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## **Olsson Associates to get Rotary award**

Lincoln's combined Rotary Clubs have named Olsson Associates as their 2018 "Salute to Business" award winner.

The Salute to Business award honors businesses in Lincoln that contribute to the community through employment and good works.

Olsson Associates, which is an engineering and design firm, ranked as the 106th-largest design firm in the U.S. in 2017. It has 1,100 employees in nearly 30 offices across the Midwest and the southwest U.S., including more than 250 based at its corporate headquarters at 601 P St. in Lincoln.

Olsson will be honored at a luncheon April 17 at The Cornhusker Marriott hotel. For more information, visit [rotary14.org](http://rotary14.org).



# Ricketts talks running state like a business

By Kelli Rollin

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AURORA — The Chicago Cubs organization isn't so different from the state of Nebraska, according to Gov. Pete Ricketts.

Ricketts spoke to the Aurora Rotary at noon Wednesday at the Bremer Community Center.



Gov. Pete Ricketts

"The vision for my administration is to grow Nebraska," he said.

Ricketts said some people just have a bad century, like the Cubs. Rotarians laughed at the comment, but he said the truth is that the Cubs didn't win a World Series for more than 100 years because they had poor management.

He digressed into different things his family, who owns the baseball team, did to create more organization and management. Ricketts said that's similar to what he wants to do with Nebraska in running it as an efficient business.

He said ways he wants to grow the state by keeping young people here, attracting outside people and creating jobs. He went on to explain ways he and his administration have done that and want to continue to do that.

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## RICKETTS AT ROTARY: More customer-focused

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Ricketts said to a room full of Rotarians that he wants to run the state like a business. Government needs to be more effective, efficient and customer-focused.

He said the state needs to treat people more like customers.

Ricketts described instances where systems were trimmed so it didn't take as long to know if a family qualified for help or to process a nursing certificate. The time to process nursing certificates was made more efficient as it used to take 90 days to process, but now it only takes 30 days.

He also described a program that will eventually be launched statewide, changing the unemployment system into a re-employment system.

Grand Island was the pilot city for the program, Ricketts said. It pairs people on unemployment with job coaches to find better jobs and reduce the need for government assistance.

He also talked about LB946, a property tax bill he is supporting.

The bill combines agriculture and urban interests for tax relief, Ricketts said. By 2030, it would aim to bring \$4.5 billion in tax relief.

LB946 would allow \$5 million a year, Ricketts said, for workforce development. For example, Cargill is wanting to train employees for an upcoming business expansion. If the

bill is adopted, the business would benefit, as would its employees by getting paid more.

He stressed that there have been a few senators holding up the budget he wants passed because of language. He said part of the budget is Title X health care dollars, which are primarily for services to women.

"The federal government prohibits us from using that (those funds) for abortion," Ricketts said.

He said those funds have been blurred and sometimes used for abortions, so he wanted to add language to assure it wouldn't happen.

The Appropriations Committee, Ricketts said, seemed in agreement on the language until "three of the liberal members of that committee" didn't like the language. In short, the budget still hasn't passed with just days left in the session.

He said the budget is the first priority right now, especially since it affects other things such as funds allocated to schools.

"If we don't get this budget passed, schools are going to be short on school aid," Ricketts said.

He urged people to contact their senators about the bill.

He took a question at the end of his talk about how he thinks the Cubs will do this season, to which Ricketts said he thinks they have a good chance to make it to the playoffs.



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# The News-Press

## Backpack Program



Volunteers with the Nebraska City Backpack Program prepared 29 backpacks for families in need in the Nebraska City Public School system on Friday morning at Northside Elementary. Each backpack contains basic foods which kids can prepare for themselves and has a value of between \$5 and \$7. The food for the backpacks came from the Nebraska City Food Pantry. People power to build the backpacks was provided by the Nebraska City Rotary and the Nebraska City Physicians Clinic. The program builds backpacks each week of the school year. Bags for packing are always needed. If you would like to donate canvas grocery bags, email Sharon Hersemann at [shersemann@gmail.com](mailto:shersemann@gmail.com). Pictured are Hersemann, left, and Amy Allgood. Also helping out on Friday was Pam Frana.

PHOTO BY KIRT MANION