Over the past two decades, there have been several very good statewide studies conducted that defined strategies for Nebraska to retain and attract talented people while strengthening the state’s economy.

Unfortunately, only a limited number of the recommendations from these important studies have been implemented.

The Forging Nebraska’s Future Initiative, sponsored by the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce with support from the Nebraska Press Association and numerous other partners, is not “just another study” about the future of Nebraska.

With broad, “bottom up” input from across the state, Forging Nebraska’s Future will define, and then execute, critical action steps to make Nebraska more competitive for the NExt Generation. “Taking action” will be the defining difference between this and earlier statewide strategic planning efforts.

The Forging Nebraska’s Future initiative will involve a transparent and straight forward process and dialogue to:

1. present Nebraskans with unbiased and unvarnished data comparing our state to others (showing sometimes good and sometimes not so good results, all relating to important future Nebraska challenges or opportunities);

2. through open and easy processes, seek ideas from everyone in the state about what should be done, changed or emphasized to build an even better Nebraska;

3. consolidate that state-wide input down to “100 Best Ideas for Nebraska’s NExt Generation” (to coordinate with the February, 2013 100th anniversary of the State Chamber); and

4. from those 100 Great Ideas identify 3 to 5 “Best Ideas” that can have a positive transformational impact on all of Nebraska.

The State Chamber, in partnership with other appropriate organizations, will then develop the action plans and policy initiatives to implement the priorities identified within the “Best Ideas.”

Nebraska has ridden the recent economic roller-coaster much better than most states. Yet in today’s fast-paced-world the only thing certainly predictable is that change will continue to accelerate.

In true, common-sense Nebraska fashion, the Forging Nebraska’s Future Initiative will work with residents, business and partners across the state to seek out aggressive strategies and policies to make Nebraska even better for the NExt Generation.

To get involved or to find more information about the Forging Nebraska’s Future go to www.forgingnebraska.com.