

# 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 III ■ 2008

### Van Wyhe Sees Opportunity in Falls City – “We really enjoy being here.”



The news earlier this year that [Vantec Inc.](#) had decided to locate a \$4.4 million state-of-the-art injection molding operation in the spec industrial building and create 25 new jobs was undoubtedly great news for the local economy. Production began the first week in November.

Owner Willie Van Wyhe recently met with EDGE investors and told them, “We employed as many local workers as we could and we hired local contractors to build out the building and set-up the equipment.” The plant will produce three semi-truck loads of components daily for the Kawasaki engine plant in Maryville.

According to Van Wyhe, “Kawasaki plans to outsource more business to Vantec next spring. We currently have four production machines installed and the building can hold up to 20—there’s room for growth.”

“Internal projections show the plant should be profitable in its second year,” said Van Wyhe. “We see a lot of opportunity in Falls City. We want this to be a win-win situation for Vantec, our employees and Falls City. We think we can make this happen.”

Van Wyhe expressed his gratitude to the people of Falls City, “We really appreciated all the support we’ve received from everyone in the community. In fact, that was a big part of our decision to locate here. The positive attitude of the community was a big part of it. We really enjoy being here.”

#### Economic Development Return on Investment (ROI)

Gov. Heineman recently announced a \$200,000 award in [Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) funding](#) to Falls City to assist in transforming the Hotel Stephenson into a regional conference and convention center. This brings the total CDBG funding awarded to Falls City this year to \$550,000. In June the Gov. announced a \$350,000 CDBG award for the Vantec project. Kevin Malone, President of EDGE, said “This is great news for Falls City. The \$550,000 in public investments leverages nearly \$5 million in private investments in these projects. We are just beginning to realize a return on our investment in economic development.” [To read the Gov.’s press releases on the awards, visit the EDGE website – click on news and announcements.](#)

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# EDGE to Market Business Location Opportunities at Pack Expo in Chicago



EDGE Executive Director, Chuck Whitney, joined the [Lincoln Area Development Partners](#) November 9-13 at [Pack Expo](#) in Chicago to promote business location opportunities in southeast Nebraska, including the greater Falls City area.

Pack Expo is sponsored by the [Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Institute \(PMMI\)](#) and is the industry's largest U.S. trade show. It drew more than 45,000 attendees, including more than 6,000 international visitors from some 125 countries. About 1,700 exhibitors participated in this year's show.

Whitney and other members of the regional marketing team staffed an exhibit, called on targeted companies and hosted an invitation-only reception for exhibitors/attendees. While in Chicago, the regional team also made sales calls on area site location consultants.

## EDGE Participates in Governor's Reverse Trade Mission

At least 130 guests from 10 countries participated in the Governor's first-ever Reverse Trade Mission that took place September 10-13. EDGE President Kevin Malone and Executive Director Chuck Whitney were on hand to network and discuss Falls City opportunities with the participants.

The Mission drew business and government leaders from Brazil, Columbia, Nicaragua, Canada, Spain, South Africa, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea. Several members of the China delegation signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the state pledging Nebraska would receive top consideration from five Shanghai, China companies looking to expand in the U.S.

"I'm pleased with the enthusiastic response we've received from our first Reverse Trade Mission," Gov. Heineman said. "It's been a busy and very productive week. We now have several strong leads for attracting new business facilities here to Nebraska.

Many reverse trade mission participants stayed for the [Annual Diplomats Passport to Nebraska Weekend](#). (Kevin Malone and Steve Kottich, EDGE Board members, are members of the Nebraska Diplomats.) Whitney and Malone participated in the weekend events, including business reception on Friday and a tailgate at the Governor's residence followed by the Nebraska vs. New Mexico football game on Saturday.

"Our participation in the Reverse Trade Mission and the Diplomats Weekend provided a great opportunity to present Falls City to an international audience," said Kevin Malone. "We initiated a sales dialogue with several prospective businesses."

The Business Location  
**EDGE**

It may be the person sitting next to you on the plane or a college friend at the next tailgate or a family member at an upcoming holiday gathering that will ask you, "Why Falls City?" To prepare you for the question, here are a few of the reasons we are the Midwest community with the *business location edge*:

- Strategic Central U.S. Location and Ideally Situated to Serve the Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas Tri-State Market Area
- Access to Transcontinental Transportation Networks including Interstates/Highways and Rail
- Growing, Diversified Employment Base—Manufacturing, Healthcare, Education
- Available, Job-Ready Workforce and Skills Training Programs
- Pro-Business State and Community, including Performance-Based Incentives and Competitive Operating Environment
- Quality of Living Attractive to Workers and Families

To learn more, view the [EDGE sales presentation in the member-investors login section of our website](#).

