

FALLS CITY NEBRASKA

Strategically Positioned. Building for the Future.



Our mission is to encourage economic development and growth and improve the business conditions of the Falls City area.

edge

FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE
VOLUME I ■ 2013

Merz Farm Equipment Adding the Next Generation to Workforce



“We commend Merz Farm Equipment for providing quality employment opportunities that are bringing college students back home to Falls City.”

~Bart Keller
Falls City EDGE President

Merz Farm Equipment (MFE)

understands agriculture is big business in the region and area farmers need a forward-thinking dealership that keeps up with the changes that continually occur within the agricultural industry. In order to stay competitive MFE recognizes a well-qualified, skilled workforce is a vital component to their success.

MFE’s future looks bright and continued success is certain thanks to a quality succession plan that is being executed by Mitch Merz. “We have several *core* employees in their 50s—some have been employed for over 35 years—that will be retiring in the next few years,” said Merz. “So we are working to build a solid foundation for the future by adding qualified youth throughout all aspects of our business.”

MFE is actively searching for employees that will sustain the company for generations to come.

Mitch, who attended a [Talent and Innovation Initiative \(TI²\)](#) workshop hosted by Falls City EDGE, took valuable program information and turned it into a financial reward via the [InternNE program](#).

MFE was awarded \$10,000 dollars in funding for hiring two interns, Dusty Metzner and Jesse Vollmer, who are currently enrolled at Southeast Community College (SCC)-Milford Campus. The InternNE program provides financial assistance to companies willing to give paid internships to college juniors and seniors, or those at least halfway through community college programs. Businesses located in Richardson County may receive a 60 percent match up to \$5,000 dollars and businesses can hire up to five interns annually. Both Jesse and Dusty will become full-time employees of MFE upon graduation from SCC in September.

Continued on page 5 »

In this issue

- CGB Breaks Ground P.2
- EDGE Annual Banquet P.3
- City Comprehensive Plan P.4
- EDGE Investment Drive P.4
- Regional Networking Meeting P.5
- Regional Workforce Training P.5
- Marketing & Sales Update P.6
- New Member Investors P.6
- Executive Director Message P.7



SCC in Top 10%
of Nation's
Community
Colleges
2nd
Consecutive
Year



Consolidated Grain and Barge Breaks Ground for Multi-Million Dollar State-of-the-Art Grain Terminal

Consolidated Grain and Barge (CGB) broke ground on its new \$23 million dollar BNSF Grain Terminal in December and construction is well underway. The terminal is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2013 in time for soybean and corn harvest. The project is anticipated to create a minimum of eight new jobs.

When completed, the terminal will handle high volumes of grain and soybeans. It will serve as an economic driver for the area and have a far reaching positive impact on the economy, including:

- Jobs with good salary and benefits, creating employment opportunities for existing families, as well as bringing new families to the area.
- An increased property tax base which benefits the City, County, and schools.
- The economic value of a year's worth of construction and the ripple effect of those activities to area businesses.
- A large, new customer for Falls City Utilities.
- Increased truck traffic that will utilize area service stations, convenience stores and restaurants.
- The utilization of our rail asset which could provide the local railroad workforce more of an opportunity to work in Falls City.
- The potential for better grain prices and reduced costs for our farmers which creates more wealth in our local area.
- The potential for future expansion at this site and any ancillary businesses that could be drawn to the area as a result of this business being built.



Construction of CGB's \$23 million dollar grain terminal in Falls City is well underway.

The County is already feeling the impact. Southeast Ready Mix/Concrete Industries and Compass Pumping and Conveying, Inc. are currently working on the concrete phases of construction and Snethen Farms, Donnie Stevens with Triple S Construction, Kaster Trucking and Huettnner Trucking are hauling dirt and rock for the project. Temporary residents have moved into the area, resulting in apartment and houses being rented and hotel usage increasing. The company is also currently utilizing Staffing Services' Falls City office to recruit workers from the construction trades to assist in the development. And the project strengthened an already established partnership between CGB's contractor Custom Agri Builders and Airlanco with Airlanco bidding on the project and providing warehouse space during construction.

