICK**

*Brett Barstow*

*Platte Institute*

Public employees are necessary to provide government services at the state level, yet there remains a discrepancy in the number of employees each state needs to do so. A recent study by the American Legislative Exchange Council shows that Nebraska employs more civil servants on a per-capita basis than most of its neighbors and significantly more than the national average.

The number of Nebraska's public employees ranks the state among the most bloated compared to neighboring states. Colorado employs the fewest civil servants, 536.5 per 10,000 people, ranking it 30<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Missouri (547.8), South Dakota (577.9), and Iowa (623.5) also retain fewer public employees than Nebraska. The Cornhusker State delivers uninspiring numbers both regionally and nationally—Nebraska ranks as the 4<sup>th</sup> largest public employer per capita—with 664.4 per 10,000 people. The national average rests at 565.8 per 10,000.

Neighboring states Kansas (669.1) and Wyoming (889.4) account for two of the three states with higher levels of public employment than Nebraska. Midwestern states are naturally disadvantaged with relatively low populations and sizable land masses. A per capita measurement like the one used in the *Rich States, Poor States* study generally favors states with high populations and smaller geographic areas to maximize governmental efficiency.

Population density, measured in people per square mile, becomes helpful in estimating the efficiency of state governments. When coupled with the public employees per 10,000 people measurement, population density helps explain why Midwestern states like Nebraska retain more civil servants. The national average is 80.7 people per square mile, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Nebraska's 22.9 people per square mile population density naturally lends itself to a less efficient government, serving fewer people in a larger

## 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.

area. Nebraska certainly has room to improve; South Dakota has both a lower population density (9.9 people per square mile) than Nebraska *and* fewer public employees per capita.

We have posted a PDF copy of the full ALEC report on our website. You can view it by [CLICKING HERE](#).

## SEN. FULTON TO SPEAK AT THURSDAY LUNCHEON

Nebraska Senator Tony Fulton, who recently advocated for a performance audit of the Department of Roads by the State Auditor, will be the keynote speaker at the Platte Institute for Economic Research's Milton Friedman Luncheon on Thursday, July 31, at Omaha Regency Marriott.

Fulton was appointed in 2006 by Gov. Dave Heinemann to represent District 29. He also has advocated for a revision of tax revenue flow so more of the motor vehicle tax goes to roads and infrastructure.

Bellevue University Professor Judd Patton, PhD, chair of the Economics Department, also will speak and provide historical and introductory remarks pertaining to Milton Friedman's free-market economic theories.

Events to honor Friedman are taking place in more than 40 states across the country on Thursday. If you would like to see what else is happening that day, you can see a full schedule of events by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Friedman would have turned 96 on July 31, and the Platte Institute is celebrating the vision and impact the Nobel Laureate had on society in partnership with Friedman Legacy for Freedom. Registration for the event begins at 11:30 a.m. with the program running from 12-1 p.m. Cost is \$25 per person and is payable at the door. To RSVP, call (402) 452-3737 or send an email to [rsvp@platteinstitute.org](mailto:rsvp@platteinstitute.org).

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