



# *2014 Annual Report*

*Falls City Economic Development  
and Growth Enterprise, Inc*



# *Achieving Impact*





## *Achieving Impact*

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2014 Annual Report of Falls City Economic Development and Growth Enterprise (EDGE). As you can see, we have realized another successful year on the economic development front with the area realizing some great projects in 2014. These accomplishments would not be possible without our EDGE team—the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, committees, and staff—who offer energy and enthusiasm in serving and representing the business community year after year. We are keenly focused on building a stronger Falls City/Richardson County and fulfilling our top initiatives of business retention and expansion, recruitment, improved infrastructure, preparing our workforce for the future, and increasing the supply and affordability of workforce housing.

As the President of EDGE, I am proud to have been at the helm of an organization that continues to reach new milestones that make our area a better place to do business, work, and live. Thanks to the dedication of so many generous individuals, EDGE has the resources, professional economic development staff, investor base and support from elected officials, city staff and other leaders in the business community that allow the organization to remain the proactive advocate for economic growth and expansion in this community. EDGE is a time-tested model of an effective public-private partnership. We embrace the fact that community is all about joining together, sharing resources, and celebrating successes. These collaborations affirm that we are indeed a community which shares a sense of purpose.

In closing, I think it's valuable to share the comments of Mayor Tim Hersh the night he concluded his term as mayor of Falls City as he gives accolades to those directly involved in advancing economic development goals...."I've seen this community do wonderful things, to grow and prosper and everyone takes part in that. I am proud to have been a part of this change and I'm still proud to be a part of this city. This city is on its way and if you keep going and keep pushing as hard as you have there is no end to the possibilities. You think things are good now, you wait, the best is yet to come!"

As we enter 2015, we welcome you in joining our efforts as we continue to impact this region with positive change, growth and development.

Bart Keller, EDGE President

im-pact (im-pakt) (1) n. the force exerted by a new idea, concept, technology, or ideology (2) v. to have an impact or effect on; influence; alter (3) See also outcome, payoff, results.

# Investor and Community Relations

## Mission:

Keep EDGE Investors informed of EDGE projects and activities, recruit new members, and plan investor and community events.



➤ Falls City EDGE, in cooperation with Southeast Community College (SCC), Falls City Public Schools (FCPS), Airlanco, Herzog, and WASP, worked together to create a pipeline of skilled welders to fill job openings available at our local industries. This 60 hour course was offered twice in 2014 and provided hands on training that focused on the welding processes used by our local industries. This collaborative partnership included 14 students receiving full scholarships to attend the class, local industries providing welding consumables and personal protective equipment, FCPS investing in electrical upgrades to their Industrial Arts Lab, and SCC providing eight multi-process welders.

➤ The City of Falls City and Falls City Homefront, LLC added 2 new homes to the Wilderness Falls Subdivision in 2014. These beautiful new homes have amazing views and offer many amenities to prospective buyers. One home has been sold and one is available for purchase by contacting Miller Monroe Co. or Falls City Realty. This unique partnership advanced housing initiatives in Falls City/Richardson County and is a model being considered by other communities around the state!



➤ EDGE participated in the Southeast Nebraska Career Fair at Peru State College in order to educate the students about the many benefits of living and working in southeast Nebraska. We provided resources to the students about employment and business opportunities in our region and we were pleased to find many of the students have plans to stay in the area after graduation.



➤ Advocated for legislation and public policies in support of Falls City/Richardson County's economic and community development plans by hosting Congressman Adrian Smith, a representative of Senator Deb Fischer's office, and by attending the Nebraska Economic Developers Association's annual Legislative Day which included a personal visit with Senator Dan Watermeier of District 1.

➤ Regionalism is a key component of our economic development efforts and EDGE continues to collaborate with the 13 counties of the Lincoln Area Development Partnership and the 5 counties of the Southeast Nebraska Partners for Progress. Each group provides added opportunity for marketing, expansion, and workforce development initiatives that advance priorities that benefit the entire region.

➤ EDGE supports initiatives that promote tourism and enhance the Main Street district and we were happy to support efforts of the Falter Museum Committee by assisting with fundraising efforts and hosting a ribbon cutting event attended by Governor Dave Heineman. The Falter Museum will be a great addition to the community and we look forward to the grand opening early in 2015!