CGB has a network of over 70 grain elevators and terminals in the United States utilizing various modes of transportation. The company considered several locations before choosing Falls City. One of the draws to Falls City was the ability to use rail for transporting grain.

"The project is a great 'win' for Falls City. Not only does it create new jobs and infuse substantial dollars into our economy, but it has energized our community. The support the project has received—from the landowners to local farmers and local business owners—has been overwhelming. The community really rallied together to make this happen," said EDGE Vice President of Marketing and Sales Kevin Malone. "It's also gratifying to know that Falls City successfully competed for this investment with communities across the region. The impact of this project will have a long-term effect on our community for generations to come."

Company officials were very impressed with the assistance they received from EDGE. "CGB is very excited about becoming valued members of the Falls City community and serving southeast Nebraska's grain merchandising and handling needs," said Eric Kresin, CGB Southwest Region General Manager. "Our thanks go out to EDGE. They have been great to work with. Our company has worked with economic development organizations throughout the United States and I can honestly say the EDGE economic development team is the best we've dealt with."

To follow all the latest news and updates on the CGB project, visit the Falls City EDGE website news blog at www.fallscityedge.com/news.aspx.

EDGE Celebrates Sixth Year of Success

Over 75 EDGE member-investors gathered at the Elks Club on January 9th for the organization’s Annual Meeting and Banquet—a celebration of continued success in encouraging and facilitating economic growth and development in Falls City/Richardson County.



Bart Keller, EDGE President, delivered annual message to investors.

“EDGE is proud of the many accomplishments we’ve achieved over the past six years that have brought new jobs, capital investment and revenues to the area and resulted in an overall positive economic impact to Falls City and Richardson County,” said EDGE President Bart Keller in his annual message to investors. “Our work to help our existing business and industry succeed and grow has been effective, as business-retention efforts have measurably kept companies here and helped them expand employment opportunities. We have also effectively attracted new business investment and jobs to the area. Since EDGE’s inception, there has been a reported hundreds of millions of dollars in capital investment in the City and County.”

The 2012 EDGE Annual Report was distributed and a display highlighted 2012 milestones and successes, including Consolidated Grain and Barge’s multi-million state-of-the-art grain terminal project, Wilderness Falls senior housing development ribbon-cutting, existing business growth and expansions and efforts to promote economic development location opportunities in the greater Falls City area. (*Download a copy of the EDGE 2012 Annual Report, “Moving Forward and Achieving our Economic Destiny,” at www.fallscityedge.com/investorrelations.aspx.)*



A display highlighted 2012 milestones and successes

The EDGE 2012 *Investor of the Year Award* went to Farm and City Supply and its owners, Madaline Wilhelm, Brett Keller and Bart Keller. The award was presented by EDGE Board Member Kevin Malone. “Farm and City Supply has been part of the Falls City retail community since purchasing the business in 1978,” said Malone. “The family-owned business completely renovated and moved to their current location in 1994. They expanded at this location in 2004 with a new warehouse and currently have 11 employees.

I’m not sure there is a better example of a family-owned, community-minded business in Falls City with all of their involvement in the various civic, school and church organizations and fundraisers—they are always one of the first to give of their time and/or money to a worthwhile cause. The business has been a *Visionary* member-investor of EDGE since its inception and Bart has personally given an unbelievable amount of his personal time and time of the business serving as president of the organization over the past two years.”



EDGE VP Investor & Community Relations Kevin Malone presents 2012 Investor of the Year Award to Farm & City Supply. (Front Row) Kevin Malone; Brett Keller, Owner; Madaline Wilhelm, Owner; Bart Keller, Owner; and Georgia Cole, Employee (Back Row) Employees Mike Beer and Keith Hayes

The three previous winners of the award were Community Medical Center, Southeast Nebraska Communications and Vision Inn.

