



# FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE VOLUME III ■ 2016

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

# edge

## SCC Hires Coordinator, Considers Potential Building Site

It's been an exhaustive year of considering buildings and sites and then even more buildings and more sites. The community even became engaged in the process by emailing their building and site ideas to the EDGE office for the new Southeast Community College (SCC) Learning Center. You can be assured "we left no stone unturned" said Kelly Morgan, one of SCC's site committee members. The most recent building that was considered throughout the summer included four site visits from SCC representatives, conceptual drawings by their facilities manager and an eventual "it won't work" determination. This has led us back to the idea of building a facility that will properly serve the educational needs of our region's business and industry sectors. SCC is currently working with The Clark Enerson Partners, which is a firm of architects, on evaluation of a site that has been identified for construction of a 10,000 square foot facility. This site is in its preliminary stages of consideration in the hopes of making a final determination in 30-60 days. We will keep the region informed as the process moves forward. Construction of a facility will take time so we are looking at ways to partner with Falls City Public Schools, thanks to Superintendent, Tim Heckenlively, in order to

bring valuable coursework to our region until a new center could be built.



In other news, SCC announced the hiring of the Falls City Learning Center Coordinator last month and she began her duties on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Holly Carr will be working from the SCC building where the Licensed Practical Nursing program is currently held on Chase St. Holly is a third generation Nebraska educator whose background is in Science Education. Holly is from Johnson, NE, and has experience with Nebraska Extension/4-H and the Educational Service Unit 4 Career Academy. She is married to Michael for 26 years and they have 3 children, two are in college at the University of Nebraska Lincoln and one attends Johnson-Brock Public School. Holly says, "I love working on projects I can start from the ground up. I am very invested in Southeast Nebraska and want to find ways to support communities." Holly can be reached at [HCarr@southeast.edu](mailto:HCarr@southeast.edu) or by calling 402.245.2160.

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FALLS CITY EDGE  
LIKE A THON



# Rural Renaissance Event

The Nebraska Rural Renaissance, an organization focused on catalyzing community and business growth in rural Nebraska, visited southeast Nebraska, hosting its Business Leaders' Summit.

Renaissance principal sponsors and leaders include: Bruce Lauritzen, First National Bank; Dennis Wiederholt, DLR Group; Tim Kenny, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority; Mick Jensen, Great Plains Communications; Patti Petereson, Kutak Rock, LLP; Tim O'Brien, OPPD; Rick Nelsen, NPPD and Janet Palmtag, Palmtag Realty.



Todd Foje, CEO, Great Plains Communications

In 2015, Rural Renaissance sponsored its inaugural summit in Valentine, inviting area community leaders to meet with corporate representatives, giving the communities an opportunity to “show their stuff” to those with interests or potential interest in rural Nebraska. Renaissance leadership felt the Valentine event was very successful and planned a similar type of event for Southeast Nebraska.

The 2016 Summit was held at the Lied Lodge and Conference Center from August 24 through the 26<sup>th</sup>. Participating Southeast Nebraska communities included: Beatrice, Pawnee City, Falls City, Tecumseh, Auburn, Nebraska City and Syracuse. Each community was able to make a “why locate here” presentation to those attending the Summit, which included representatives of several companies.

Guest and companies attending included Dan Ariens, CEO Ariens Company; David Ickert, VP Finance, Air Tractor; Daid Gau, Principal, Pritzker Group; Rob Hanson, Monolith; Randy Ives, CEO, Pellet Technologies; Scott Honan and Jim Sims, NioCorp; Mike Gilson, Honeywell and Paul Eurek, Xpanion. Senator Watermeier, Nebraska City Mayor Bryn Bequette, Auburn Mayor Scott Kudrna as well as several area elected officials also attended.

Bruce Lauritzen spoke about opportunities he sees in doing business in rural Nebraska from a banker's perspective. Former Nebraska State Senator, Mike Flood, Flood Communications, spoke about his experiences in growing his businesses in rural Nebraska. Dr. Illich, Southeast Community College and Dr. Hanson, Peru State College also made presentations to the group.

