



EDGE Newsletter

2026 | Quarter 2

April, May & June

Lucas Froeschl,
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Executive Board

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Kevin Malone, *Past President*

Ray Joy, *VP*

Bart Keller, *VP*

Steve Kottich, *VP*

Mitch Merz, *VP*

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Dr. Andrew Offner

Executive Assistant

Renee Kopf

New Strategic Direction

The EDGE Board of Directors recently adopted a new three-year Strategic Plan designed to guide economic development efforts through 2029. The plan is built around three core pillars with 2-3 goals for each: **Business Attraction & Retention**, **Community Infrastructure & Investment**, and **Operational Sustainability**. These priorities will help focus resources on supporting existing businesses, attracting new investment, improving community assets, and ensuring EDGE remains a strong and effective organization for years to come. The strategic plan also introduces our new Vision, Mission, and Values, which will serve as the foundation for future decision-making and community partnerships.



- 🌟 **Vision:** A connected and vibrant community providing opportunity, stability, and quality of life for all generations.
- 🌟 **Mission:** To cultivate a strong and resilient economy that drives prosperity across our region.
- 🌟 **Values:** Persistence, Collaboration, Stewardship & Community
- 🌟 **Pillar 1, Business Attraction & Retention:** 1) Strengthen and support existing businesses through targeted retention and expansion efforts and 2) Support new businesses and entrepreneurial growth, with a focus on bioeconomy/ag expansion and industrial recruitment.
- 🌟 **Pillar 2, Community Infrastructure & Investment:** 1) Foster infrastructure modernization opportunities including dual rail access and electrical transmission improvements, 2) Continue to invest in infrastructure and policy initiatives that support business growth, and 3) Convene community partners to support critical workforce initiatives in housing, childcare, and art/entertainment/recreation.
- 🌟 **Pillar 3, Operational Sustainability:** 1) Increase marketing and communication efforts to strengthen public awareness, trust, and understanding, 2) Expand operational capacity to support community initiatives and growth, and 3) Optimize board governance, member engagement, and civic alignment.

**Now Hiring: Part-Time Program
Coordinator (20-25 hrs/wk) [Link](#)**



Committees

Investor & Community Relations

Bart Keller, *Chair*
Denise Daake
Rachel Rankin
Tracie Heckenlively

Marketing & Sales

Mitch Merz, *Chair*
Kelly Bletscher
Logan Bredemeier
Brian Daake
Don Ferguson
Steve Kottich
Kevin Malone
Steve Severin

Product Development & Public Policy

Ray Joy, *Chair*
Bob Campbell
Chris Halbert
Tim Heckenlively
Ryan Larsen
Adam Morris
Anthony Nussbaum
Samantha Scheitel
Trent Scheitel
Beth Sickel
Merle Veigel

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Housing Momentum Continues

Housing remains one of the community's top priorities, and progress continues on several projects. The first home developed through the Rural Workforce Housing Fund initiative at 1612 Fulton Street successfully closed in June, while construction continues on a second home at 606 Morehead Court that will be listed for sale once complete. EDGE has also completed the first of 20 housing rehabilitation projects funded through the 2025 Owner-Occupied Affordable Housing Program, with seven additional renovation projects currently underway. This program is sponsored by F&M Bank's partner, Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka. EDGE hosted a community housing event this spring, bringing together developers, contractors, and local stakeholders to discuss opportunities for expanding housing options in Falls City.

Infrastructure Investments Position Falls City for Growth

Several infrastructure projects are advancing that will strengthen Falls City's ability to attract future investment. Engineering is nearly complete on utilities and lot layouts within the North Commercial Corridor, while another study is evaluating options for dual rail access to improve industrial site competitiveness. Work also continues on electrical transmission improvements that will support major economic development opportunities, but is experiencing a trending delay due to clarifying service transition. Together, these projects represent important investments that enhance site readiness and support future business expansion.

Community Updates

-  Citroniq Chemicals continues advancing its OrganiqPP® technology, helping position Falls City as a leader in sustainable manufacturing.
-  A senior economic development consultant toured Falls City noting the community "shows well" and appears larger than its population.
-  EDGE participated in meetings in Washington, D.C., with Nebraska Rural Generation regarding future energy development opportunities.
-  EDGE hosted a regional childcare roundtable to discuss workforce and family support needs with local providers and partners.
-  Planning continues for future Nebraska Department of Transportation projects, including bridge and highway improvements scheduled over the next several years.
-  Hosted tours at the Family Fare building and forwarded requested info like monthly utility bill costs and mechanical service history.