During the business meeting, Tim Heckenlively was elected a General Director.

HIRING?



EDGE will post local employer job openings on its Facebook page. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please send information, including job description and contact information to assistant@fallscityedge.com.

Development of City Comprehensive Plan Underway

You may have heard the buzz around town about the City and EDGE, in partnership with Marvin Planning Consultants, developing a Comprehensive Plan for the City.

The Falls City Comprehensive Plan is designed to:

- Promote orderly growth and development for the community, as well as provide policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of the community.
- Provide a guideline for the location of future developments within the planning jurisdiction of Falls City as well as redevelopment of older areas in the community and encourage a strong economic base for the City so all goals can be achieved.
- Provide an information and management tool for City leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. It is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population or local economy occur during the planning period.



Town hall meetings provided valuable input on a vision for Falls City's future.

The Comprehensive Development Plan represents a blueprint ... designed to identify, assess and develop actions and policies in the areas of population, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities and utilities. The Plan will contain recommendations that when implemented will be of value to the City and its residents.

“The overall goal is to create a unified vision and implementation plan that will continue moving Falls City forward over the next 15-20 years. That’s why it is crucial to have the community’s participation in the planning process,” said Falls City Mayor Tim Hersh. “We are utilizing an array of tools to generate new and innovative ideas and feedback from the public, including town hall meetings, key person interviews, social media and a website launched November 28th — www.EngageFallsCity.com.”

WE WANT YOUR IDEAS
ENGAGE FALLS CITY



We're looking for practical and resourceful ideas about improving our community.

★★ www.EngageFallsCity.com ★★

“We have been pleased with the good attendance and good input we’ve had at the town hall meetings, as well as input we’ve received through the website,” said EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer. “The process will continue for several months and we are continuing to gather public input. New topics have been added to the EngageFallsCity website and we encourage everyone to visit the site and join in the discussion. We’re even offering *rewards* to the top contributors. Help the City and EDGE move the best ideas forward and together we will make our community better.”

Go to www.EngageFallsCity.com to share your ideas for moving Falls City forward.

EDGE Investment Drive: February 2013

EDGE has launched a new investment drive to help fund economic development initiatives for the next three years, as well as bring new people and ideas into the organization. Chairing the drive is Charlie Radatz. Other members of the team include: Andy Dunn, Steve Severin, Rod Vandenberg, Bart Keller, Kevin Malone, Beth Sickel, Madaline Wilhelm, Jerry Duerfeldt and John Martin.

“We have a great Investor Recruitment Team whose members are volunteering their time to contact prospective members,” said Charlie Radatz, Chairman of the EDGE Investor Recruitment Team. “When contacted, please consider making a three-year investment pledge to this organization doing so many great things for our community. And, if we should fail to contact you and you wish to add your support, please call our Executive Director, Beckie Cromer, or her Assistant, Carla Rhodd, at 402.245.2105.”

EDGE to Host Regional Networking Meeting

The [Southeast Nebraska Resource Network \(SERN\)](#) is a group of development resource and service providers, and volunteers interested in the betterment of Southeast Nebraska. SERN members meet quarterly to share information about successes, initiatives, resources and programs for the region. SERN meetings are an excellent opportunity for local community leaders, volunteers and municipal staff to be connected with federal, state and local resource and service providers to discuss ideas and opportunities for potential projects in Southeast Nebraska.



Julie Taylor-Costello

EDGE will be hosting a SERN meeting on June 19th at 10:00 a.m. at Personal Care, Inc.'s offices. Julie Taylor-Costello Director for the [Institute for Community Engagement \(ICE\)](#) at Peru State College will be the keynote speaker. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to the EDGE office at assistant@fallscityedge.com.

Merz Farm Equipment (cont.)

