



FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE  
 VOLUME III ■ 2013

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

edge

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**New Family Acquires Tri State Truck & Tractor Repair**

Tri State Truck and Tractor is under new ownership! Justin and Monica (Gormley) Lechtenberg have purchased the business which will retain valuable jobs and continue to provide quality business services to the tri-state region. They, along with their 3 children Gavin, Jentry and Kinley, moved to Falls City in June and expect to grow the business in the coming months. Justin, who always dreamed of becoming a small business owner, has plans to continue the great services offered by Tri State Truck and Tractor as well as expand his services to include road side service, welding and fabrication work. He also sees growth potential from the increased truck traffic Consolidated Grain and Barge Co. will bring to Falls City.



*The Lechtenbergs acquired Tri State Truck & Tractor Repair in Falls City.*

and I appreciate all the help I received. I look forward to raising my family in Falls City and growing my business. The community has been very gracious in welcoming us to town.”

Falls City EDGE worked with Justin in obtaining a \$30,000 Community Development Block Grant ReUse loan which was approved by a unanimous vote of the City Council in May. Justin notes, “I appreciate the assistance from the EDGE office and the support of the City Council. Beckie Cromer was instrumental in the application process

Justin, who holds an Associate’s degree in Diesel Truck Technology from Southeast Community College, Milford, encourages you to stop by and visit the shop. He’d love to tell you more about the services he has to offer. He promises quality service at reasonable rates. Congratulations to the Lechtenberg family!

[To learn more about incentives available to help your business expand and grow in the Falls City/Richardson County area, visit the EDGE website »](#)



# Marketing & Sales Team Continues Hard Work

The EDGE Marketing and Sales team continually works to retain and grow existing businesses, recruit new business to the Falls City/Richardson County area, strengthen state and regional marketing partnerships, and build upon relationships with railroads, utilities, and higher education institutions. These activities fill the marketing and sales pipeline and result in a heightened awareness of the Falls City/Richardson County location. The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter was filled with marketing events which included the following activities:



- Kevin Malone, Bart Keller and Beckie Cromer completed a corporate 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. Officials were pleased with their local workforce specifically noting the stability of their long-term employees and the exceptional record of no loss time accidents.
- A planning event was held with [Burlington Northern Santa Fe \(BNSF\) railroad](#) as we remained focused on future rail development. BNSF Regional Manager of Economic Development, Steve Dodd, and Chris Carucci, Economic Development Specialist of Jones Lang Lasalle, a leading global commercial real estate management and investment firm, attended the meeting.
- EDGE, in cooperation with the Lincoln Area Development Partnership, hosted a Site Selector event with consultants from the [Selectors Guild](#) May 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. The Site Selectors Guild is a professional association comprised of the world's most respected site selection consultants. The mission of The Site Selectors Guild is to advance the profession of international corporate site selection by promoting the site selection profession and providing education, networking and other services to those involved in the site selection industry. You can read more about the event on page 3.
- Met with members of the Stella Improvement group on grant opportunities/referrals for downtown improvement.
- Participated in the [Community Venture Network \(CVN\)](#) forum in Minneapolis April 19<sup>th</sup>. CVN matches rural communities and expanding companies in an effort to bring high growth businesses together with economic development professionals seeking to attract business expansions and relocations to their community. Eight companies attended the networking event.

## Business Appreciation Week

In May during National Business & Industry Week, EDGE delivered cookies to City staff in a show of appreciation for the outstanding contributions they are making to the health of the local economy.