Between meeting and networking events, guests golfed at Arbor Links, or toured Arbor Lodge and the Lewis and Clark Center. There were nearly 100 people involved at some level.

The messages imparted to those attending or presenting at the Summit were “embrace and promote the rural lifestyle”, “grow new and existing businesses”, “create and enhance living wage jobs”.

**Welcome to our new investors!**

**Kex Rx Pharmacy and Home Care  
Casey's General Store**

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

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](mailto:director@fallscityedge.com).

# MEET THE BUYERS

## 2016 Government Contracting Conference

What is Meet the Buyers?

- Network with federal buyers and prime contractors
- Discover which products, services and company qualifications federal agencies are seeking
- Learn how to increase sales through government contracting
- Learn how to improve the success of your bids



[Click Here To Register!](#)

**DATE: November 4, 2016**

**TIME: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm**

**LOCATION: UNO's College of Business Administration**

**Mammel Hall**

**6708 Pine Street, Omaha, NE**

### Featured Agencies:

SBA/SCORE; Offutt AFB; Army Corps of Engineers; Department of Transportation (DOT); Department of Roads (DOR/DBE); National Parks Service, Veterans Administration (VA); HUD, OPS; Nebraska Safety Council; GSA; National Guard; OPPD; Blue Cross Blue Shield

## EDGE Investor Drive

In our tenth year at EDGE, we continue to work hard, maintain momentum, and achieve success. Thanks to our investors this successful organization has seen a number of accomplishments that have driven this community forward in the areas of economic development and growth.

We take great pride and celebrate these successes! All of the time and energy our members have invested in the EDGE program of work are greatly appreciated and *we extend an invitation to you to become involved.* Your involvement can only make us an even stronger public-private economic development team. Many of the wonderful things that happen through EDGE are the result of our investors and volunteers. We invite you to join the organization by becoming an EDGE Investor.

Please note your investment may be made through the Richardson Foundation and will be 100% tax deductible. If you have any questions, please contact Beckie at [director@fallscityedge.com](mailto:director@fallscityedge.com) or 402.245.2105

EDGE Investor Level	Annual Investment	Direct Investor Benefit
Visionary	\$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic seat on board</li> <li>• Recognized as Visionary Member in all EDGE materials including website</li> <li>• Major business profile on EDGE website including logo and web link</li> </ul>
Champion	\$2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible for "At Large" Board Seat</li> <li>• Recognized as Champion Member in all EDGE materials including website</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Catalyst	\$1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible for "At Large" Board Seat</li> <li>• Recognized as Catalyst Member in all EDGE materials including website</li> </ul>
Advocate	\$ 500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible to serve on EDGE Committees</li> <li>• Recognized as Advocate Member in all EDGE materials including websites</li> </ul>
Supporter	\$ 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible to serve on EDGE Committees</li> </ul>

# Falls City EDGE Talent Strategy:

## TSMF Like A Thon

The Falls City EDGE Marketing and Sales team has focused on talent and people recruitment in 2016. We contracted with Firespring to develop strategic priorities and our first step was to increase our social media presence via the EDGE Facebook page by developing a larger base audience for our future campaign messaging. We launched our social media strategy on September 22<sup>nd</sup> in partnership with the Tanner Shelby Merz Foundation. The Facebook “Like-A-Thon” started with the posting of the following message:

*Let’s work together to share all the great things going on in Falls City! **Each new like** to the Falls City EDGE page generates a \$1 donation to the Tanner Shelby Merz Foundation to help protect young athletes from injuries. Plus, we’ll donate \$10 for each video posted to our page using #FallsCityProud that shows you or your family loving life in Falls City. We’ll keep giving until we reach \$1,000! Don’t forget to share this opportunity with your friends!*

We’ve had a great response and we are nearly ½ way to our \$1000 goal. We invite those who are near and far to like the Falls City EDGE Page and upload videos via #FallsCityProud. Sally Merz shared, “Please keep liking the Falls City EDGE page and posting videos as it helps the TSMF and your kids. Working together gets it done!!”