The success of the internship concept has driven Merz to invest in a second round of students that will benefit from hands-on experience. SCC Milford student Jordan Schomerus, the son of a long-time MFE customer from Nebraska City, and Colton Vollan, a Navy Reservist and Wyotech student, will be employed as interns in 2013 and become full-time employees after graduation. MFE also provided tuition assistance to Colton and Jordan and it's an investment plan they will continue to cultivate.

"I am proud MFE is a third-generation family-owned business and we have created an aggressive succession plan by developing a pipeline of qualified youth. We currently employ eight workers with a goal of growing to 20 full-time employees by 2016," said Merz.

"InternNE is a valuable program for businesses and for students seeking work experience to further shape their future careers," said EDGE President Bart Keller. "We commend Merz Farm Equipment for providing quality employment opportunities that are bringing college students back home to Falls City."

For more information about how your business can benefit from this program, contact Beckie Cromer at 402.245.2105 or director@fallscityedge.com.

Regional Partnership Focuses on Workforce Training

The Southeast Nebraska Partners for Progress, including Nemaha, Richardson, Pawnee, Johnson and Otoe counties, have been working with [Southeast Community College](#) and area employers to develop worker training courses that address regional workforce development needs. The group agreed to focus on two courses this year—Leadership and Supervisory and CNC Operations—and each member county is allotted six students per course in order to generate a true cross-section of the region.

"Airlanco and WASP will be representing Richardson County employers during the first training session," said EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer. "The regional partnership is very interested in providing the training our employers need to remain competitive and successful."



CNC Operations training are being offered to regional employers.

The Leadership and Supervisory course will be the first offered. It is scheduled for February 25th in Nebraska City. This will be a high-energy, interactive boot camp that will provide the foundational knowledge and skills to become an effective leader. Students will learn how to transition more successfully into a supervisory role, how to manage a multi-general workforce and about laws new supervisors should know. A certificate and 0.9 Continuing Education Units will be awarded for completing the course.

Marketing and Sales Update

EDGE is aggressively marketing and selling Falls City area business location opportunities to retain/expand existing business investments, generate new business investments and stimulate entrepreneurial development.

“Our number one priority is to work with our existing businesses,” said Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director. “We strive to maintain an ongoing dialogue with local and corporate executives and work hard to provide them with information and assistance they need to grow and expand here in Falls City/Richardson County.”

To attract new business development leads, EDGE participates in an array of targeted marketing events. In 2012 EDGE’s marketing plan of action included:

- Hosting Nebraska Department of Economic Development Familiarization Tour, which provided an opportunity for state officials to tour the community and see first-hand new developments while learning more about site location opportunities.
- In conjunction with the [Nebraska Diplomats](#) signature event—Passport to Nebraska Weekend, EDGE Board members, Kevin Malone and Tim Heckenlively, hosting Consolidated Grain and Barge (CGB) company executives. The event also provided an opportunity to network with national and international companies hosted by the Diplomats and Governor.
- As a member-investor of the [Lincoln Area Development Partnership \(LAPD\)](#), participating in regional sales efforts at the [2012 International Plastics Showcase](#) in Orlando, Florida, and the [Industrial Asset Management Council](#) Professional Forum in Omaha, Nebraska.



Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy spoke at the Industrial Asset Management Council’s dinner at Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium.

“EDGE’s Marketing and Sales team is considering the following events,” said EDGE Vice President of Marketing and Sales Kevin Malone, “[FABTECH](#)—North America’s largest metal forming, fabricating, welding and finishing event, [Community Venture Network](#)—a forum that brings together bring high growth businesses with economic development professionals seeking to attract business expansions; and the [Farm Equipment Manufacturers](#), as well as call trips and headquarter visits. In addition, EDGE, in cooperation with LADP, will be hosting a site selector event May 19th through 21st which will allow us to market our community and its assets. The event will include an evaluation of the Falls City 10.1-acre industrial site, dual rail opportunities, as well as development potential within the loop track being constructed by Consolidated Grain and Barge. We are excited about the marketing opportunities in 2013 and continuing to pursue development opportunities for the Falls City/Richardson County area.” said Malone.

