

FOR RELEASE: Immediately

---

CONTACT: Doug Parrott at Bailey Lauerman, (402) 475-2800, Cell (402) 305-1625, or Terry Uland, Downtown Lincoln Association, (402) 434-6905

---

**PANERA BREAD® TO OPEN BAKERY-CAFE IN DOWNTOWN LINCOLN***DOWNTOWN LINCOLN ASSOCIATION'S PRIVATE SUPPORT PROGRAM ASSISTS IN STORE DEVELOPMENT*

May 1, 2009 – Lincoln, Neb. – Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA) and 2015 Vision officials today announced that Panera Bread® will open one of its popular bakery-cafes in the first floor of the former Cooper Plaza near 12<sup>th</sup> & P streets. Private money that was raised in the past year to promote retail growth along the P and Q Streets Corridor will be used to help with building renovations.

Terry Uland, DLA president, said a 2008 consultant study identified Panera Bread as an excellent recruitment target for downtown Lincoln.

“Panera Bread is a perfect fit for the community, offering a tremendous selection of coffees, bakery items and fresh foods while serving a wide cross-section of customers,” Uland said. “Panera will appeal to university students, faculty and staff, people working downtown as well as visitors to our city for sports and cultural events.”

The Arbor Day Foundation, which now owns Arbor Day Plaza at 211 North 12th, will receive financing from Downtown Civic Ventures to help renovate the first floor for Panera Bread's needs. Downtown Civic Ventures is a 501(c)(3) organization formed several years ago to promote downtown business development.

Tom Smith, a member of 2015 Vision and chairman of Downtown Civic Ventures board, said a forgivable loan of approximately \$35,000 will be given to the Arbor Day Foundation for the renovation work.

“Downtown Lincoln offers a great support base for retail, restaurant, entertainment and other ventures, and the private financing offered through Downtown Civic Ventures is critical during these economic times to recruit business activity to Lincoln,” Smith said. “Panera Bread is one of the most respected names in the restaurant industry, offering great food and a great atmosphere that can be enjoyed from early in the morning until late at night. We are excited to bring this quality company to Lincoln.”

Matt Harris, president of the Arbor Day Foundation, said his organization participated in the master plan for downtown Lincoln and wanted to create something positive for the community with its available space.

“Our goal was to keep retail space in Arbor Day Plaza and we think Panera Bread is ideal for this location,” Harris said. “Downtown Lincoln has a bright future and the efforts of DLA and Downtown Civic Ventures will continue to result in additional retail business growth for this area.”

Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler called the announcement exciting news for Lincoln and a further demonstration of the value of the financing options offered through Downtown Civic Ventures.

“The recruitment of retail businesses has never been more challenging and supporting downtown retail efforts is certainly important to the City of Lincoln,” Mayor Beutler said. “The City Council recently agreed to provide a one-time grant of \$100,000 toward this effort by supporting the operations of the Downtown Civic Ventures program.”

City Council chair Robin Eschliman said sales tax and tourism dollars breathe life into the City budget.

“In recent months, NuVibe, the 14<sup>th</sup> Street art studios and the Public Shoe Store have come into the downtown,” Eschliman said. “The City Council is excited to have Panera Bread, and it is our hope that we have a surge of momentum that will bring an eclectic and unusual mix of local, regional and national retailers to Lincoln.”

Uland said the company has more than 1,200 locations under the Panera Bread and St. Louis Bread Co.® names.

2015 Vision is a group of Lincoln business and civic leaders that have pledged support to 10 interrelated projects to strengthen research and education, create jobs and provide new entertainment and cultural opportunities for Lincoln and Nebraska. Expansion of retail and entertainment along P & Q Street is one of those 10 projects. For more information: [www.2015vision.org](http://www.2015vision.org).

Founded in 1967, the Downtown Lincoln Association was originally established as a merchants' association by downtown retailers who recognized the need for an organization to serve downtown's unique needs. DLA has evolved to a multi-faceted organization supporting a wide range of programs and activities including maintenance, economic development and advocacy. DLA is also the umbrella for Updowntowners, Inc., downtown's events production arm and the Downtown Neighborhood Association. The association works closely with the Lincoln Haymarket Development Corporation to support Haymarket revitalization and attractions.

-end-