*The class was very informative and the instructor was very knowledgeable. I passed with a 92% and I'm real excited about that!"*

*~ Nick Koso, Welding Student*



# Product Development & Public Policy

## Mission:

*Maintain open communication with key public and private organizations to support and implement efforts that will improve the Falls City area "product" and increase opportunities to generate more prospects considering Falls City/Richardson County.*

➤ EDGE met with 10 small businesses interested in opening/expanding local operations in 2014

➤ Falls City was awarded recertification by Nebraska Department of Economic Development for another 5 years. This certification clearly indicates that Falls City is prepared for business growth and able to meet the needs of companies seeking new business and industrial locations. This designation sets Falls City apart as a community that has the leadership and commitment necessary to successfully compete for new jobs and investment.



➤ Falls City EDGE and Main Street Falls City worked together to launch the inaugural



Lane Leadership program which is designed to train individuals for leadership roles by educating them on area issues, institutions, and resources through a structured curriculum. There is real evidence to support the positive impacts being made in other communities that utilize the leadership program and Falls City wants to realize the same success! Over 50 Falls City area organizations will be showcased over

the nine-months, from September through May including manufacturers, businesses, educational facilities, and organizations associated with agriculture, commerce, the economy, energy, health, human services, recreation, heritage, and state and local government in the Falls City area.

➤ Vantec celebrated record-setting quality performance in 2014 with a company BBQ. The purpose of the celebration was to recognize the employees for their record setting quality results in which Vantec surpassed a long running 15 year record for quality performance—as measured by its customers. Falls City also set a historical company record for its best internal quality metrics. This milestone represents the quality of the workforce --which has grown to 19 strong-- and the commitment of employees to build a better Falls City/Richardson County!



➤ The Tri State Labor Basin committee was formed to work with businesses, educational and vocational institutions to create a skilled workforce that creates a pipeline of qualified candidates for our local industries.

➤ In 2014, EDGE established the Richardson County Asset Modernization Initiative, offering "modernization" resources to Richardson County manufacturers and agricultural/food product processors. The initiative helped stimulate modernization of assets by county businesses with 4 companies---Airlanco, Gold Star Sausage, K&F Welding and WASP----applying for grant funds in this inaugural year. All told, companies planned to invest nearly \$1 million dollars in modernizing their equipment with 3%, or \$29,927.66, being eligible for reimbursement via the grant program.

➤ Engineering design services were completed for the Champions Crossing Sub-Division. This plan establishes the cost of infrastructure for future housing developments in Falls City.

*"Lane Leadership will allow me to explore and better understand the industry and infrastructure of Falls City, including the strengths and weaknesses of the community and how as a group we can help overcome hurdles and attract others to this place I will always call home"*

*~ Mitch Merz, Lane Leadership Participant*

# Marketing and Sales

## Mission:

Fill the pipeline with more prospects considering Falls City/Richardson County and make steady progress towards meeting sales objectives identified in the EDGE Strategic Plan.



➤ Falls City EDGE announced Gold Star Sausage Co. would be Falls City's newest corporate citizen. Gold Star Sausage Co. will begin private label production of hot dogs and sausages of all varieties in 2015 and this USDA certified production facility will be located in the Industrial Park at 810 East 5th St. The jobs being created are in the food processing industry and will include managers, quality assurance, maintenance, production, line supervisors, and office personnel. Gold Star Sausage is proud to say they use only fresh, domestically produced, beef and pork trimmings. Their batch cook process and quick freeze techniques combine old-world craftsmanship with modern day efficiencies.

➤ EDGE continues to build strong relationships and in 2014 members of the Marketing and Sales team traveled over 2700 miles by air and 500 miles by car to accomplish corporate visits to Airlanco/Ag Growth International, Ames True Temper and WASP, Inc. These visits give local officials the chance to discuss business conditions at the corporate level and provide resources that assist our companies with expansion. The time was well spent as we learned international sales are climbing, research and development efforts are alive and well, there are plans for continued capital investment and employment projections continue to climb.



