



Nebraska

Less is more for one surgical startup

A two-pound robot developed by a Nebraska medical startup could replace devices a thousand times its size and improve surgical care for patients.

Lincoln-based Virtual Incision was founded by a University of Nebraska-Lincoln engineering professor and the chief of minimally invasive surgery at University of Nebraska Medical Center.

From its launch in 2006, the company began developing a robot that can perform minimally invasive colon surgery, procedures performed more than 600,000 times a year in the U.S.

The device makes an incision a fraction of the size of those made using traditional surgical techniques, dramatically reducing hospital stays for patients following a procedure. Equipped with medical instruments, a TV camera and lights, the device is controlled remotely by a surgeon, and images can be streamed to other physicians for real-time consultation.

In 2017, the company secured \$18 million in investment. It plans to use the money for manufacturing and Food & Drug Administration trials.

The robot has already been used in human trials in Paraguay. Company leaders hope to see it in use in the U.S. by late 2019. Meanwhile, Virtual Incision's founders say the technology could be adapted for a range of minimally invasive procedures.

Sources: (Sages) (Silicon Prairie News) (Omaha World Herald) (Daily Nebraskan)

WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

Nebraska's small businesses added 62 jobs per 1,000 people from Q2/2011 through Q4/2016.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR?

Nebraska can improve VC investment, which fell 111 percent year-over-year to \$42.19 per capita, and bulk up R&D spending from \$303.08 per capita.

WHERE HAVE WE MOST IMPROVED?

State and industry collaborated on an electronics recycling pilot project, an alternative to government mandates.

Best & Brightest	B
Fast Internet	C
Grants Advanced Degrees	C+
Tech Workforce	B
Tax Friendly	B
Attracts Investment	D+
Entrepreneurial Activity	B
Ridesharing	A-
Short-Term Rentals	B
Sustainable Policies	A-
Self-Driving Vehicles	A
Drones	A



Fast Internet

At 55 percent, the proportion of Nebraska households with internet connections of at least 10 mbps is on par with several neighboring states, and 38 percent enjoy speeds of 25 mbps or more.



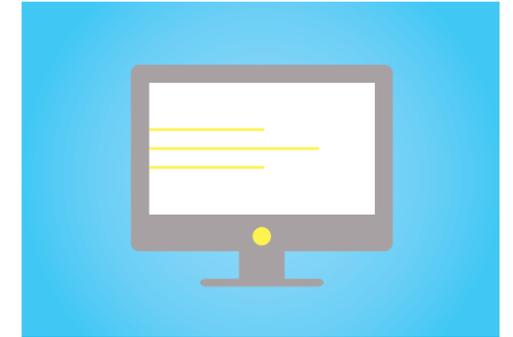
Best & Brightest

Nebraska is a Right-to-Work state but lacks a law protecting workers from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.



Short-Term Rentals

In 2017, Nebraska regulators tried to legalize short-term rentals throughout the state but the efforts have stalled.



Tech Workforce

Nebraska has about 40 tech jobs per 1,000 residents, which is on the higher end regionally.

Global Payments Build on Local Talent – And Spur Hiring – in Omaha

Global payments business i2c Inc. plans to open an operations center with a staff of 300 new employees in Omaha. Over four years, the center is expected to invest \$30 million in the city.

Executives at the California-based company chose the Nebraskan city for its pool of fintech talent, and it aims to fill positions including IT, account management and operations. "Omaha could not have been a better choice," said Peg Johnson, EVP of Global Client Success. "We have highly qualified, fintech-savvy personnel here."

The Nebraskan city already boasts a number of other payments technology businesses, and in 2017, trade publication *Bank Innovation* ranked it among the top five fintech hubs in the United States.

The move by i2c comes shortly after Omaha leaders signed a \$35-million economic development plan to bring more jobs and prosperity to the city. The plan earmarks \$16 million to encourage business growth and another \$7.6 million for programs including job training and student career experiences.

Sources: (Cision) (Omaha World-Herald) (Nebraska Tech) (Omaha World-Herald)

