Rotary Fall Conference District 5650

Create Lasting Impact

October 23-24, 2026

Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum
Ashland, NE

Rotary District 5650

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

Welcome

TO THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE



On behalf of our District Leadership Team, our Conference Planning Committee, and the many people who have worked to make this weekend possible, I am delighted to welcome you to the 2026 Rotary District 5650 Conference.

Fusion means coming together as one. And I think that describes Rotary at its very best.

We come from different clubs, communities, professions, and generations, but we share a common purpose: creating change.

Throughout this Rotary year, I've talked a lot about **change** and **impact**. Change is what we do. **Impact is what happens because we did it**. Sometimes that impact is easy to see. Other times, it is a life changed, an opportunity created, or someone discovering a place where they belong.

Fusion 5650 gives us the opportunity to step outside our individual clubs and see the bigger picture. To reconnect with old friends and make some new ones. To share ideas, learn from one another, celebrate what we've accomplished, and imagine what might be possible next.

Most importantly, I hope you leave this conference reminded that you *belong* to something bigger than any one club, project, or community.

Thank you for showing up. Thank you for serving. Thank you for believing that ordinary people, working together, really can create extraordinary impact.

Welcome to Fusion 5650. Let's make an impact together!

Gretchen Bren
District Governor, Rotary District 5650

Rotary District 5650 | CREATE LASTING IMPACT

President's Message

TO DISTRICT CONFERENCE



My dear friends and family of Rotary,

Welcome to your Rotary District Conference! A chance to celebrate, connect, and prepare to build an even stronger Rotary for the future. As our vision statement says, ""Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change, across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves". Those final words are at the heart of what it means to create lasting impact. We often speak about how Rotary changes the world, but what about how Rotary changes us? During this conference, I encourage you to consider how Rotary has shaped your life.

Reflect on your hopes for the future ahead.
Welcome different perspectives.
Reaffirm your commitment to a polio-free world and to building peace.

If each of us commits to being better than our best, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. May you leave this conference inspired, united in purpose and ready to create lasting impact, together.

Thank you.

Olayinka H. Babalola
Rotary International President, 2026-2027

Rotary

Thank You

TO THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

District Governor 5650
Gretchen Bren

Conference Chair
James Mackiewicz

Advisors
Robert Rapp

Aid to RI President's Representative
Bill Harvey

A/V & Streaming
Dan Lupardus

Conference Content
James Mackiewicz
Carol Horner
Karalee Picard
Rob Simmon
Kathryn Schubert

Conference Registration and Help Desk
Dan Hosford

Fundraising for The Rotary Foundation/Polio
Tom Kerfoot
Gary Bren

Ashland Coordination
Janece Mollhoff

Women in Rotary
Joanne Peters
Barbara Bartle

Youth Exchange
Regina Werum

Master of Ceremony
James Mackiewicz

Memorials
Emily Martin

Rotary Band
Mark Sanford
Mick McKinley
Stephanie Olson
John Gessert
Bill Thoms
Bob Adler
Dave Fulton

Rotary District 5650

FUSION 5650

POST YOUR PICTURES HERE!

Agenda

Friday, October 23, 2026

10:30 am	Registration Opens
11:30 – 12:00 pm	**Buffet Lunch** in Atrium
12:00 – 1:00 pm	**Opening General Session** in Theater • Presentation of the Colors ~ Nebraska National Guard • Welcome ~ District Governor Gretchen Bren • Greetings from Rotary International ~ Video from Rotary International President Olayinka Hakeem Babalola • Greetings from Rotary International Director Marty Peck Helman • **"The Flight to End Polio"** ~ John Ockenfels
1:15 – 1:30 pm	Networking Break in Atrium
1:30 – 2:45 pm	**Growth and Engagement** Explore practical ways to attract new members, strengthen engagement, and build vibrant clubs where people feel that they belong. • **Membership ~** PDG Kathryn Schubert, District 5650 Membership Chair • **Vibrant Clubs** ~ PDG Carol Horner and District Facilitator Karalee Picard
2:45 – 3:00 pm	Networking break in the Atrium
3:00 – 4:00 pm	**Celebrating 40 years of Women in Rotary** in Theater Panel Discussion led by PDG Barbara Bartle featuring some of our very first women members in Rotary District 5650.
4:00 – 5:30 pm	**See what's around you!** • Enjoy the museum • Ashland Scavenger Hunt
5:30 – 8:30 pm	**Reception in the Atrium** Cash Bar and hors d'oeuvres. Paul Harris and the Fellows Rotary Band start at 6:30 pm.

