



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

edge

Colorado Company Chooses Falls City for Second Nebraska Location

Falls City EDGE celebrated an economic milestone on June 27th with the grand opening of the newly established Falls City Foods. Nearly 150 state and local leaders, business executives, and members of the public came together for a barbeque and ribbon cutting ceremony at the new location. Courtney Dentlinger, Director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, spoke during the program and noted, “Falls City is a beautiful, progressive community. Congratulations to all of you who work hard to make that happen. This is a great day to celebrate a valuable addition to southeast Nebraska.” The event represented the culmination of months of work on the part of local, regional and state partners as well as personnel from the Colorado headquarters of Great West – Teeuwissen, the company that owns and operates Falls City Foods.

“Falls City Foods went through a multi-faceted site location and complex business incentive process before finalizing the new location of their business,” said Falls City EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer, who led the local effort to assist in the relocation. There are many factors to consider, she added, including available transportation, utilities and infrastructure, access to skilled workers and the quality of life that a given location has to offer. “We’re so proud of the great assets here in Falls City and we’re excited about this new opportunity. Falls City competed with sites in Colorado and Iowa and through diligence and hard work we were able to come out on top!”

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Matt Spanjers, Mark Young, Courtney Dentlinger, Mayor Jerry Oliver, Kris Benson, Kathy Haycock, Doug Haycock, Spencer Haycock and Beckie Cromer.

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That opportunity includes an estimated 1.7 million dollar investment in building and equipment purchases as well as the creation of 20 jobs in the food- processing industry. The grand opening brings new life to the former Gold Star Sausage building which ceased operations in 2016. Its location is in the Falls City Industrial Park which is now fully occupied and diversified with eight industrial occupants specializing across industry clusters including plastics, agriculture, metal manufacturing, service and food processing.

Great West – Teeuwissen was formed in 2008 when the Colorado based company Great West joined the Netherlands based Teeuwissen in a business partnership. The combined business has several divisions including animal byproducts used in pet foods and other products as well as international trading partnerships. The Falls City location is focused on animal byproducts, an industry that is strictly regulated to ensure the safety of workers and products alike. In addition to the work on the production line, job openings will include management, maintenance, fork lift and office personnel.

Falls City EDGE helped connect qualified job seekers with the company by hosting a job fair on May 2nd. “There was a great turn out with approximately 90 individuals from across the region stopping by to learn more about the employment opportunities available” Cromer said, “Falls City Foods is well on their way to reaching their employment goals thanks to the event.”

For more information about the new facility please contact Falls City Foods at 402.245.2132.



Richardson County USDA Investment 2016 (United States Department of Agriculture)

2009-2016 Total USDA Rural Development Amount: \$28.7 Mil
2009-2016 Total USDA Rural Development Grant Amount:\$537.6k
2009-2016 Total USDA Rural Development Loan Amount:\$28.2 Mil

<http://cic.naco.org>

Southeast Community College

The Southeast Community College - Falls City Learning Center project took another step forward when the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Post-Secondary Education unanimously voted in support of the project proposal in Lincoln during their June meeting. The Commission showed enthusiasm and voiced support for the project. This was the next step in the planning process and necessary in order to continue moving the project forward. Mayor Jerry Oliver, City Administrator Gary Jorn and EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer traveled to Lincoln for the meeting with SCC’s Bob Morgan and Cromer speaking on behalf of the project.



Nebraska Post-Secondary Coordinating Commission

The Commission looks forward to seeing expanded services in the region and we appreciate everyone’s support and leadership in this endeavor and we look forward to the next phases of design, budget and construction! Falls City EDGE will continue to keep you updated as we reach these project milestones.

Falls City EDGE Welcomes New Executive Assistant

Jessica Santo hasn't lived in Falls City since third grade—but today, she's back with her family in a new role as the Executive Assistant at Falls City EDGE. Jessica will be assisting Executive Director Beckie Cromer in the work of serving existing and prospective business and industry as well as talent recruitment with programs and support to help encourage economic vitality in the region.



Jessica grew up in Kearney, Nebraska and attended the University of Nebraska where she studied studio arts with an emphasis in graphic design.



After college, she moved to Kansas City and took a job as a nanny for eleven years. She worked for the same family and cared for the children through high school graduation. Along the way, she met her husband Tony who grew up in Falls City and they began a family of their own.