**Be sure to like us on Facebook:  
Falls City Economic Development &  
Growth Enterprise (EDGE)**

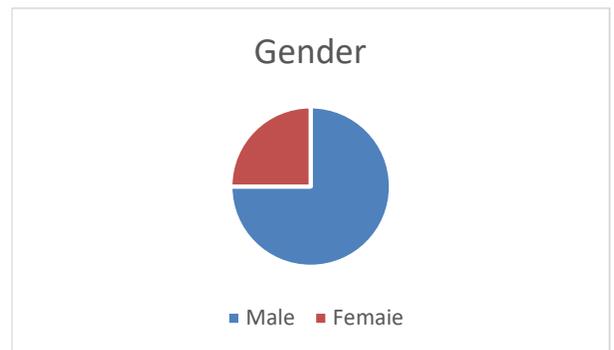
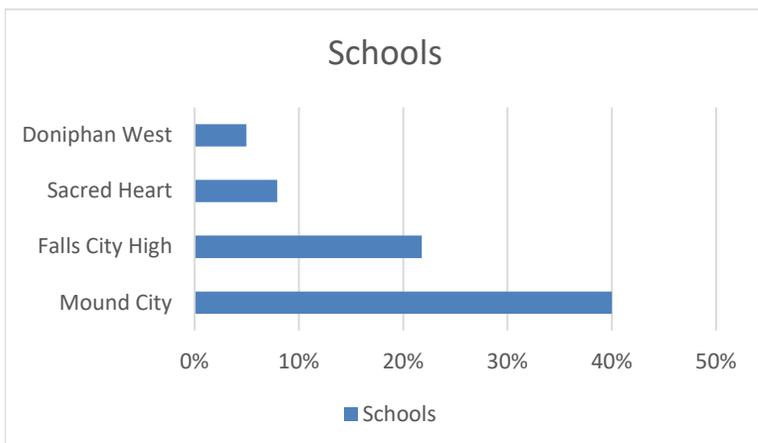


**And follow us on Twitter:  
@FallsCityEDGE**



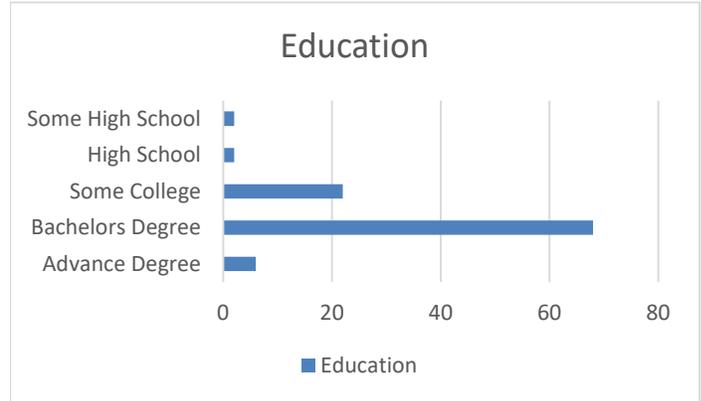
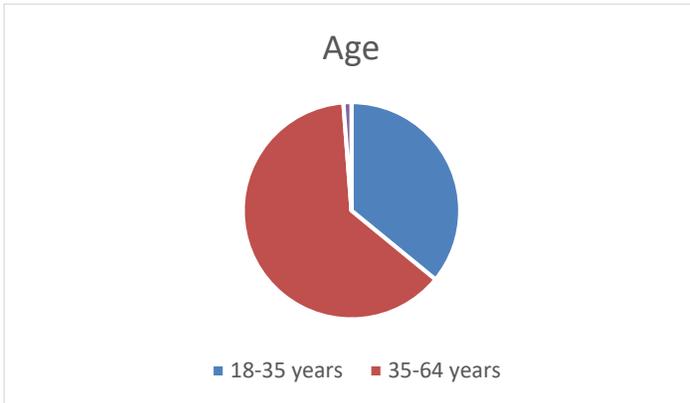
“Love that you’re donating to a great cause for our kiddos in the community!”   
-The Falls City Cooperative Ministry