Rotary
District 5650

Saturday, October 24, 2026

7:30 – 8:30 am **Breakfast and Fellowship** in the Atrium

8:30 – 9:45 am **Morning General Session** in the Theater

- Welcome ~ District Governor Gretchen Bren and Rotary International Director Marty Peck Helman
- **Global Grants Overview Video**: See how District 5650 has invested nearly $1 million in projects that are doing good around the world.
- **Global Scholar Impact** ~ Dr. Barbara Engebretsen
- **Polio Update** ~ PDG Gary Bren, District End Polio Now Coordinator
- **ShelterBox Update in Nepal** ~ Dr. Barbara Engebretsen
- **Peace Pole Project Update** ~ Immediate Past District Governor Robert Rapp

10:00 – 10:45 am **Participate in the World's Largest Polio Walk**

Join other Rotarians around the world by participating in a one-mile walk around the museum.

10:45 – 11:30 am **What's next after Visioning?** In the Theater

Many clubs have a vision for the future, but how do we move from aspiration to action? Carol Horner and Rob Simmon will lead a practical workshop to help clubs begin the strategic-planning process.

11:30 – 12:00 pm **Buffet Lunch in Atrium**

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Behind the scenes of an Indie Movie** in the Theater

Ever wonder how a movie gets made? Producer David Levy, an Academy Award nominee, and Omaha writer/director Kathleen Markel will take us behind the scenes of their new coming-of-age film, "Going for Two" that is set against the backdrop of the Nebraska Cornhuskers' 1983 season and the 1984 Orange Bowl.

- Lincoln South PHF presentation ~ Tamie Lambie, President Lincoln South Rotary Club

1:00 – 1:30 pm **Networking Break** in Atrium

1:30 – 2:30 pm **Getting Involved in Rotary** in Theater

Discover Rotary opportunities that extend beyond the club meeting, from Action Groups and Fellowships to the Rotary Leadership Institute.

- Rotary Action Groups ~ PDG Robert Rapp
- Rotary Fellowships ~ DGE Bill Harvey
- Rotary Leadership Institute ~ DGN Emily Martin

2:45 – 4:00 pm **Global Connections** in Theater

Meet the people and programs connecting District 5650 with the wider Rotary world through youth leadership, international exchange, Rotaract, and The Rotary Foundation.

- RYLA ~ PDG Kathryn Schubert – with guests
- Rotary Foundation ~ Rotary District Foundation Chair Tom Kerfoot
- Youth Exchange ~ Lincoln 14 Youth Exchange Officer Regina Werum – with guests
- Rotaract ~ UNL Rotaract Club President Annabeth Schubert

4:00 – 4:30 pm **Closing Remarks**

- District Governor Gretchen Bren

4:30 – 5:00 pm **Break and Networking**. Enjoy the Museum!

5:00 – 6:15 pm **Major Donor Reception** by invitation only

5:00 – 6:15 pm **Cocktail Reception** in Hangar A – cash bar.

6:30 – 8:30 pm **Awards Dinner** in Hangar A

- Memorials coordinated by DGN Emily Martin
- Invocation
- **Welcome** ~ District Governor Gretchen Bren
- **A few words** ~ Rotary International Director Marty Helman
    - Dinner served
- **Rotary Club Awards** ~ Immediate Past District Governor Robert Rapp and Rotary District Foundation Chair PDG Tom Kerfoot
- **Cadwallader Award** ~ PDG Tom Kerfoot
- **Closing Remarks and a toast**

Rotary
District 5650

Cadwallader Award

OF ROTARY DISTRICT 5650

The Cadwallader Award was implemented in 1963 by Rotary District 5650 to recognize each year an outstanding Rotarian(s) in the District.