**Do you know someone EDGE should contact to discuss business location expansion opportunities in the Falls City area? Please contact [EDGE Executive Director Chuck Whitney](#). You can be assured all referrals will be handled confidentially.**

# EDGE Board Members Meet with NE Highway Commissioners

EDGE Board Members and Co-Chairs of the Tri-State Corridor Alliance, Beth Sickel and Charlie Radatz, met with District 1 Nebraska State Highway Commissioners in Lincoln on October 7 to advocate for funding for local road improvement projects.

Sickel and Radatz presented Commissioners with a case for including improvements to Highway 73 south of Falls City to the Kansas border and Highway 159 between Falls City and Rulo. Sickel told Commissioners, “Now is not the time to shy away from putting those stretches of the highway into the plan. They go hand-and-hand with the new Missouri Bridge at Rulo.”

The Commission currently has three Richardson County projects in its 2009 plan, including Highway 8 west of Salem for 7 miles, Highway 67 south of Nemaha for 6 miles and Missouri River Bridge at Rulo.

Falls City Mayor Vandenberg serves as a District 1 Commissioner and was in attendance at the meeting.

Learn more about the importance of highway accessibility in site location decisions in the recent issue of [Area Development Magazine](http://www.areadevelopment.com/corpSurveySeries/aug08/highway-accessibility-location-decision.shtml) ([www.areadevelopment.com/corpSurveySeries/aug08/highway-accessibility-location-decision.shtml](http://www.areadevelopment.com/corpSurveySeries/aug08/highway-accessibility-location-decision.shtml)).

## The New Railroad Resurgence

According to a recent article in *Area Development Magazine*, the railroad industry is in a stage of development never before experienced by the industry. The majority of projects underway in this “rebirth” of railroads are being implemented by the five major “Class I” railroads. Those railroads matching the Association of American Railroads (AAR) Class I criteria include the [BNSF Railway](#) and [Union Pacific Railroad](#) that serve the greater Falls City area.



The article states that according to a February 2008 Wall Street Journal article, American railroads have spent \$10 billion since 2000 to expand tracks, built freight yards and buy equipment with \$12 billion still to come. In 2005, the Union Pacific Railroad spent \$1.3 billion on track improvements across its 33,000-mile system. This past January, BNSF President/CEO Matthew Rose said that this year, the railroad “expects to spend more than \$1.8 billion to keep our infrastructure strong by refreshing track, signal systems, structures, freight cars and upgrading technologies. What’s behind this activity? Simply stated, freight demand is expected to increase 67 percent by 2020 according to the AAR.

Read the full article at [Area Development Online](http://www.areadevelopment.com/siteSelection/aug08/railroads-site-selection-process.shtml) ([www.areadevelopment.com/siteSelection/aug08/railroads-site-selection-process.shtml](http://www.areadevelopment.com/siteSelection/aug08/railroads-site-selection-process.shtml)).

## Did you know?

- Richardson County was one of 30 Nebraska counties to top the list of “Rural America’s Most Prosperous Counties.” Economist Andrew Isserman looked at measuring success of rural areas differently. Instead of looking at population and income growth, Isserman looked at prosperity of rural counties. Prosperous counties, according to Isserman, graduate their students from high school, have low rates of unemployment, have less poverty and offer housing that is both affordable and in good repair. The full report dated May 2007 is available online at <http://www.dailyyonder.com/finding-rural-americas-prosperous-communities>. (First reported in *Nebraska Department of Economic Development Newsletter 01/08*.)
- In a recently published report, “The Geography of Personality,” Nebraska ranked among the top ten states on *extraversion* personality traits (sociable, energetic, enthusiastic), *agreeableness* (warm, compassionate, cooperative, friendly) and *conscientiousness* (dutiful, responsible, self-disciplined); while ranking in the bottom ten states on *neuroticism* (anxiousness, stressful, impulsive) and *openness* (curious, intellectual, creative). Read more about the study in the article, “*The United States of Minds*,” at [Wall Street Journal Online](#). According to the article, the findings pleased Gov. Heineman who said it was nice have scientific proof the state is *super-friendly*.