➤ EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer attended 2 national marketing events in 2014. The Grain Elevator and Processing Society Expo in Omaha, NE and FABTECH in Atlanta, GA. These trade shows---which focus on the ag and metal fabrication industry clusters---provide a great opportunity to network with exhibitors in order to develop business contacts and project leads.

➤ K&F welding is a locally grown industry that opened in 2013 and since then growth has been slow and steady to the point expansion plans are currently underway. Jeremy Kearney (the "K") and Joel Frost (the "F") are the proud operators of this successful business venture that offers outsourcing services---including welding, fabrication, grinding, and assembly---to several industries in the region.

➤ Consolidated Grain and Barge prepared for the record harvest of 2014 by constructing a large-scale temporary storage unit to accompany the existing facility configuration. The expansion added 2.1 million bushels of space which increased their total amount of storage to 4.4 million bushels. CGB saw steady traffic from the agricultural community during this harvest season with 9000 trucking customers delivering grain during peak harvest months.



*"All in all I think 2014 has been a very exciting year for us! In 2013, we saw a 17.31% increase in production by our employee owners with total sales for the Falls City shop at \$17.8M. We are looking to eclipse that in 2014 and beyond!"*

*~ Jerry Koopman, WASP Plant Manager*

# Achieving Impact



Community leaders welcomed President Rick Rue and Operations Manager Paul Meyer to Falls City during a recent dinner held at the home of Violet McTaggart. This was a great opportunity to learn more about the future of Gold Star Sausage in Falls City as they move forward in joining the thriving Falls City industrial community. We will see great improvements at their facility located in the Falls City Industrial Park in 2015 and we welcome the

creation of 40 new food processing jobs—a new industry cluster for our region! Gold Star Sausage is a family owned business that has been in operation since 1936 and expansion is necessary as they have outgrown their current facility. A Falls City location will allow them to grow their national distribution as well as capitalize on export.

In March of 2013, Ames True Temper, a leading manufacturer of striking tools, announced it would cease operations at their Falls City plant by the end of 2013 due to a consolidation plan being implemented by corporate officials. With the closure date approaching local workers were offered a reprieve as ATT extended production at the Falls City plant to February and eventually April of 2014. Then an unexpected final announcement was made...closure averted! Thanks to this livelihood saving announcement on March 19th from Griffon Corporation the family of workers at Ames True Temper will be forging an ever growing presence in Falls City to show the striking tool business is alive and well!



**3 construction projects got underway in 2014 and totaled \$3+ million dollars in new investment—Sacred Heart Activity Center, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness, and the USDA Farm Service Agency.**

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**In 2014, 29 jobs were added to the industries located in the Falls City Industrial Park.**

**Consolidated Grain and Barge welcomed 9000 trucks during peak times of the 2014 harvest**

**\$50,000 dollars in grants and outside investments helped advance 5 different projects in 2014 including the Falter Museum, Lane Leadership Program, a Regional Housing Study, welding program and the Sacred Heart Activities Center project.**

**Tri State Truck and Tractors employment numbers grew to 6 with 3 full time and 3 part time workers.**

**Vantec was awarded 11 new molds in 2014 which adds to the list of products being manufactured at the Falls City plant.**

*"Falls City EDGE welcomes Gold Star Sausage to the community and we appreciate their contribution to the economic health and vitality of the region. Gold Star Sausage is a great company and we look forward to this project continuing to move forward in the coming months."*

*~ Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director*



# Throughout 2014

Falls City JOURNAL  
 The voice to inform the people and organizations governing the community for our community  
 Thursday, August 28, 2014