The Santos never dreamed they'd move back to Falls City. "We absolutely loved Kansas City," she said. "We had lots of friends and an active social life there" but the arrival of children changed their minds. "Once you have kids, you really just want to hang out with them. In Kansas City, we wouldn't let our daughter play outside. We didn't know the neighbors. Here in Falls City, she runs free." Tony's family lives nearby and their daily contact with their grandchildren—Lucy, 4 and Calvin, 9 months—has become a highlight of their new routine in Falls City. "His parents are really involved and we love that."

In addition to her work at Falls City EDGE, Jessica owns and operates a successful business – Jessica Santo Photography - that specializes in family and senior portraits. She also hosts regular photography exposure workshops in her home designed to teach people how to get the best photos out of their cameras. Jessica's work was recently recognized in an article by *Woman's World* magazine with her picture adorning the heartfelt story "Every One of These Kids is a SUPERHERO." You can check out her creative expressions by visiting her website at <http://www.jessicasanto.com/>.

Executive Director Beckie Cromer noted Jessica will play a key role in building the area's growth and development. "Falls City EDGE juggles a lot of hats—we help business and industry expand or start up in our region, we assist existing businesses in achieving success and we focus on talent recruitment programs and resources to help business and industry grow. Jessica's support will help us keep all these roles in robust form."

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Falls City EDGE collaborates with many partners throughout the year and hosts many community events. Here are some upcoming events:

- August 5th - Tractor Pull
- August 10th - Kearney Welding Grand Opening
- August 21st - Solar Eclipse Dine in the Dark
- August 24-27th - Cobblestone Festival, Downtown Falls City
- August 26th - Demo Derby

Note to Graduates: You Are Welcome Here!

Mayor Jerry Oliver has a couple of messages for recent graduates from Richardson County high schools. First and foremost, of course, is a hearty congratulations for the hard work that put them on stage with a diploma in their hand! Just as important, however, is his message about the future. In a personal letter to area grads, Mayor Oliver stressed that young, returning individuals and families are an important asset to the community.

A growing number of graduates from the region are heading out into the world for travel, learning, and job experience—and then returning home to Falls City to reap the advantages of our jobs and our quality of life. A shining example is Tony Santo, who graduated more than a decade ago and left Falls City for the bright lights of Kansas City, never planning to return. But while he and his family enjoyed the city life, Tony ultimately found a job opportunity as a Physical Therapist for Physical Therapy and Respiratory Services back where he started, in Falls City. “It’s been wonderful,” said Tony’s wife, Jessica, who serves as the Executive Assistant at Falls City EDGE. “We love raising our kids in a smaller community. The sense of community and family is strong and you feel safer with less worry and stress.”

Families like the Santos are key to the vitality and economic strength of the region, according to Kevin Malone, Vice-President of the Falls City EDGE Marketing and Sales team. “Our message to recent grads is that whether you choose to go to college first or to start your career here in the region right away, you are welcome and important.” Falls City EDGE can connect grads with training and employment resources, he added, by visiting

EDGE’s talent and recruitment website @ www.fallscityproud.com. Many regional employers are hiring for skilled and professional positions so check out the employment opportunities today!



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EDGE Hosts Open House and BBQ at Vantec, Inc.

On a rainy April 28th Falls City-based Vantec, Inc. opened its doors to the public for tours, demonstrations and some good ole BBQ grillin' by Master Chef, Bart Keller. The annual event, which is organized by Falls City EDGE, is designed to showcase different local business or industry and the work they do. Approximately 200 area residents, including high school students from Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer and Falls City Public School, community leaders and interested citizens attended the event.

In the case of Vantec, that work is “taking small plastic pellets and making large plastic parts” explained Dayton Dudas, Vantec’s plant manager. In practice, that includes computer-assisted machining, injection molding and other manufacturing practices as well as warehousing and distribution operations, and collaborating with customers on problem-solving in the manufacturing process.

Attendees of the event had the opportunity to tour the facility and observe its operations. “We have a very clean environment and an air-conditioned production facility” said Dayton. “Everybody commented on how clean the factory is and the good working conditions on the floor.”

These spic-and-span conditions are currently enjoyed by about 20 employees, according to Dayton, and the industry is poised for expansion due to increased demand for Vantec’s services and new customers are driving growth. Dayton expects the operations to grow by 50 percent.

Vantec’s success is an indication of economic growth in the Falls City region, according to EDGE Executive Director, Beckie Cromer. “Vantec is one of a number of companies that are expanding or making significant business investments in Falls City,” she said. “Our community is well-suited to take advantage of growth in the national economy as many businesses here can testify to.”