## EDGE Tuition Grants for Adult Welding Classes

This fall the adult welding classes offered by Southeast Community College filled up quickly. Thanks, in part, to EDGE providing tuition grants to the first ten registrants.

The classes are designed to address area employers' growing demand for skilled welders. "Investing in enhancing the skills of our workforce is one of the many ways EDGE is building for the future of Falls City," said Chuck Whitney, EDGE Executive Director. "A well-educated, skilled workforce is key to the future economic growth and vitality of our community."

Two skill levels of courses are being offered this fall:

- **Basic Welding** classes started September 29. In this session, students are learning the concepts, procedures and safety of oxyacetylene and arc welding.
- **Intermediate Welding** classes started November 3 and will be held on Mondays for five sessions from 6:00-8:30 p.m. Students will develop skills in metal inert gas welding and tungsten gas welding as well as learn the safety precautions of these procedures. EDGE will again provide grants to cover tuition and supply fees to the first ten registrants.

To learn more about the program and to register for the intermediate welding classes, please contact Rick Johnson, local director for Southeast Community College Adult Education, at 402.245.3455 or email [rjohnson@esu4.org](mailto:rjohnson@esu4.org).

## Career/Job Connections

A new feature of the EDGE website is the [Living and Working section](#) with information on area quality of living amenities and employment opportunities. Go to the employment opportunities page and click on the [Nebraska Workforce JobLink](#) to view a listing of job openings in the Falls City commuting area.

Are your job openings listed? If not, contact the Falls City Nebraska Workforce Development Office at 402.245.4401 for assistance in posting your job openings.

EDGE's goal with the new section is to attract new workers and residents to the greater Falls City area and to assist our employers with finding qualified workers. We encourage you to forward a link to the page to colleagues, family and friends that may have an interest in relocating to the Falls City area.

[www.fallscityedge.com](http://www.fallscityedge.com)



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### Chuck Whitney, Director

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- Jerry Oliver
- Charlie Radatz
- Jim Sefried
- David Sickel
- Mayor Rod Vandenberg

## Meet Becky Fischer



We are pleased to announce Becky Fischer has joined EDGE as Administrative Assistant. Becky was born and raised in Falls City and holds a Degree in Psychology and Human Relations. She has experience in community support, case management services, group work, team management and grant writing. She has been actively involved in community events and programs within Falls City and surrounding areas. Becky currently resides on a farm north of Falls City with her husband Nick and their two-year old daughter Adisen. "I'm excited to be a part of the dynamic EDGE team and look forward to meeting and working with all member-investors," said Fischer. You can reach Becky at the EDGE office or email [becky@fallscityedge.com](mailto:becky@fallscityedge.com).

## Want to learn more about EDGE?

Visit the [EDGE website](#), "[About EDGE](#)" section. Here you'll learn more about EDGE's mission and services. You'll also find a current listing of member-investors and links to our members' websites. If you are not currently a member of EDGE and are interested in joining, please contact Chuck Whitney, EDGE Executive Director, at 402.245.2105 or email [director@fallscityedge.com](mailto:director@fallscityedge.com).

For EDGE member-investors' announcements, updates and reports, check the [Member Investors Login](#) section. If you need assistance with accessing this password-protected section, please contact Chuck.

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

- **I2E Club - Inventors, Investors and Entrepreneurs Club** - meets the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Kimmel Education & Research Center, 5985 G Road, Nebraska City. Each session begins with a networking social at 5:30 p.m. and is followed by introductions and an educational session or guest speaker at 6:00 p.m. Each evening ends with an "Ask and You Shall Receive" session, which enables participants to ask for what they want or need so the group can help them find solutions and break through barriers. A \$30 fee is charged to join the club; however, people are encouraged to attend 1-2 sessions before making a commitment. If you would like to be involved, contact Dr. Connie Reimers-Hild at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Kimmel Education & Research Center by phone 402.873.3166 or email [creimers2@unl.edu](mailto:creimers2@unl.edu) -or- contact [Chuck Whitney](#) at the EDGE office.
- **Nebraska Governor's Conference on Rural Development, November 14, Kearney**. The conference, themed "Renewable Nebraska," will feature local tours, networking opportunities, resource booths and a variety of workshops. For conference program and registration materials, go to the [Nebraska Department of Economic Development website \(www.neded.org/files/crd/2008/NCIP/NCIPRegistrationProgram.pdf\)](http://www.neded.org/files/crd/2008/NCIP/NCIPRegistrationProgram.pdf).