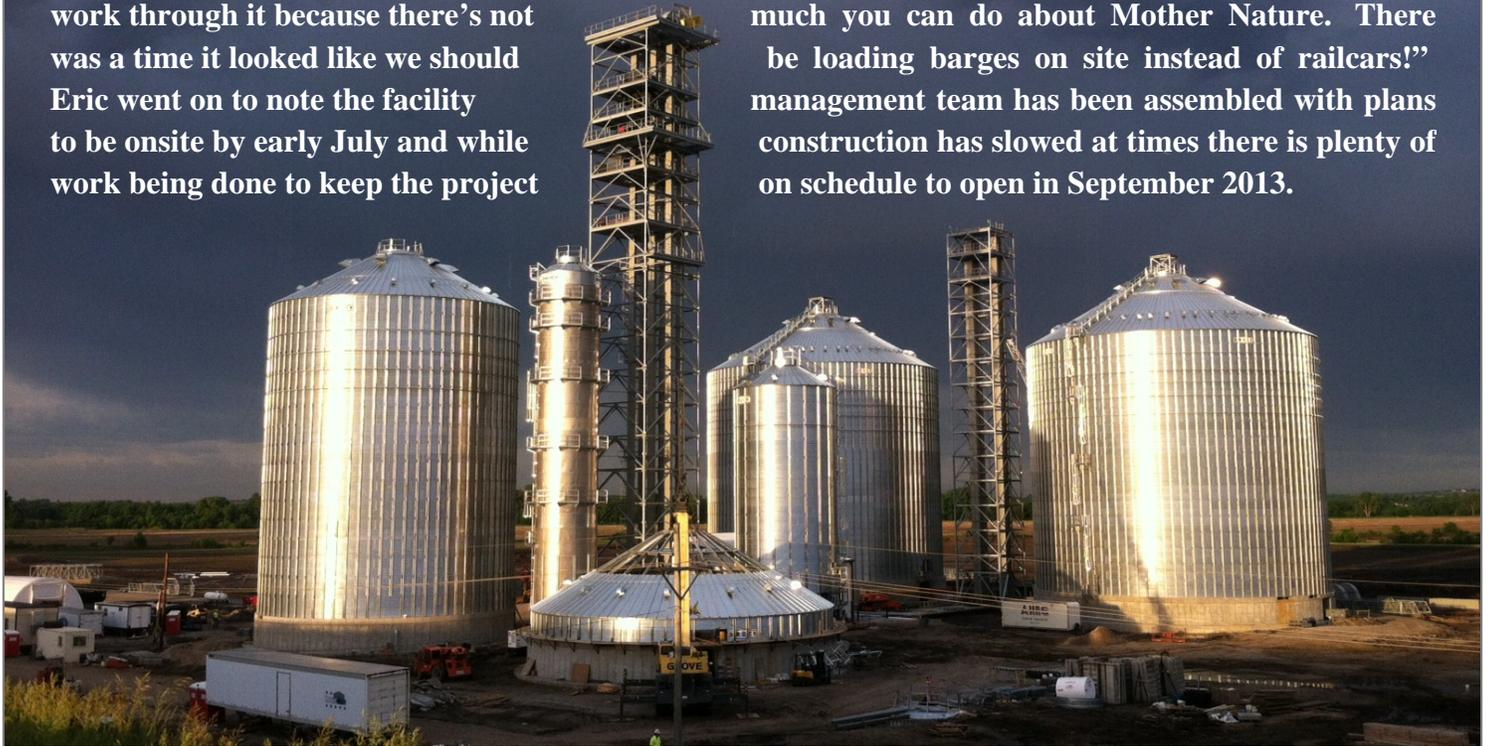
“Each year, we look forward to taking the time to thank our employers for the investment they have made in our community and for the jobs they have created for area residents,” said Bart Keller, EDGE President.



*EDGE Administrative Assistant, Carla Rhodd, delivers cookies to City Administrator, Gary Jorn.*

A winter which produced favorable construction conditions has turned into a spring full of continued—yet much needed—rain and thunderstorms as depicted by this recent photo of the Consolidated Grain and Barge site. Despite weather conditions the project continues to progress and Eric Kresin, General Manger Southwest Region, of CGB remains in good humor noting, “We’ll just work through it because there’s not was a time it looked like we should Eric went on to note the facility to be onsite by early July and while work being done to keep the project

much you can do about Mother Nature. There be loading barges on site instead of railcars!” management team has been assembled with plans construction has slowed at times there is plenty of on schedule to open in September 2013.



## LADP Hosts 2013 Site Selectors Guild

Falls City EDGE participated in a site selectors event, sponsored by the [Lincoln Area Development Partnership \(LADP\)](#), in May. The event brought five nationally known site selectors to our 13-county Southeast Nebraska region in an effort to market each of our community assets and identify target industry areas.

