



# FALLS CITY NEBRASKA

PASSIONATE • PROVEN • PROSPEROUS

# 2019

## EDGE ANNUAL REPORT



*“Vision without action is merely a dream.  
Action without vision is just passing time.  
Vision with action can change the world.”*

*~Joel Barker*

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

- Champions Crossing LLC was formed and work is underway to construct infrastructure for Falls City's newest residential subdivision. This public-private partnership, leveraging nearly \$750,000, will create 6 residential lots available for development in 2020.
- The Ames Companies and Airlanco, Inc. were awarded Falls City EDGE scholarships for incumbent worker training courses offered by Southeast Community College. A total of \$1,250.00 dollars was awarded for 2 courses and 3 employees.
- Falls City EDGE has pledged \$20,000 to Falls City Middle School for investment in a STEM Lab that introduces students to manufacturing processes. These funds will provide equipment such as 3D printers, vinyl cutters, a laser engraver, a CNC machine, welding lab or an embroidery machine. EDGE will work with school officials on this project as we decide what the best approach is for the school.
- Falls City EDGE was awarded a \$13,000 matching grant from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority for an updated Housing Study. The study will be used to stimulate ideas for comprehensive development plans encompassing housing, community, and economic development opportunities in Nebraska.

Southeast Community College Learning Center at Falls City held its Grand Opening in October 2019. The state of the art building includes a large shop area with nine welding booths and room to move equipment into and out of it for the training of individuals seeking skills required in modern manufacturing, one large classroom, three smaller classrooms, and two rooms equipped with clinical medical equipment for healthcare related programs. Falls City EDGE worked with community college officials on real estate negotiations and the building and site location selection process. Dr. Paul Illich, President of Southeast Community College, spoke about rural vitality in his grand opening remarks, "We don't want them (rural communities) to struggle. We want them to strengthen."

- Falls City EDGE optioned property for a Union Pacific Railroad served, 1,000-acre megasite. The property went through a series of phases with the railroad including an initial Service Feasibility Questionnaire followed by two site visits by railroad representatives as well as comprehensive reviews from both the UPRR service and operations units. The site was approved by the UPRR in January of 2019 after the 10% engineered rail design concept was finalized and a targeted marketing campaign focused on site selectors is underway.



Falls City Foods invested in new equipment and added employees.



Vantec Inc. invested nearly \$1M in new machines, added 12 employees and a new weekend shift.



CGB welcomed students from Falls City and Sacred Heart on tours during National Manufacturing Day.





*EDGE volunteers are a vital part of the organization and give generously of their time for many events throughout the year.*

*Students receive hands on experience as robotic operators while learning about industrial careers.*

*Falls City public school students are engaged in the agriculture industry at Merz Farm Equipment.*

## INVESTOR AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Falls City EDGE hosted the 3rd annual National Manufacturing Day as part of continued efforts to inspire our next generation of manufacturers. Falls City and Sacred Heart 7th and 8th grade students toured FAST Global Solutions, Merz Farm Equipment, Kearney Welding, Vantec and Consolidated Grain and Barge. EDGE also coordinated a tour of Cooper Nuclear Station in 2019.
- The Investor and Community Relations team put on many events throughout the year. In 2019 they coordinated the EDGE Annual Banquet, hosted a public open house for Senator Julie Slama, participated in the SNC Empty Bowls Soup Supper in support of the Backpack program and welcomed a representative of Congressman Adrian Smith's office for a public meet and greet.
- Beckie Cromer participated in Falls City High School Career day where nearly 100 high school students learned about the careers available in Falls City. Students were also given the opportunity to learn more about manufacturing, healthcare, government and agricultural careers directly from local employers in the community.

*Why does Mitch Merz @ Merz Farm Equipment, Inc. participate in National Manufacturing Day? "I'm recruiting!" He sees the value in planting a seed of interest in his future workforce and works hard to retain our area youth. Thanks Mitch!*

- The EDGE Investor of the Year was B.P.O. Elks Club # 963 and the Business Wall of Fame recipients were Ron and Madeline Keller and Edward and Sandra Hartman
- EDGE welcomed 9 new EDGE Investors in 2019 totaling \$10,500 in new investment dollars bringing our total private investment to \$78,000 annually.
- Falls City EDGE provided 2019 Falls City and Sacred Heart graduates with #fallscityproud sunglasses and a note inviting them to choose Falls City to start their future careers and to raise their families.



*The Keller and Hartman families were honored for their dedication and philanthropy to Falls City.*

*"This nationwide spotlight on modern manufacturing is unlike any other time in the year. Thousands of children will see their future come into focus. Teachers will have a renewed insight about opportunities in the industry. And more parents will see that our careers offer chances for their children to create and to thrive."*

*~Carolyn Lee,  
The Manufacturing Institute*

## MARKETING AND SALES

- Kevin Malone, Steve Kottich, Gary Jorn and Beckie Cromer completed a corporate business retention and expansion visit with senior executives at Herzog in April. We discussed business conditions, how the economy impacts their services and the strength Herzog has in its diversified product offerings. Herzog stated they have a contract with a major rail company for a 75-car train every quarter which stabilizes their workload. This gives them a more routine business model in Falls City. They noted their workforce is very steady and they have good employee retention. They will be investing in additional track at the Falls City site for Burlington Northern Railroad railcar storage.

- In 2019, Falls City EDGE awarded nearly \$35,000 to 3 Falls City industries for equipment modernization. Falls City Foods, Vantec Inc. and FAST Global Solutions invested nearly \$1.3 million dollars in modernized manufacturing equipment. These projects also contributed to employment growth with Vantec adding 8-12 jobs and a new weekend shift; Falls City Foods adding 2 new employees and FAST Global solutions adding 5 workers to their payroll as a result of these investments.



Falls City EDGE visits FAST Global Solutions headquarters in Glenwood, MN as a part of their Business Retention and Expansion program.



Local leaders accept the Nebraska Certified Community honor from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.



- Falls City was awarded Economic Development Certified Community status from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. This program showcases the communities in Nebraska that have well-positioned themselves for economic development opportunities.
- Dana Rathje, Gary Jorn and Beckie Cromer completed a corporate business retention and expansion visit with senior executives at FAST Global Solutions. We discussed business conditions, how the economy impacts their services and the stability the company has realized since making management changes. FAST was proud to note they are actively hiring and planning a multi-million dollar investment for the Falls City facility.
- A widespread marketing campaign was completed in the 4th quarter aimed at driving new employees to each of our 8 local industries in an effort to fill open positions. A 30-day radio blast campaign targeted the region as we highlighted industrial careers available in Falls City.
- 2019 Prospect Report: EDGE submitted 5 RFP's to companies looking for new locations; locally we worked with 8 different companies looking to expand/invest in their local operations.

### Falls City Manufacturing Employment per Industry