This award is presented in honor of Charles N. Cadwallader, who served as President of Lincoln Rotary Club #14 during the 1932-1933 year; as District Governor during the 1937-1938 year for District 120 which was the number of the District at that time (The District number eventually became #5650 in 1991); as a Director of Rotary International; and who was the sponsor of eleven Rotary clubs in the District. The award has been endowed by a gift from Charles N. and Ruth Cadwallader.

The award is presented to a Rotarian in the District who has made a monumental contribution in one or all of the Avenues of Rotary Service:

- Community Service
- International Service
- Vocational Service
- Club Service
- Youth Service

Past District Governors or the current District Governor are not eligible to receive the award. In addition, any Rotarian in the District who has been previously recognized with a Council of Governors Special Award is not eligible to receive this award.

The recipients truly represent the embodiment of Rotary.

Past Award Recipients

1963	Elijah Leavitt, York
1964	William W. Cook, Sr., Beatrice
1966	Al V. Sorensen, Omaha
1967	Paul W. Hyland, Lincoln Northeast
1968	Ervin J. Schneider, Auburn
1969	Dr. Ben H. Greenburg, York
	Dr. Donald J. Bucholz, Omaha West
1970	Robert L. Voss, Fremont
1971	Bernard J. Klasek, Wilbur
1972	Ken Wortman, Aurora
1973	J.D. Anderson, Omaha
1974	Elmer E. Magee, Lincoln #14
1975	E.J. "Pat" Keim, Fremont
1976	Vernon E. Fisher, Shenandoah
1977	Eugene J. Ely, Auburn
1978	Hugh L. Tinley, Omaha
1979	James M. Paxton, Omaha West
1980	David A. Lemen, Council Bluffs
1981	Everett R. Jones, Beatrice
1982	Earl T. Luff, Lincoln #14
1983	John Paustian, Lincoln Northeast
1984	Dr. Sol Kutler, Omaha Suburban
	Walter E. Truex, Norfolk
1985	I. Joseph Pemicone, Omaha
1986	Erwin H. Goldenstein, Lincoln #14
1987	Dr. Clarence Zimmer, Friend
1988	H.W. "Bud" Henricksen, Fremont
1989	Kermit R. Hansen, Omaha Suburban
	Wayne O. Tanderup, Seward
1990	Larry McNichols, Omaha Suburban
1991	Thomas E. Gouttierre, Omaha
1992	Dr. Donald W. Miller, Lincoln #14
1993	Paul F. Foster, Shenandoah
1994	Rudolph E. Tomek, Humboldt
1995	David C. Livingston, Lincoln #14
1996	William R. Mann, Nebraska City
1997	Robert L. Carlisle, Norfolk
1998	Dr. Ann Coyne, Omaha Suburban
1999	Roger R. Ludemann, Lincoln #14
2000	William E. Ramsey, Omaha
2001	Dr. George Lytton, Lincoln South
2002	Dan Rose, Wayne
2003	Lyle Sapp, Omaha Suburban
2004	Mary Linn Sonnemaker, Bellevue
2005	Nicolette S. "Nicki" Klein, Lincoln South
2006	William Schmeeckle, Lincoln #14
2007	J. Robert Perrin, Omaha Suburban
2008	Joseph K. Roberts, Lincoln South
2009	Joanne Peters, Omaha Suburban
2010	Robert Knox, Council Bluffs
2011	Harry Reyburn, Omaha Suburban
2012	Ozzie Gilbertson, Lincoln East
2013	Roxy Orr, Omaha Suburban
2014	Thomas Cardwell, Lincoln South
2015	Charles Erickson, Lincoln East
2016	Dorothy Zimmerman, Beatrice
2017	Curt Peters, Omaha Suburban
2018	Dr. John Herdman, Lincoln South
2019	Gretchen Bren, Omaha Downtown
2020	Clay Ehlers, Lincoln South
2021	Jon and Bonnie Kruse, Seward
2022	Robert Rapp, Omaha Morning
2023	Rob Simmon, Glenwood
2024	Dr. Klaus Hartman, Lincoln 14
2025	Blake and Kathy Collingsworth, Lincoln Giving Spirits
2026	Dr. Robert Rauner, Lincoln 14