EDGE Welcomes New Member-Investors

Visionary Investor

(\$5,000 and greater)

Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.

Catalyst Investors

(\$1,000-\$2,499)

Knobbe, Kent & Jackie

Merz Farm Equipment

Advocate Investors

(\$500-\$999)

Bauman Family Limited Partnership

Kresin, Eric

Reesman Investment Corporation

Supporter Investors

(individual & nonprofit level - \$100-\$499)

Bierman, Mike & Jennifer

Duerfeldt, Jerry & Linda

Duerfeldt, Stan & Stacey

Dunn, Andy & Nicole

Eickhoff, Al & Family

Hunzeker, Mike & Sherri

James, Dick & Jennifer

Maze, Charlie & Betty

Rieger, Jake

Schawang, Leon

Seeba, John & Rita

Snethen, Cory & Jessica

Stevens, Donnie & Colleen

Wilcox, Matt & Michelle

Witt, Brian & Rachel

Witt, Bob & Tammy

Witt, Tom & Cindy

To learn more about EDGE’s program of work and how you can join us in shaping the future of Falls City, visit the [EDGE website](#) or contact Beckie Cromer, Executive Director, at 402.245.2105 or email director@fallscityedge.com.

A Message from the Director

2013



As we begin 2013, I look forward to working with the EDGE public and private investors, as well as community stakeholders, to continue moving Falls City forward on the road to economic development success.

A new year means new opportunities. And we have some exciting developments that will continue to take shape in 2013, as well as prospects for new business developments.

Consolidated Grain and Barge (CGB) has begun construction of their state-of-the-art grain terminal and the economic impact of this \$23 million investment is starting to ripple throughout our community. We foresee the CGB terminal will serve as an anchor in attracting new related businesses to the area in the coming year and beyond.

Over the last 2-3 years, we have seen our existing business and industry expand and add new jobs to the economy. We anticipate this trend will continue in 2013. Throughout the year, we will work hard to insure employers have the resources and assistance they need to succeed in Falls City/Richardson County.

CGB's decision to make a considerable investment in our community illustrates that we have the right combination of infrastructure, economic development incentives and workforce to meet the needs of growing companies. That's why we feel confident we can compete effectively for new business development opportunities in 2013. To generate new development prospects, we will be participating in an array of state and national marketing events. We will also continue work to fully develop the Falls City 10.1-acre industrial site that when completed will make our area even more competitive.

There's a lot of optimism and positive energy throughout the community that has been strengthened by our recent successes. Let's continue to work together to make 2013 another banner year for Falls City/Richardson County.

~Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director

Falls City Economic Development & Growth Enterprise (EDGE)

1705 Stone Street, PO Box 574

Falls City, NE 68355

402.245.2105

info@fallscityedge.com

Beckie Cromer, Executive Director
Carla Rhodd, Administrative Assistant

Visit us online

www.fallscityedge.com

Connect with us



2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bart Keller, Farm and City Supply

Steve Kottich, Miller Monroe Co.

Kevin Malone, F&M Bank

Dana Rathje, Richardson County Bank & Trust

Ray Joy, Southeast Nebraska Communications

Beth Sickel

Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director

DIRECTORS

Brian Daake, Dorr & Clark Funeral Home

Chris Halbert, Halbert, Dunn & Halbert, L.L.C.

Edward & Sandra Hartman

Tim Heckenlively, Falls City Public Schools

Tim Hersh, Mayor, City of Falls City

Dennis Hullman, Hullman's Ford

Ryan Larsen, Community Medical Center

Marc Morehead, Richardson County Bank & Trust

Jerry Oliver, Councilman, City of Falls City

Charles Radatz, Tri-State Corridor Alliance

Kirby Robidoux, Councilman, City of Falls City

David Sickel, Richardson County Commissioners

Rodney Vandeberg, Vandeberg Family Foundation

EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

Eric Barr, Manager, Falls City Area Chamber

Gary Jorn, City Administrator, City of Falls