WASP stands test of time - and business is booming

By Jason Schock  
 Falls City, Mo. (WASP) - WASP stands test of time - and business is booming. The company, which has been in operation since 1989, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The company has grown from a small business to a major employer in Falls City, Mo. The company has a long history of providing quality products and services to its customers. The company has a strong reputation for customer service and quality products. The company has a strong commitment to its employees and the community. The company has a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. The company has a strong commitment to social responsibility. The company has a strong commitment to innovation and research and development. The company has a strong commitment to safety and health. The company has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. The company has a strong commitment to ethical business practices. The company has a strong commitment to transparency and accountability. The company has a strong commitment to integrity and honesty. The company has a strong commitment to respect and dignity. The company has a strong commitment to fairness and justice. The company has a strong commitment to peace and harmony. The company has a strong commitment to love and compassion. The company has a strong commitment to hope and faith. The company has a strong commitment to courage and strength. The company has a strong commitment to wisdom and knowledge. The company has a strong commitment to humility and service. The company has a strong commitment to gratitude and appreciation. The company has a strong commitment to joy and happiness. The company has a strong commitment to peace and harmony. The company has a strong commitment to love and compassion. The company has a strong commitment to hope and faith. The company has a strong commitment to courage and strength. The company has a strong commitment to wisdom and knowledge. The company has a strong commitment to humility and service. The company has a strong commitment to gratitude and appreciation. The company has a strong commitment to joy and happiness.



WASP stands test of time - and business is booming

WASP Inc. celebrated its 25th year in Falls City with a nod from the Nebraska Diplomats as the “2014 Nebraska Business of the Year”! Governor Dave Heineman recognized WASP for their corporate citizenship at a banquet honoring this growing Falls City industry. WASP celebrated substantial job growth by surpassing the 100 employee mark in 2014 after slow but steady growth over the last decade which includes the addition of 76 jobs. WASP has also made a significant investment---totaling ½ million dollars---in equipment that will help them work smarter and faster as well as a 40X60 building expansion which gives them room to grow. (Photos by Jason Schock)

Merz Farm Equipment celebrated 2014 in style by unveiling a ½ million dollar investment that was more than a year in the making. The Grand Opening celebration welcomed 400 guests who toured the 4000 square foot expansion that modernized the business and has given Falls City’s northern corridor a grand new showpiece. The upgrades include a new showroom, high tech conference room, new offices, customer lounge and service office. Merz Farm Equipment has realized three generations of strong leadership and they are committed to giving their customers the best experience in the business. 2015 will mark their 30th year at this location and we look for continued success and growth from this Massey dealer. (Photo by Jason Schock)



**EVENTS** Falls City EDGE collaborates with many partners throughout the year and hosts many community events. Here are some of the highlights from 2014:

- o Hosted a Small Business Administration seminar for local businesses.
- o Falls City EDGE Annual Banquet
- o WASP 25th Anniversary BBQ
- o Peru State College Football Game at the new Oak Bowl
- o Offered a Local Elected Officials Training
- o Participated in the Rural Futures Institute
- o Nebraska Investment Finance Authority Housing Conference
- o Mid-America Economic Development Council Competitiveness Conference

Richardson County realized a 1.3% improvement in the Unemployment rate in 2014.  
 -October 2014 3.4%  
 -October 2013 4.7%

Nerd Wallet ranked Falls City as 9th overall in their top ten for “Best Places in Nebraska for Home Ownership”

*Falls City EDGE would like to THANK all 2014 Investors for partnering with us as we strive to make an impact in our community.*

*Support from generous people like you make this possible!*

**Public Investors:**

City of Falls City (\$120,000)  
Richardson County (\$20,000)

**Private Investors:**

**Visionary Investors  
(\$5,000 and greater)**

Community Medical Center  
Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.  
Dorr and Clark Funeral Home  
Farm & City Supply  
F&M Bank  
Halbert, Dunn & Halbert, L.L.C.  
Hartman, Edward & Sandra  
Richardson County Bank & Trust  
Southeast Nebraska  
Communications  
Vandeberg, Rodney/  
Vandeberg Family Foundation

**Champion Investors  
(\$2,500-\$4,999)**

Aitken, Robert W. (CPA)  
Armbruster Motor Company  
Morehead, John and Amalia

**Catalyst Investors  
(\$1,000-\$2,499)**

Airlanco  
Animal Health Center  
Falls City Journal  
Great Western Bank  
Harris, Ed & Deb  
Haws, Butch & Dobe  
Hullman's Ford  
Jim Hill's  
Merz Farm Equipment  
Miller-Monroe Company, Inc.  
SunMart Foods  
WASP, Inc.