Dayton agreed. “In particular, we are a hub to a number of larger cities like Omaha and Kansas City so we benefit from being close to our customers.” He emphasizes the facility is always on the lookout for people to join the workforce and they recently hosted a job fair to recruit potential employees to the shop floor. Dayton, who recently relocated to the community to take on a management role at Vantec, notes “Falls City is a nice community with good people.”

In addition to the Falls City location, which opened in 2008, Vantec has a headquarter facility in Webster City, Iowa. To learn more about Vantec, visit ww.vantecinc.com. To learn more about doing business in Falls City contact the EDGE office at 402.245.2105 or email director@fallscityedge.com.



FCHS students enjoy a time out from their facility tour



EDGE volunteers serve the crowd

Quote of the Quarter:

“We love the people and sense of community in Falls City. It offers small town living with easy access to major metro areas.”

-Dr. Justin Westengaard, Community Medical Center

Kearney Welding is open for business!

Kearney Welding is open for business! Owner, Jeremy Kearney, took advantage of a favorable winter construction season and was able to begin operations ahead of schedule. Kearney, who began his career at Southeast Community College in the welding program, brings over 10 years' experience to the business. His combined education and experience are qualities his customers, which include regional manufacturing companies, value greatly. He and his employees are busy keeping up with demand for the outsourcing welding services he provides. Kearney notes, "the demand for the outsourcing of welding is continually growing" and that is a perfect forecast for his business putting him in a great market position.

Falls City EDGE will be welcoming Kearney Welding to the Falls City Industrial Park at a grand opening event on August 10th at 10:00 AM. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. There will be refreshments served and a sneak peek of the high tech facility which is something you don't want to miss so plan on joining us for this exciting occasion!



EDGE GARNERS GRANT FUNDS FOR TWO LOCAL PROJECTS



Falls City EDGE submitted two successful grant applications which, in turn, supported two great quality of life amenities in Falls City, the Stanton Lake Park and Itha Krumme Arboretum. The funds were awarded by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality's Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grants Program and provided new crumb rubber playground base at each site. The City of Falls City received \$4,772 and the Arboretum received \$2,638. Mary Martineau, who serves on the Arboretum Board and is an active

volunteer, shared her thanks with EDGE and noted, "the Arboretum is a great place to enjoy and work for." If you have a chance, stop by to visit and appreciate these places.

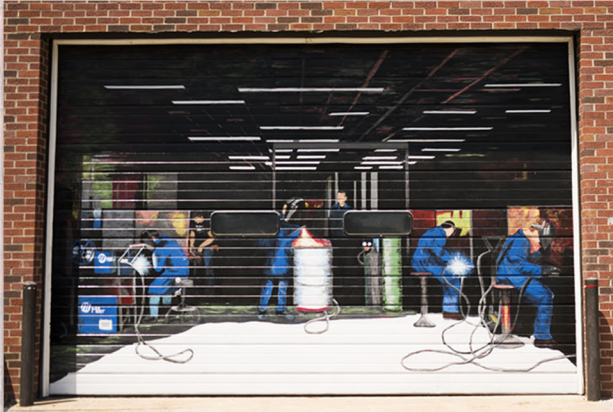
Join the EDGE team and invest in the future of Falls City/Richardson County!

Investment levels range from \$5,000 for Visionary to \$100 for Supporters

To Learn more about EDGE's program of work, visit the EDGE website or contact Beckie Cromer, Executive Director, at 402-245-2105 or email director@fallscityedge.com

#WORKFORCE #EDUCATION #MANUFACTURING

Career and technical education is vitally important to the success and growth of our industries in the region and the art class, guided by teacher Gayle Weinert, at Falls City High School has showcased how cool the industrial arts can be! Check out their mural which highlights the career and technical educational opportunities available through Falls City Public Schools. Our communities economic growth potential is directly linked to the skills of our regional workforce and kudos to Mrs. Weinert and her students for their efforts to highlight the technical coursework available at FCPS!



“The flaw in our character is our insistence on separating blue-collar jobs from white-collar jobs, and encouraging one form of education over another.” Mike Rowe, Dirty Jobs

“The skills gap is a reflection of what we value. To close the gap, we need to change the way the country feels about work.” Mike Rowe, Dirty Jobs

“Closing the skills gap is critical for increasing labor-force participation.” Department of Labor Secretary, Alexander Acosta

“There are currently 6 million jobs available in this country that are due in part to the skills gap.” Ivanka Trump

SKILLS GAP defined...the fact that many potential workers don't have the right qualifications to take jobs that are currently open.

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