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**Notice of a Valley and Waterloo Citizens' Meeting
and Upcoming Town Hall Meetings**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VALLEY, Neb. – Citizens for a Free Nebraska (CFN) will be holding a town hall meeting at DC West High School on Monday to explain the importance for the citizens of Valley and Waterloo to take action to preserve the independence of their Cities. The town hall meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 19th. CFN is also hosting town hall meetings in several other cities, and the current schedule can be found at the end of this document.

Among CFN officials and other guest speakers at the meeting will be Mary Caffey, Mayor of Valley, Tim Gilligan, Mayor of Gretna, and Phil Klein, former Mayor of Elkhorn.

CFN is currently circulating two statewide initiative petitions. If the effort is successful, the petitions would place two laws on the statewide ballot for voters to decide whether or not they will be enacted: one would prohibit the takeover of any city or village in Nebraska without a majority vote of its citizens and the other would allow the citizens of any city or village that has been annexed to petition to detach and reestablish as an independent city within five years. The full text of the statutes can be found on their website, www.freenebraska.net.

The State of Nebraska is the only state in the Union that allows one municipality to take over another without a vote of the citizens, and CFN says that it intends to correct that. "What is the fear in allowing the people to vote? Who fears that, in the United States of America, the principles of its own Constitution would be put into action? The answer is obvious: those who fear the voice of the citizens are those who do not truly represent them," said Jason Fuller, an organizer of CFN.

The citizens of Nebraska have the prerogative to act as the state's second legislative body and enact laws through the petitioning process. Through a statewide effort of gathering about 80,000 signatures (seven percent of the registered voters in the state), the people could bring the issue to the ballot this year and enact the laws being proposed by CFN.

Among other issues that will be discussed at the meeting, CFN organizers will discuss how they intend to defend cities and villages from city-county mergers and takeover by a municipal county. CFN believes that even though Valley and Waterloo are in a floodplain, they are still attractive to takeover by a municipal county. Fuller asserted that, "it won't matter if Waterloo and Valley are in a floodplain or not. In fact, it won't even matter if they're contiguous with Omaha at all, once Omaha becomes a municipal county. Under current law, once any municipal county is formed through city-county merger, its governing body would have all of the powers and borders of both the county and the city that merged with it. Once Omaha becomes a municipal county, it will eventually be able to take control of every formerly independent city within its newly doubled territory regardless of proximity to the original city, and its new borders would also be directly adjacent to every surrounding county in the area." He added, "once the city of Omaha becomes the Municipal County of Omaha, it will no longer have to go after one city at a time or inch its way around. If your city is in Douglas County or any of the surrounding counties, you're in trouble." For more information about this and other issues, visit CFN's website, www.freenebraska.net and view the "cause" page.

The laws proposed by CFN would protect cities and villages from municipal counties by guaranteeing the citizens a right to vote before they could be annexed into a municipal county.

CFN also believes that its efforts are of statewide importance, whether a city is being threatened locally or not, and according to CFN, two of the most important issues that all Nebraskans should consider are the balance of power in the Nebraska State Legislature and the diminishing of western representation. Fuller stated that, "among other statewide issues, perhaps one of the most dire is that the Nebraska Legislature is now reaching a point where, due to Omaha's current ability to make forced annexations of its neighbors and gobble up legislative districts, Omaha will soon gain enough power over the Legislature to force the state to funnel tax dollars directly into its fiscally irresponsible projects and comply with its every whim. The problem compounds itself. If you are a citizen of Nebraska, you will be affected by the outcome of our struggle."

“As only a small example of what’s coming,” said Tom Fencel, another organizer of CFN, “during a state of the city address, Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey asked that the state ‘recognize all of the economic benefits’ of Omaha’s convention center, and for it to ‘reimburse [Omaha] with its fair share,’ because Omaha is not able to manage the expenses of the projects that it starts. And, with their increasing control of the Legislature, it won’t be long until they are simply able to demand it. Big ticket-items like baseball stadiums, trolley car systems, and sewer replacement projects don’t come cheap, but Omaha isn’t all that concerned and continues to spend recklessly because when funding comes from the state, everyone pays.”

CFN invites all citizens of Nebraska who wish to know more about the local and statewide implications of their efforts to attend one of their upcoming town hall meetings, ask questions, and visit their website, www.freenebraska.net.

In an effort to inform the citizens of the issues and to also gain volunteers, CFN is working to schedule town hall meetings for the citizens of several other cities. Currently scheduled are the following:

Valley / Waterloo :	May 19, 7:00pm at DC West High School in Valley
Ralston :	May 20, 7:00pm at Ralston American Legion Hall
Papillion / La Vista / Springfield :	May 22, 7:00pm at Papillion South High School
Fort Calhoun / Blair :	May 27, 7:00pm at Fort Calhoun High School

More are being scheduled, and the updates can be found on their website, www.freenebraska.net.

For more information, visit www.freenebraska.net or email info@freenebraska.net.

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