**Advocate Investors  
(\$500-\$999)**

AHRS Construction, Inc  
American National Bank  
Anonymous  
Chaney Furniture Co.  
Check-In Motel  
Dan Scholl Seed  
Edward Jones Investments  
Falls City Area Chamber  
Falls City Healthcare Community  
Falls City Family Practice, P.C.  
Falls City Mercantile Co.  
Goldsmith Abstract & Title Co.

Habben, Dr. Jon & Kathy  
James, Dr. Charles R. (DDS)  
Jones Air Conditioning  
Jorgensen Surveying  
KLZA/Kanzaland Radio Group  
Kresin, Eric  
Martin, John & Kathy  
Morrill Elevator, Inc.  
Neal Parsons Law Office  
Omaha Public Power District  
Physical & Respiratory  
Therapy Services, LLC  
Poppe Realty & Management  
Radatz, Charles & Karen  
Rathje, Dana & Lori  
Reesman Investment Corporation  
Snethen Farms/Snethen Trucking  
Southeast Ready Mix/  
Concrete Industries  
Stripes & Signs  
Veigel, Merle & Sara  
Vision Inn

**Supporter Investors  
(Individuals & Non-Profits –  
\$100-\$499)**

Bangert, John & Cindy  
Bauman, Julie & Matt  
Bebermeyer, Charles & Jane  
Bierman, Mike & Jennifer  
Boose, William R. III  
Borg, Dr. David & Joyce  
Brott, Steven  
Burghart, Robert & Joyce  
Campbell, Don & Laverne  
Castle, Mike & Jean  
Chestnut, Bev  
Deckinger, Fred & Gracie  
Duerfeldt, Austin  
Duerfeldt, Jerry & Linda  
Duerfeldt, Lester  
Duerfeldt, Richard & Jan  
Duerfeldt, Stan & Stacey  
Dunn, Andy & Nicole  
Eickhoff, Ryan & Halbert, Andy  
Engles, Bob & Wendy  
Falls City BPO Elks  
Falls City Jaycees  
Falls City Rotary Club  
Finck, Mike & Cheryl  
Finck, Ruth  
Froeschl, Marty & Gail  
Froeschl, Phil & Laurie  
Gist, Martin & Mary Jane  
Gossman, David & Becky  
Groothuis, Ruth

Haralabidis, Costas & Lee Ann  
Harsin, Brent  
Heckenlively, Tim & Tracie  
Heineman, Carol  
Howard, Ben & Krystal  
Howard, Jerry & Barb  
Hunzeker, Mike & Sherri  
James, Dick & Jennifer  
Jenkins, Bill & Becky  
Johnson, Rick & Susan  
Keller, Bart & Gayle  
Kelley, Ron & Nancy  
Knaup, Rodney  
Kopf, Dan & Renee  
Kottich, Steve & Diana  
Malone, Kevin & Janet  
McKim, Jerry & Nancy  
McPeak, Dr. Eric  
Morehead, Marc & Marcia  
Moses, Richard & Nancy  
Niedfeldt, William (Bill)  
North Ridge Church  
Nutzman, Rick & Susan  
Oliver, Jerry & Sharryll  
Parrish, John & Barb  
Roh, Monsignor Robert  
Romine, Alan & Freeda  
Runyan, Bud  
Schawang, Jim & Denise  
Schawang, Kenneth & Elaine  
Schawang, Leon  
Scheitel, Kevin & Gina  
Seeba, John & Rita  
Sefried, Jim & Diane  
Sickel, Benny & Mary  
Sickel, Randy & Beth  
Simpson, Kenny & Tami  
Sipple, William & Susan  
Stevens, Donnie & Colleen  
Taft, Kevin & Kay  
Talbot, Larry & Judy  
VonSeggern, Bill & Merry  
Weaver, Mrs. Larry  
Weaver, Paul & Letha  
Weinert, Paul & Mary Jane  
Whalen, Michael & Cassey  
Whitehouse, Tom & Mary  
Wilhelm, Leon & Madaline  
Wilson, Dick & Hallie  
Windle, Brown  
Witt, Bob & Tammy  
Witt, Brian & Rachel  
Witt, Rich & Susan  
Witt, Tom & Cindy  
Yount, Jerry & Denise  
Zoeller, Joan

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