



FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE VOLUME III ■ 2014

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

edge

New Developments Total \$3+ Million Dollars



Sacred Heart Ground Breaking Ceremony: Monsignor Robert Roh, Principal Doug Goltz along with Ruth Finck and her grandchildren officially kick off the project.

Schools, local governments, and religious institutions are all central parts of any municipality. These not-for-profit entities provide quality jobs, educate our future workforce, and contribute to the long term overall health of any community. Falls City is set to see over \$3M dollars' worth of development from several nonprofit groups in the next 12-15 months and we look forward to the improvements these organizations will bring to our area.

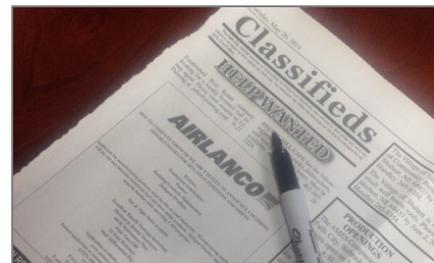
Falls City Sacred Heart celebrated the culmination of a successful fund raising campaign on May 21st as they held a ground breaking ceremony for their \$2.3M dollar Activity Center. This project is a vital piece of Sacred Heart's future and will include a full sized gym, locker rooms, weight room, and a kitchen/lunch area for the students providing safe and direct

access throughout campus and eliminating the need to walk out doors or cross busy streets as they do now. The lunch/commons area will also serve as a concession area for the various activities occurring in the facility. The Activities Center will greatly enhance the campus and serve the needs of Sacred Heart for generations to come.

The USDA Farm Service Agency will soon relocate to 502 East 14th St. to a building recently purchased by Northwinds Development LLC, out of Norfolk, NE. This newly expanded and remodeled facility will see approximately \$350,000 dollars in improvements. Construction is underway and will bring a welcomed expansion to Falls City's highway 159 corridor. That building was purchased from the Jehovah's Witness congregation in February of 2014 and was a critical step that now paves the way for the construction of their new Kingdom Hall. They will begin working on their new building in October of 2014 and it will take a mere 7 days to construct! Peter Eaton notes, "Falls City Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses is scheduled to be completed on October 19th. Many of the 1000+ volunteers involved in Falls City's week long construction project will have already been involved with similar builds in Ashland NE, in August, and Rapid City SD, during September."

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Welding Class Offered at Falls City High School

Since the end of the “Great Recession” in June 2009, the manufacturing sector has grown faster than the rest of the U.S. economy and, for the first time since the early 1960s, manufacturers have added jobs four years in a row. With the average age of an American welder at 55, the demand for future skilled workers is increasing sharply. (Philips, Matthew. “Welders, America Needs You” Businessweek.com, 3/20/2014)

To meet the demands of our local industries, Falls City EDGE in collaboration with Southeast Community College, will be offering a **FREE** welding course. The course was designed with input from Airlanco, Herzog and WASP, and will include 20 hours of lecture, 40 hours of lab time and the following types of instruction:

- Theory, safety, reading prints, and welding symbols
- Welding principles and procedures
- Filler wires, shielding gases, welding power sources and joint configurations
- Steel and stainless steel hands-on process
- Manipulative skills and welding positions



The classes will be held in the Industrial Arts Lab of Falls City High School July 15th- August 14th on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 5PM-8PM. Tuition for the class and student safety equipment costs will be 100% funded by donations from WASP, Inc. and Falls City EDGE.

For more information regarding future welding course opportunities, please contact the EDGE office at 402-245-2105 or director@fallscityedge.com.

EDGE/Chamber/Main Street Open House



On May 1st, EDGE teamed up with Falls City Area Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Falls City to host an open house. Over 70 investors from the organizations stopped by to mingle and snack on appetizers whipped up by local caterer Ann Meinzer.

The event was a great opportunity to thank our investors for their continued support of our mission but also to introduce the new Falls City Area Chamber of Commerce/Main Street director, David Branch and two new administrative assistants: Katie Riley with Falls City Chamber/Main Street and Kristy Dixon with EDGE.

EDGE Welcomes New Investor

AHRS Construction, Inc
www.ahrs-inc.com



Falls City Awarded Recertification by NDED

Falls City has earned recertification in the [Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community Program](#) for another 5 years. The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Designation as a Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community clearly indicates that Falls City is prepared for business growth and ready, today, 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 new investment.

Communities exhibiting economic development readiness are eligible to earn certification once approved by a review committee. Communities are judged against standards including organization, local industry target identification and workforce issues, infrastructure, local financing and business assistance, as well as child care.

