

## Entrepreneur Award



Larry Harbour,  
LB Custom Chrome and Detail, LLC.  
Broken Bow, Nebraska

Larry Harbour, established LB Custom Chrome and Detail, LLC, in Broken Bow, Nebraska, as a side job in 2001 and officially since October 2006. The business provides “quality detailing with unsurpassed service.”

Larry and his wife moved to Broken Bow from Omaha in 1998. Like many entrepreneurs, Larry decided to take a risk by renting a shop in a downtown location in Broken Bow in October 2006. The risk paid off. For the first year, Larry’s detailing business had a 1-2 month wait list and the business was off and rolling.

In the winter of 2007, Larry heard about REAP office hours at the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce and decided to make an appointment. After many months of working on a business plan with REAP Business Specialist, Dena Beck, Larry was approved by a local bank for a loan to expand his business to a new location in Broken Bow. Dena also helped Larry research ways to use renewable energy in his business.

The expansion will allow LB Custom Chrome and Detail to add two additional jobs, totaling one part-time and two full-time. The assistance Larry received through the REAP Program has been a difference maker, and REAP is very proud to have played a part in the successful expansion of Larry’s business!

## REAP Small Business of the Year



Andy Weitzel,  
Midwest Electronics  
Scottsbluff, NE

With the help of REAP Business Specialist Jerry Terwilliger, Andy Weitzel was able to get a loan for equipment and inventory and started his business in February 2007. Midwest Electronics is a mobile electronics retail store specializing in aftermarket car stereos, speakers, amplifiers, accessories and installation. Andy also does some home electronics installation.

Andy worked in the auto repair business before starting Midwest Electronics. Auto electronics had been a dream of his from prior experience when working at another job. Andy has done a great job in developing the business and presently has one full-time employee and one part-time employee. He says that even with the downturn in the economy, his business has stayed fairly strong.

## REAP Friend of the Year



Denise Russell,  
Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce  
Custer County, NE

The tireless efforts of Denise Russell prove that she is not only an asset to her community, but a great friend to REAP. Dena Beck, SW Central 1 Business Specialist, approached Denise about conducting office hours there in the summer of 2007. Denise instantly saw the win-win situation.

Denise and Office Assistant, Tammy, are great promoters of REAP and assist with setting up office hours monthly. REAP is also promoted in the Chamber newsletter, to inquiries at the Chamber, and on Denise’s weekly radio show. Denise has collaborated with REAP on Marketing Training, Agriculture and Business Succession Training, and Quick Books training.

By far, the majority of referrals in Dena’s 16-county region come from Custer County. Denise Russell is a great friend to REAP.

## REAP Extra Mile Award



Kristin Simonson-Olson,  
Executive Director,  
North Central Development Center  
Ainsworth, NE

Kristin Simonson-Olson became Executive Director of the North Central Development Center in December of 2005. Located in Ainsworth, the center serves Brown, Rock and Keya Paha counties.

She has been instrumental in assisting economic development in the three-county area. Kristin was a driving force in passage of a local sales tax initiative using LB 840 to establish a local revolving loan fund to help businesses with their start up and expansion capital needs. The CDBG Revolving Fund has also been used to the utmost for business development.

Kristin has been an excellent collaborative partner with REAP, referring clients for assistance with business plans and financial projections. Anytime a possibility of conducting training sessions in the area arises, help comes from Kristin's office in setting up the training and promoting the activity. The meeting room at the development center is readily available for trainings and meetings with clients. Kristin also assists REAP by serving on the REAP Loan Committee and reviewing loans in the area.

## REAP Officer of the Year

Maria Alvarado,  
Alvarado's Tax Services,  
Columbus, NE

Alvarado's Tax Services began in January of 2006 when Maria Alvarado wanted to offer income tax preparation and translation services to the Hispanic community in the Columbus area.

In the fall of 2006, Maria attended a REAP Business Plan Training in Columbus and received significant technical assistance individually and through the Columbus Roundtable Group. Maria was also one of the recipients of a Women and Company Microenterprise Boost Program Award through the REAP Women's Business Center.

The grant money and technical assistance helped Maria move her business from her home to a storefront and to expand her services. Now, in addition to tax services, she offers translation of documents, wireless money transfers, and bus and air fare tickets. This has increased her client base, and she has been able to hire one part-time employee.

Maria is the Secretary of the Columbus Hispanic Roundtable group where she helps in many ways – visiting in person with potential members, sending notices through phone and email, finding potential speakers for the group. She recently became a REAP Advisory Committee member. Maria keeps the group on track and strives to help in any way she can.