## Survey Demographics Snapshot



# Falls City EDGE Talent Strategy (cont'd)

## Survey Demographics Snapshot



## Falls City EDGE Microsite

Social media marketing is one aspect of our marketing efforts as we look to increase the interaction with our virtual friends. We also plan to develop a talent and people recruitment micro-site as an added level of sales messaging to a larger audience. A recent survey collected valuable information about those who would consider relocating to the area. Common themes were identified and can be summarized as follows, “alumni and new residents believe Fall City’s low-cost of living and safe, small-town feel are the communities’ greatest assets.” The respondents also shared a sentiment that Falls City is a good place to raise a family. Communicating these assets to potential families, business owners and alumni through consistent, integrated marketing efforts is an integral part of reaching EDGE’s outlined goals and objectives.

“Fifty years ago, companies opened new locations to be near lumber, copper or resources needed for their business. Today, people are the resources.”

[Companies Flock to Cities with Talent](#)  
April 11, 2014  
*The Wall Street Journal*

Our survey goal was to target nonresident Richardson County alumni, aged 18–35, who would consider moving back to Falls City if offered a desirable job or business opportunity in their field. A summary of the research findings include:

- 49 Richardson County alumni (who now reside in other cities) completed the EDGE survey.
- Approximately 31 percent of surveyed Richardson county alumni use Facebook as their primary information source. Google search was selected as the secondary method when accessing information (25.7%).
- 75 percent of alumni are between the ages of 18–35. Nearly half of this group has completed some college. One-fourth are college graduates.
- When considering a move back to the area, participants would be most influenced by a new job, business opportunity or family member who now lives in close proximity to Falls City.
- Six percent selected technology advancements and nine percent chose upgraded educational facilities as main assets.
- Lack of entertainment and limited job availability are the primary challenges for Falls City attracting new families and entrepreneurs to the area, according to this group

Lastly, a few closing key points included providing activities that attract millennials, collaborating with local businesses to create a variety of desirable job opportunities and increasing available housing options rounded out the list. Falls City EDGE will use the data collected in order to create strategies that will encourage people to move to Falls City to fill the skilled and professional jobs we have available in the region.

## Grand Weaver Hotel Announces Expansion

In June 2009, hundreds of individuals from near and far gathered for the unveiling of the newly renovated Grand Weaver Hotel. This much anticipated renovation was the visionary masterpiece of Florida native, Mitch Glaeser. Now, nearly seven years later, the vision continues and preliminary plans call for both first and third floor improvements. These changes are set to begin soon and will take 12-18 months to complete.



The plan for the third floor calls for the addition of five new apartments, one of which is already spoken for, and five new hotel rooms. The first floor improvements will be made in the conference room area located in the southwest corner of the building. This space will be occupied by two new business ventures, The Den and The Front Porch. The addition of these services at the hotel will provide a “grounds to gifts” concept envisioned by Glaeser and will not only elevate the stay for his guests but also provide a relaxing place for locals and visitors. People will have the chance to enjoy a glass a wine at The Den or delight in a coffee house atmosphere at The Front Porch where there will be specialty coffees, bites, nibbles, munchies and gifts. It’s an exciting addition to the hotel and to the downtown district.