Andrea McClintic, Business Development Consultant for the central and south regions for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, presented EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer the recertification during the May 5th City Council Meeting.



EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer was presented the recertification by Andrea McClintic with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.



Richardson County Residents Arrived in Drove to Support WASP, Inc.



"The Original 5" Falls City employees and corporate officials celebrate the Falls City location's 25th anniversary.

Close to 300 hungry area supporters and WASP, Inc. employees attended the '2014 Business/Industry Week Spotlight' BBQ at WASP, Inc. held on May 1st. WASP, Inc. was chosen as our 'Spotlight Industry' for its long list of 2014 accomplishments including: an all-time employment high of 92 employees, the modernization of key equipment such as a new press-brake and air compressor, and a 40x60 building expansion. With over \$500,000 dollars in investment this and it being the company's 25th year at the Falls City facility, a celebration was certainly in order!

Volunteers from our Investor & Community Relations Committee worked like a well-oiled machine swiftly serving lunch to a seemingly never-ending line, while EDGE President Bart Keller manned the grill.



Debbie Witt (R) of the EDGE Investor & Community Relations Committee works quickly to serve hot dogs and brats to the growing line.

It was great to see so many attendees staying for the facility tours conducted by WASP, Inc. corporate officials who joined in celebration all the way from the company's headquarters in Glenwood, MN. The tours ran continuously every 15 minutes with knowledgeable guides leading groups through the entire shop as they explained the welding, fabrication, assembly, paint and prep processes. These skilled manufacturing operations in turn produce WASP's quality products which include: package conveyor products, ground support equipment and military munitions transport.

In appreciation of the company's commitment to their employees and unwavering support of the Falls City community we wish a happy 25th anniversary to this valued local industry!

EDGE Continues to Build Strong Relationships

Falls City EDGE's Marketing and Sales Team works hard to provide comprehensive economic development services to our local business and industry sectors. One of the many facets of a healthy economic development program is an active Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. The BRE concept was created as a way of establishing good relationships and communication with companies in our community and includes visits to the corporate headquarters of our industries every two years. These visits provide valuable information about the future plans of each company and can help identify and address specific issues/needs of a company.

In April of 2014, Vice President of the EDGE Marketing and Sales team Kevin Malone, City Administrator Gary Jorn and Executive Director Beckie Cromer traveled to WASP headquarters in Glenwood, MN where they met with WASP President Dane Anderson, Director of Operations Eric Kolstoe, and Controller Steve Hagstrom. The trip began with a tour of the Glenwood facility and ended with lunch at a quaint local restaurant located on one of Minnesota's 10,000



lakes. The visit gave our team the opportunity to demonstrate Falls City's appreciation for WASP as well as identify perceptions of the community as a place to do business, detect the training and technical assistance needs of the business, ascertain the future plans of the company and to identify strategies that support continued growth and development. It was a meeting packed with positive information and we look for WASP to continue its record breaking performance well into 2014!

The team then traveled to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada to visit with corporate officials of Ag Growth International to discuss business conditions at Airlanco. They met with a great team of leaders including President Gary Anderson, Senior VP of Operations Franzmann, VP of Commercial Products Tom Zant, and Senior VP of Sales and Marketing Dan Donner. They learned there are plans to continue to grow the workforce in Falls City, international sales are climbing and that research and development efforts are alive and well at their Falls City facility.



All told the team members traveled over 1600 miles by air and 450 miles by car in 2 ½ days to accomplish these important visits. Informative meetings were held with two great companies and EDGE appreciates the valuable relationship it has with WASP and Airlanco! Falls City is lucky to have them in our industrial park providing quality jobs for our citizens. Both companies plan to expand operations at their Falls City locations throughout 2014 and beyond.

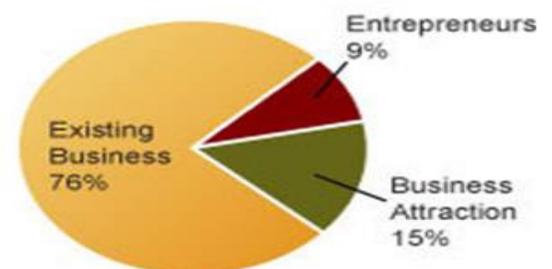
To learn more about these companies or to research the employment opportunities available please visit their websites at www.waspinc.com or www.airlanco.com.