Featured Speakers



Marty Peck Helman

Director 2026-28

Rotary Club of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, USA

Marty Peck Helman spent her career as a writer for business executives and as an editor at McGraw Hill and the American Management Association. She later served as president of the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, which partnered with The Rotary Foundation to fund the Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul, Türkiye.

A Rotarian since 2003, Marty Peck Helman has served as a Rotary Foundation trustee and held numerous leadership roles focused on fundraising, peace, and strengthening The Rotary Foundation. She helped select sites for Rotary Peace Centers in Istanbul and Pune, India, and led an effort that raised $1 million for the Sakuji Tanaka Rotary Peace Fellowship.

A recipient of The Rotary Foundation's Distinguished Service Award, Marty Peck Helman is a member of the Arch Klumph Society, Paul Harris Society, and PolioPlus Society. She and her late spouse, Frank Helman, were charter members of The Rotary Foundation's Legacy Society.

We are honored to welcome Marty Peck Helman to Fusion 5650 as the personal representative of Rotary International President Olayinka Hakeem Babalola.



John Ockenfels

John Ockenfels has been piloting small aircraft for over 52 years. Along with Peter Teahen, he is half owner of the 1977 Cessna T210 that they flew together around the world to raise funds to eradicate Polio. He also owns and maintains a WWII PT17 Stearman, and has been the proud owner of several WWII war birds.

John attended the University of Iowa before serving in the United States Air Force from 1972 to 1976. Now retired, John spent his career working with his brothers in their family business, City Carton Recycling, based in Iowa City, Iowa, where he served as President and then CEO. He is a founding member of the Iowa City, Iowa A.M. Rotary Club, serving as President in 1998-99. He served as District Governor for Rotary District 6000 during the 2014-2015 Rotary year. In 2002, John traveled to India to take part in a National Polio Immunization Day event and the International Polio Eradication Summit in Mumbai.

John has served on many District, Zone, and International Rotary committees over many years. He is a member of the International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians and serves as the North Central Chair for the Americas Region. He is also an adjunct member of the E-Aviation worldwide Club.

In 2021, John was recognized as 1 of 3 Rotarians worldwide to receive The Rotary Foundation's Service award for a Polio Free World. In 2023, John was recognized with Rotary's highest individual honor, The Service Above Self Award.

John and his wife Deb have been active community and Rotary volunteers for many years.

Featured Speakers

David Levy

David Levy is a film producer whose credits include Gosford Park, The Player, and Short Cuts. At Fusion 5650, he will join Nebraska writer and director Kathleen Welch Markel for a behind-the-scenes conversation about the making of the new independent film Going for Two.

Kathleen Welch Markel

Nebraska native Kathleen Welch Markel is the writer and director of Going for Two, a coming-of-age film set against the backdrop of the Nebraska Cornhuskers' memorable 1983 season and the 1984 Orange Bowl. The story follows a young boy who is finding his way after the death of his father, drawing inspiration from Markel's own childhood and from Coach Tom Osborne's decision to go for two in the championship game.

After receiving interest in the screenplay from Hollywood but encountering resistance to directing the film herself, Markel brought the project home to Nebraska, where it was funded entirely by Nebraskans. For Markel, Osborne's famous decision represents more than a moment in football history. It reflects the courage to stand by one's principles when the stakes are highest, a theme at the heart of Going for Two.

Women in Rotary Panelists

This special panel began with an idea from Joanne Peters of the Omaha Suburban Rotary Club. As Rotary approaches the 40th anniversary of the landmark 1987 U.S. Supreme Court decision that opened the way for women to become members of Rotary clubs, Joanne Peters suggested that our District Conference was the perfect opportunity to recognize the women who helped lead that change here in District 5650.