Cont’d on page 7



Sarah Skinner,  
Constituent Services Representative

### *Senator Fischer Staff Holds Local Office Hours*

U.S. Senator Deb Fischer’s (R-Neb) staff held local office hours in Nemaha and Richardson, counties on Thursday, September 22, 2016. These office hours served as a convenient opportunity for constituents to meet personally with Senator Fischer’s staff to receive help with casework and other issues at the federal level. Sarah Skinner, Senator Fischer’s constituent services and outreach representative, visited each of these counties to meet with citizens and hear any concerns, ideas, and opinions.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

- October 5<sup>th</sup> – Department of Economic Development Familiarization Tour
  - October 31<sup>st</sup> – Spooks on the Square
- November 17<sup>th</sup> – Entrepreneur Best Practice Summit – Innovation Campus, Lincoln, NE
  - November 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Window Opening
  - January 4<sup>th</sup> – EDGE Annual Banquet

# Gov. Ricketts 1st Annual Summit on Economic Development

LINCOLN – Governor Pete Ricketts hosted the first Governor’s Summit on Economic Development in Lincoln to unveil a report on Nebraska’s economic development programming. A diverse group of over 400 Nebraskans from across the state attended the inaugural summit including business leaders, economic development executives, and elected officials among numerous others.



“This first ever economic development summit in Nebraska provided a tremendous amount of information and baseline recommendations to help the state and our partners develop new growth strategies,” said Governor Ricketts. “These strategies can help us attract and grow companies and high-paying jobs so Nebraska continues to succeed in a global, high-tech economy.”

The summit focused on results generated by SRI International, a nonprofit, independent research center that was hired late last year to provide an assessment of Nebraska’s economic development ecosystem. SRI also performed a high-level assessment of Nebraska’s innovation ecosystem and identified gaps and opportunities that the state can target for future investment. Additionally, several sessions were conducted at the summit, focusing on findings related to the state’s target industries, housing and community development, innovation eco-system, and workforce, and talent.

“We are fortunate to be able to look at this research while the state’s economy is performing well,” said DED Director Courtney Dentlinger. “It provides us a great opportunity to put in place the programs and initiatives we need to attract and grow the high tech, high growth companies that provide high skilled, high pay jobs.”

The state will look to analyze the report and consider implementing strategies that advance strategic initiatives in the areas of workforce development, incentive offerings and housing options. We look forward to the ideas to be unveiled as we move into 2017.

To access the final SRI report, go to [www.negovsummit.com](http://www.negovsummit.com).

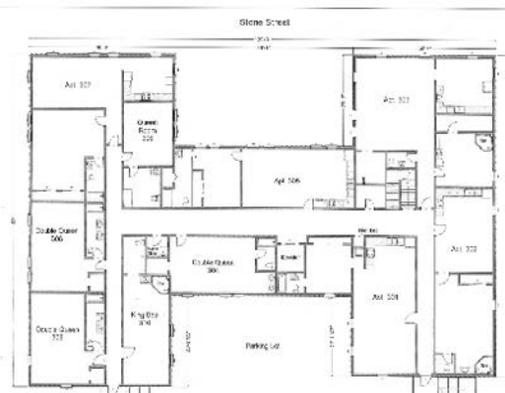
## Quote of the Quarter:

“I want to tell you how much I enjoy the EDGE Newsletter. I grew up in Falls City and my roots are still there. I do my best to keep up with all the Falls City development and news. Thanks for all you have done and continue to do to make Falls City such a wonderful community.”

-Jane Chaney Martin

## Grand Weaver Hotel (cont’d)

This next level of investment at the Grand Weaver Hotel checks all the boxes of a good, quality economic development project including capital investment, job creation, additional housing, new and expanded business, renovation as well as some infrastructure improvements. We look forward to the changes that will be taking place on the historic corner of 18<sup>th</sup> & Stone St. in Falls City.



**Falls City Economic Development  
& Growth Enterprise (EDGE)**

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**Beckie Cromer, Executive Director**  
**Cassey Whalen, Administrative Assistant**

**Visit us online**  
**[www.fallscityedge.com](http://www.fallscityedge.com)**



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