

March 2, 2009

**JOHN S.
MCCOLLISTER
NAMED
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

John S. McCollister has been named the new Executive Director of the Platte Institute for Economic Research. His duties began on Feb. 1.

To read John S. McCollister's full bio, please [CLICK HERE](#).

**CELL PHONE
TAXES TOO HIGH
IN NEBRASKA**

The Platte Institute released a policy commentary Feb. 17 that calls for the lowering of cell phones taxes and fees for Nebraskans, who pays some of the highest local taxes on cell phones usage in the country.

**PLATTE
CHAT**

**PLATTE INSTITUTE RELEASES
COMMENTARY ON COMMISSION OF
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

Nebraska city governments are struggling to make ends meet. Shrinking tax revenues and growing personnel budgets are forcing city governments to ask increasingly tougher questions in increasingly tougher times: "Should we raise city taxes? Cut city services? *Lay-off* city employees?" Such anxious queries are undoubtedly related to the current economic crisis. However, Nebraska's unique method of resolving city employee salary disputes is making matters worse.

The Commission of Industrial Relations, or "CIR" as it is commonly known, is *the* state administrative agency responsible for resolving all city employee salary disputes in Nebraska. The CIR suffers from a number of problems, however, problems which directly threaten the economic vitality of city governments across the state.

The main problem with the CIR is that it fails to take into account a city's *ability to pay* before setting the new – and generally higher – city employee salaries.

Other problems with the CIR include the lack of a

To read the full commentary, please [CLICK HERE](#)

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“Nebraska First” requirement (to be explained later) and the lack of any meaningful legislative oversight or appellate review.

As a result of these problems, the CIR has wreaked havoc on city budgets and city governance – during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Therefore, it is recommended that the following changes be made immediately:

The CIR statute should be amended to require that the CIR consider a city’s ability to pay before setting new city employee salaries.

The CIR statute should be amended to require that the CIR consider Nebraska cities first when setting new city employee salaries.

The CIR statute should be amended to provide meaningful legislative oversight and appellate review of all CIR salary decisions.

To read the complete report, please [CLICK HERE](#).

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