PDG Barbara Bartle will lead a conversation with several of our district's pioneering women as they share their experiences, reflect on how Rotary has changed, and celebrate the women who helped pave the way for those who followed.

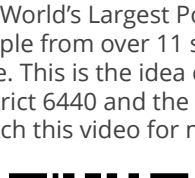
- **Joanne Peters**, currently a member of Omaha Suburban, joined the Council Bluffs Morning Rotary Club on July 8, 1987.
- **Priscilla Henkelmann** is a current member of Lincoln 14, and joined October 13, 1987
- **Cella Quinn** is a current member of the Rotary Club of Omaha and joined June 1,1990. Cella was the first female club president in the District serving 1996-1997.
- **Lisa Neu** is a current member of Omaha Suburban, and joined January 16, 1992
- **Dorothy Zimmerman** is a current member of the Beatrice Rotary Club and joined June 2, 1992. She was a club president in 2007-08.
- **Barbara Bartle** is a current member of Lincoln 14 and joined December 14, 1993. Barbara was a club president in 2001-02 and District Governor in 2022-23
- **Marty Barnett** is a current member of the Red Oak Rotary Club and joined February 1, 1995
- **Jenny Cardwell** is a current member of Lincoln South and joined December 31, 1997
- **Kim Kuhle** is a current member of Omaha West and joined the Rotary Club of Omaha January 5, 2000

Pioneering District Governors

- Our District's first woman District Governor was **Doris Heineman**, from the Council Bluffs Rotary Club. She served in 2001-02.
- **Mary Q. Garrison** joined the Wilber Rotary Club on 01 Feb 1990, was District Governor from 2002-03 and is a current member of the Crete Rotary Club.

Behind the "World's Largest Polio Walk"

On Saturday, October 24, 2026 at 10 am CDT, Rotarians across Rotary Zones 25B and 29 will come together for the World's Largest Polio Walk. We are expecting that people from over 11 states will be walking at the same time. This is the idea of Rick Reigner, District Governor in District 6440 and the District Governor class of 2026-27. Watch this video for more information:





District Leadership

District Officers and Directors

District Governor
Gretchen Bren (Omaha Night)

District Governor-elect
Bill Harvey (Omaha)

District Governor-nominee
Emily Martin (Red Oak)

Immediate Past District Governor
Robert Rapp (Omaha Morning)

Assistant Governor Team Leader
Rod Ringenberg (W. Douglas Co.)

District Secretary
Barbara Bartle (Lincoln 14)

District Treasurer
John Gessert (Omaha West)

The Rotary Foundation Chair
Tom Kerfoot (Omaha Suburban)

Director at Large - PDG
Mick McKinley (Council Bluffs Noon)

Director at Large - PDG
Kathryn Schubert (Omaha Suburban)

Director At Large - Large Club
Roxy Orr (Omaha Suburban)

Director At Large - Medium Club
John Herdman (Lincoln South)

Director At Large - Small Club
Lana Likens (Fairbury)

Assistant Governors

AREA 1	JUDY ACKLAND, Omaha West
AREA 2	CURT PETERS, Omaha Suburban
AREA 3	STEPHEN POSTIER, York
AREA 4	JANELLE SNODGRASS, Crete
AREA 5	ROB SIMMON, Glenwood
AREA 6	KATHY RIEGER, Council Bluffs Noon
AREA 7	EMILY MARTIN, Red Oak
AREA 8	BILL HARVEY, Omaha Downtown
AREA 9	WARREN WHITTED III, Omaha West
AREA 10	TOD RINGENBERG, Western Douglas County
AREA 11	SCOTT KEEP, Omaha Suburban
AREA 12	DWAYNE BROWN, Omaha West
AREA 13	ROXY ORR, Omaha Suburban