BR&E Facts and Figures

BR&E Programs have 5 traditional goals:

- **Identify companies with plans to expand**
- **Identify companies at risk for leaving/ downsizing**
- **Identify company and community problems**
- **Provide assistance**
- **Build relationships**

New Jobs and Capital Investments



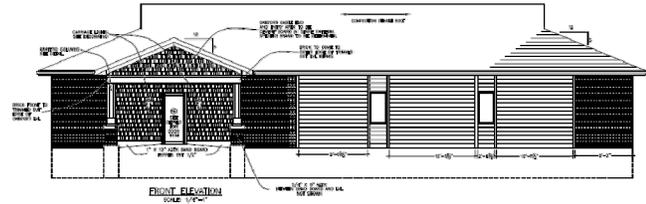
Source: Blane, Canada Ltd.

“Interviewing isn’t a strategy. It is a tactic in a broader strategy.”

Source: Blane, Canada Ltd.

New Developments continued

Finally, Northridge Church started with a group of 12 meeting in the living room of a local family then expanded to a store front location on Stone St. before purchasing the current church building at 1820 Morton St. Northridge Nebraska has done a great job of cleaning up adjoining vacant and dilapidated properties that can now be used for parking and expanded church activities that will serve their growing congregation. They've also added 3 jobs to the local economy with Brian Voos as campus pastor, Jessica Miller as the children's director and Nick Koso as facility care. Today they have 125-150 people meeting each Sunday for worship.



Falls City Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses building rendering

Falls City Ranks in Top Ten for 'Best Places in Nebraska for Homeownership'

Nerd Wallet, a consumer advocacy website that focuses on providing consumers with unbiased information regarding credit cards, mortgages, retirement funds, insurance and your self-proclaimed "nerdy friend for all of life's financial decisions", conducted a study on the best places to own a home in Nebraska. After analyzing 58 communities in Nebraska with populations over 2,000, Falls City ranked 9th overall!



Nerd Wallet ranked the communities by asking themselves three questions:

“Are homes available?” Falls City has a home ownership rate of 70.6%. A high home ownership rate is a sign that inventory is available and home ownership is more economical than renting.

“Can you afford to live there?” According to a recent survey from Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies, 1 in 4 U.S. households spend greater than 50% of their median monthly income on renting, but here in Falls City, homeowners are spending just 21.3%!

“Is the area growing?” While this website found a decrease in population for Falls City, we know that we are experiencing a true economic transformation in our area by fostering the expansion of local businesses, attracting new business and investment, and preparing the region for future growth.

To read more about Falls City’s top ranking, visit <http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/cities/best-cities-homeownership-nebraska/>.

Rank	City	Home Ownership Rate	Median Selected Monthly Homeowner Costs	Median Monthly Household Income	Homeowner costs as a percentage of household income	Median Home Value	2010-2012 Population Growth	Overall Score for Home Owners
1	Minden	76.6%	\$858	\$4,224	20.3%	\$85,600	7.0%	78.5
2	Ord	75.1%	\$852	\$3,586	23.8%	\$77,000	8.7%	77.6
3	Geneva	72.2%	\$896	\$3,646	24.6%	\$82,900	10.7%	75.4
4	Imperial	80.0%	\$1,000	\$3,995	25.0%	\$88,000	3.4%	73.1
5	Gretna	73.5%	\$1,472	\$6,485	22.7%	\$168,800	15.4%	72.0
6	Gothenburg	81.3%	\$940	\$4,014	23.4%	\$81,900	(0.2%)	71.9
7	Madison	74.7%	\$879	\$3,775	23.3%	\$68,000	2.0%	69.5
8	Broken Bow	73.7%	\$766	\$3,170	24.2%	\$68,700	(0.4%)	64.0
9	Falls City	70.6%	\$696	\$3,272	21.3%	\$62,100	(0.6%)	63.5
10	Waverly	75.4%	\$1,484	\$5,895	25.2%	\$149,400	6.5%	62.5

Improvements Underway at Brenner Field

Falls City’s municipal airport, Brenner Field, is in the midst of some exciting improvements. Located on the northeast side of town, the airport handles over 4,800 private and corporate aircraft landings per year. It boasts a 4,000 ft hard surfaced all-weather runway, terminal building with a 160 x 400 ft concrete apron as well as a new 70 x 100 ft maintenance hangar that can accommodate eight single-engine aircraft at once, with additional hangars housing 25 aircraft. The airport provides aircraft rental, flight instruction, fuel (100 LL and Jet A), as well as repair and maintenance of piston powered single and multi-engine aircraft.



