

# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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It is no surprise to those who live in western Nebraska; this is one of the safest places to live. But now, the World Health Organization and the National Safety Council have recognized the Panhandle as a “Safe Community” and will award a special designation October 6, 2011 in a ceremony at the Gering Civic Center.

The Panhandle completed a rigorous examination and application process during the past two years before receiving word last spring the application was approved. The emphasis of the Safe Communities approach is on collaboration, partnerships and community capacity building to reduce the incidence of injury and promote injury-reducing behaviors. Only four communities in Nebraska and fewer than 200 worldwide have received this prestigious designation.

“Your hard work and dedication make the Panhandle a safe community and a great place to live, learn, work and play,” Jessica Davies, wellness coordinator with Panhandle Public Health District said. “This is the first combined conference in the Panhandle for Worksite Wellness and Safety. “

Special guests include Donna Stein Harris from the National Safety Council, Governor Dave Heineman and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Joanne Schafer of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will be present to honor the Panhandle at the reception, beginning at noon.

The awards ceremony is part of the Panhandle Safety Conference and Trade Show, presented by the Nebraska Safety Council in cooperation with the Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council, Panhandle Public Health District and the Scotts Bluff County Health Department. Also at the luncheon, three panhandle organizations will receive the Governor’s Excellence in Wellness Award for their outstanding efforts in worksite wellness.

In addition to the awards luncheon, the day will include breakout sessions on safety and wellness in the workplace. Topics include motivating employees to work safer, an OSHA update, wellness as a business strategy, injury management and HazMat regulations.

Early bird registration fees are \$20 for the luncheon only, \$60 for the afternoon sessions and lunch or \$105 for the full day. After September 15, rates will be \$20, \$70 and \$125. Registrations are online at [www.nesafetycouncil.org/panhandle-safety-conference](http://www.nesafetycouncil.org/panhandle-safety-conference). Please note, seating for the awards luncheon is limited, so be sure to register early.

For additional information about Safe Communities or worksite wellness, visit the [pphd.org/pwwc](http://pphd.org/pwwc) or call Davies at 308-487-3600 or toll free at 866-701-7173, extension 101.

The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and

promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.