Club Leadership

PRESIDENTS

Ashland Rotary
Corliss Clark

Aurora Rotary
Justin Wolf

Beatrice Rotary
Lori Lovell

Bellevue/Papillion Rotary
Felix Ungerman

Blair Rotary
Ron Sorensen

Columbus Morning Rotary
Lisa Wilson

Council Bluffs Centennial Rotary
Maren Larsen

Council Bluffs Noon Rotary
Bailey McQueen-Jones

Crete Rotary
Christine Neukirch

David City Rotary
Libby Scott

Fairbury Rotary
Lana Likens

Falls City Rotary
Ryan Larsen

Fremont Rotary
Kevin Eairleywine

Geneva Rotary
Angie Hafer

Glenwood Rotary
Lori Umberger

Hebron Rotary
Sonny Manley

Lincoln 14 Rotary
Mark Feit

Lincoln East Rotary
Rick Wilson

Lincoln Giving Spirits Rotary
Indy Sukhram

Lincoln South Rotary
Tami Lambie

Nebraska City Rotary
Don Loseke

Norfolk Rotary
Georgette Sweeney

Omaha Downtown Rotary
James Mackiewicz

Omaha Millard Rotary
Lynn McCormack

Omaha Morning Rotary
Lisa Hatterman

Omaha Night Rotary
Jose “Lepe” Lepesuastegui

Omaha Suburban Rotary
Dan Hosford

Omaha West Rotary
Stephanie Olson

Pawnee City Rotary
John Werner

Plattsmouth Rotary
Adam Stoskopf

Red Oak Rotary
Carrie Shalters

Seward Rotary
Anita Foor

Shenandoah Rotary
Patti Rolf

Wayne Rotary
Mark Hill

Western Douglas County Rotary
Rex Moats

York Rotary
Avery Blum



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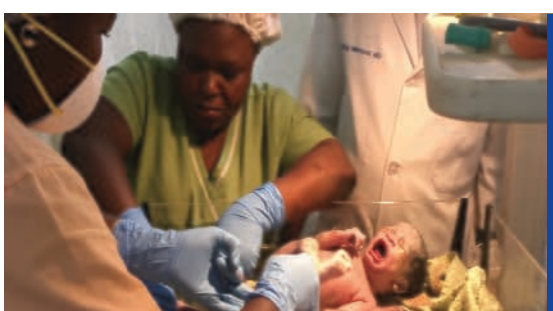
Omaha Rotary Night Club

Home Club of District Governor Gretchen Bren

Omaha Night Rotary Club is the small club with the Big Heart!

Chartered February 10, 2009

1st and 3th Tuesdays at 5:30 PM, Le Voltaire Restaturant (back room)
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omaharotarynight.org

