In 2012, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded Falls City just over \$3M dollars in grant funds to assist in constructing some federally mandated upgrades to the airport. These grant funds cover 90% of the eligible costs of the project. The improvements include widening of the current 60 ft runway to 75 ft, completion of a new electrical system which includes new lighting and a new light beacon as well as constructing a new taxing lane on the northeast corner of the field. Construction began in the spring of this year and should be completed by August.

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs...Falls City Experiencing Employment Growth

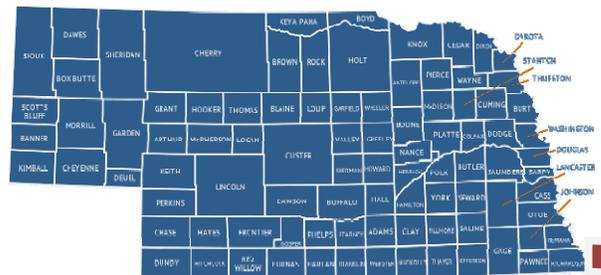
Extra Extra Read All About It...jobs, careers, opportunities galore. The *Falls City Journal* and many online job boards have shown an explosion of job listings in the region and companies are eagerly waiting for their next qualified applicant. Falls City/Richardson County has seen the natural fluctuation of the economy between periods of expansion (growth) and contraction (recession) over the years and right now we are definitely in the throes of an economic expansion. Falls City EDGE will be looking to develop a task force, chaired by board member Charlie Radatz, to evaluate and develop a strategic plan to address workforce development and people recruitment on a regional basis. We want to facilitate the growth of our businesses and industries and right now they’re hiring for a variety of careers including Managers, Production Workers, RN’s, Engineers, Welders, Design/Drafters, Maintenance Workers, etc. Recruiting people and skills development will be one of our main focuses in the coming months so if you are interested in serving on the committee tasked with finding innovative solutions please call Beckie Cromer at 402-245-2105 or Charlie Radatz at 402-245-5096.

According to CNBC’s ‘America’s Top States for Business 2014’ poll, the “Cornhusker State” ranked #4!

NEBRASKA secured its rightful place in the TOP 5 with high scores in the ‘Quality of Life’, ‘Business Friendliness’, ‘Cost of Doing Business’ and ‘Economy’ measures.

CNBC ranks all 50 states annually utilizing 56 measures. This is not a public poll; input was received from business groups, economic development experts and companies around the country, as well as from the states themselves.

“Nebraska is fertile ground for growth”
~ Governor Dave Heineman



TAKE A LOOK AT
RICHARDSON COUNTY...
Unemployment Statistics

May 2013: **5.1%**
May 2014: **3.9%**

Total Labor Force: **4,328**
Employed Labor Force: **4,158**
Unemployed Labor Force: **170**

Nebraska Department of Labor Statistics

A Message from the EDGE Director

“Capital shouldn’t be your first concern...customers should be” was the underlying theme of a focus group session during the annual Lincoln Area Development Partners regional meeting led by Diane Kander, senior fellow of the [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation](#). This is a break in the traditional train of thought and thinking “capital” is the most important test of any fledgling business is a concept that dates “back to 1999”, according to Kander. The plan based approach of IDEA—BUILD—BRAND—CUSTOMER was founded on building what you think the customer wants before testing your concept on potential customers. Kander likens this “capital intensive” approach to gambling because you are investing your time and money and “hoping” you’ve produced a product that will create demand and, in turn, a profit.

Today, Kander notes, entrepreneurs need to perform up front experiments to test demand which creates a model that flows in a different order than the traditional methodology IDEA—CUSTOMER—BUILD—BRAND. If you conduct experiments and involve yourself in a little detective work before launching your next company you will have to fight off potential investors because they know you’ve created a *proven product or concept* that customers want or need!

One only has to think of the evolution of a food truck in a parking lot (a smaller investment that builds a customer base) to a restaurant on Main Street (a larger investment that comes with a built in customer base) to realize this is a concept that promises the most reward and offers the least amount of risk.

In closing, I would reiterate one of Kander’s best quotes of the day....“Experimentation is in, financial projections are out! Entrepreneurs need to test their ideas before they throw resources at it!”

~Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director

"Consumers research products and buy exactly what they need- they no longer settle!"
~Diana Kander

Falls City Economic Development & Growth Enterprise (EDGE)

1705 Stone Street, PO Box 574

Falls City, NE 68355

402.245.2105

info@fallscityedge.com

Beckie Cromer, Executive Director
Kristy Dixon, Administrative Assistant

Visit us online

www.fallscityedge.com

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