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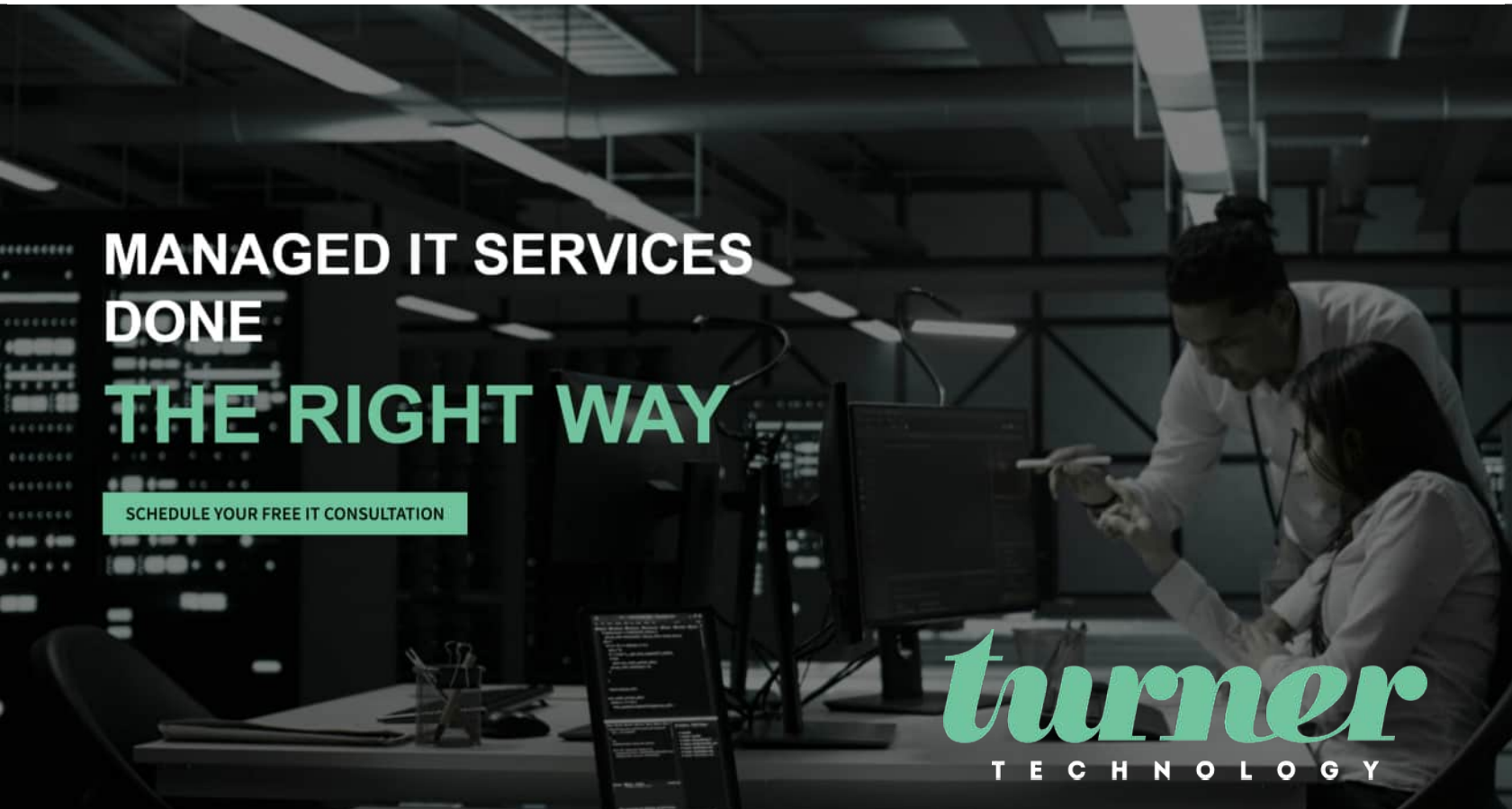
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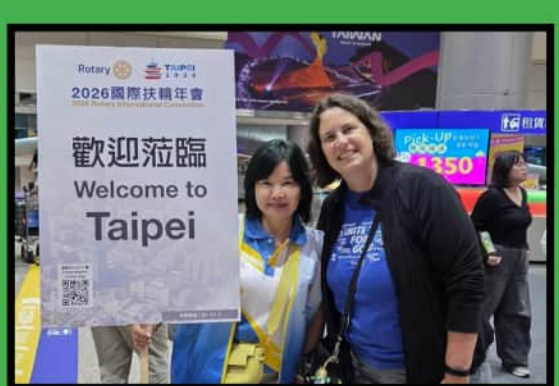
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and Rotary District 5650

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NOVEMBER 14, 2026

Omaha | 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

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8TH GRADE HONOR ROLL

April 26, 2027

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"Toastmasters has transformed me into a more confident and effective communicator. As a bonus, Toastmasters gave me leadership opportunities I never expected, introduced me to amazing people I never would have met otherwise, and broadened my knowledge of the world and humanity through the presentations my club members gave. Toastmasters also helped me improve my ability to give helpful feedback to others, which has translated to highly productive conversations in the workplace."

~ Jessica Codr, 14-year Toastmaster and former District Director

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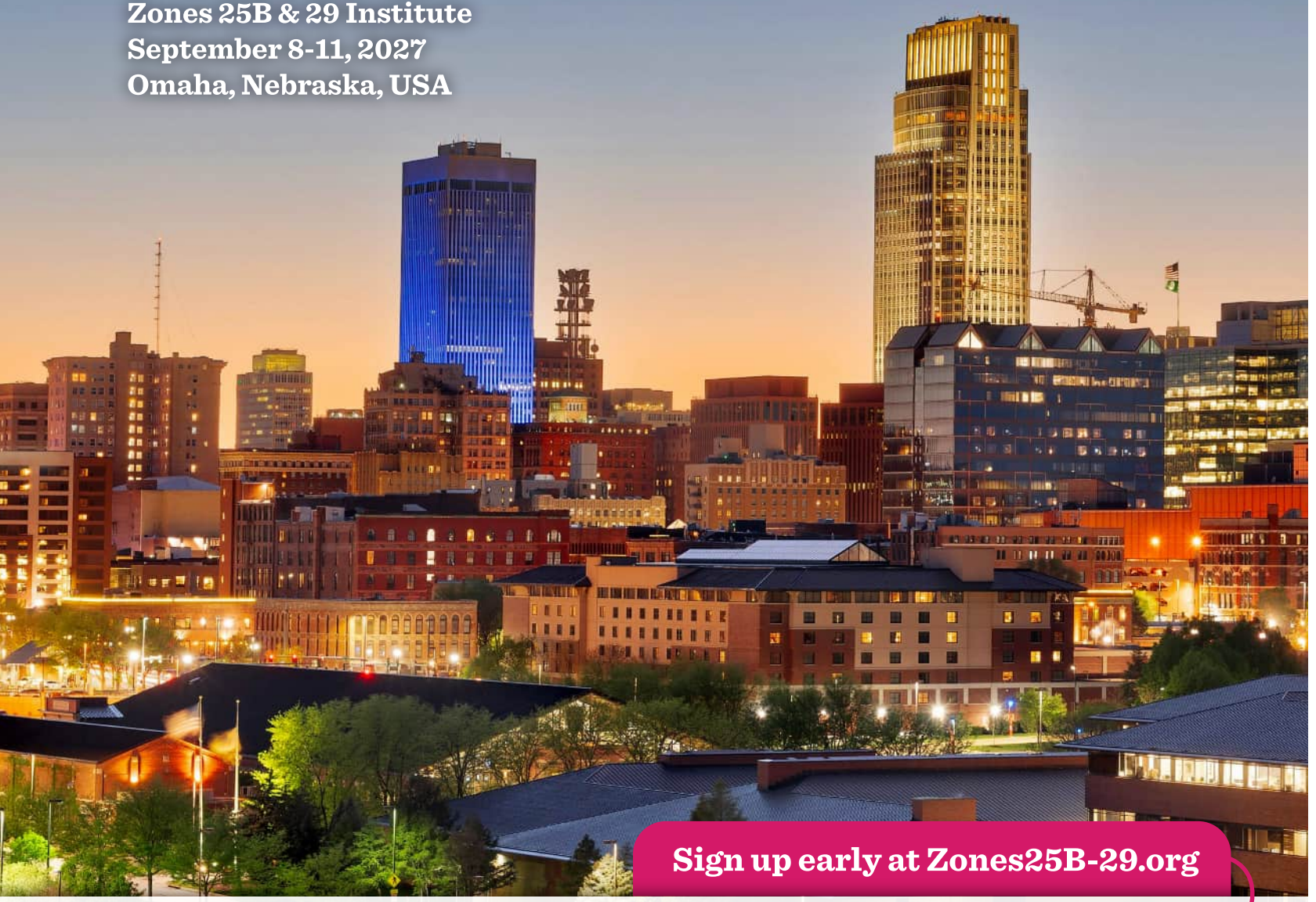
" Toastmasters gives you a voice. Rotary gives you a place to use it!"

~ Gretchen Bren, Rotary District Governor 26-27

BRIDGING WHAT'S NEXT

2027 Zone Institute
Omaha - The Cultural Oasis of the Heartland

Zones 25B & 29 Institute
September 8-11, 2027
Omaha, Nebraska, USA



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Rotary
Zones 25B & 29

Zone Institute
OMAHA 2027
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