Falls City had an opportunity to host Jim Renzas, a site selector based out of Irvine, California, on the morning of Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. The day started with a city official’s forum at City Hall for our Mayor, City Council, County Commissioners and Board of Public Works members. We also toured the community visiting the dual-rail and 10.1 acre sites as well as the Ames True Temper building. Falls City ended the visit with an economic development roundtable attended by members of the EDGE Board of Directors. Topics of discussion included feedback on the EDGE organization and its marketing materials, innovative workforce development strategies, marketing and sales initiatives, and evaluation of sites and buildings.



*Jerry Oliver, Gary Jorn and Rod Vandeberg attend the Site Selector Panel breakfast in Lincoln, Nebraska.*

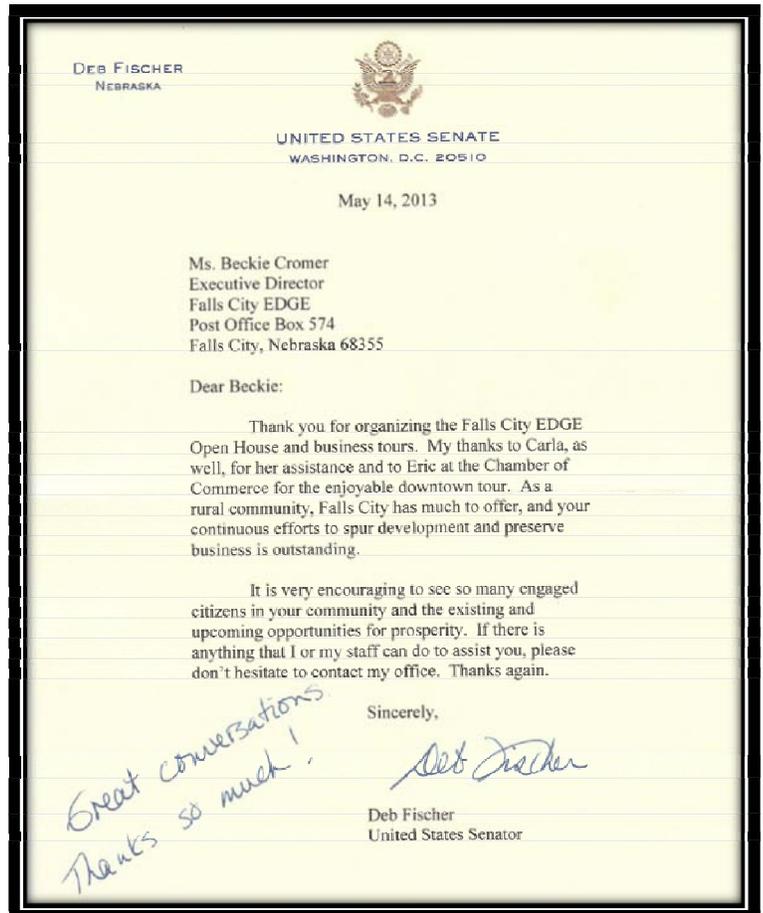
The following day, Beckie Cromer, Gary Jorn, Rod Vandeberg and Jerry Oliver attended a breakfast which included a panel discussion attended by all 5 site selectors at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, NE. The final event included lunch attended by representatives from Falls City, Nebraska City, and Auburn, where leaders had the opportunity to visit with, Dennis Donovan of Bridgewater, NJ. “Mr. Donovan was absolutely excellent and I believe his input will prove very helpful to EDGE and our entire region as we move forward!” commented EDGE Executive Director, Beckie Cromer.

# Political Dignitaries Visit Falls City

Falls City EDGE has been busy networking with our state's political officials. In March, Nebraska's Third District Congressman Adrian Smith met with a group of local bankers to discuss tax reform and ways to simplify the tax code. Falls City was only one of his many stops across the district. Congressman Smith co-chairs the Tax Reform Working Group of the House Ways and Means Committee with John Larson of Connecticut.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Senator Deb Fischer stopped in Falls City for a tour of our community as well as a meet and greet with the public. An open house was held at the EDGE office followed by a community tour which included visits to WASP, the CGB construction site and a walk thru Main Street's downtown district. Fischer was impressed with our town noting, "As a rural community, Falls City has much to offer, and your continuous efforts to spur development and preserve business is outstanding."

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## Prime Real Estate Lots FOR SALE



Champion's Crossing subdivision was finalized in May 2013 and this newly platted property, owned by Falls City Industrial Development Corporation, covers approximately 23 acres targeted for new residential development. This area offers the potential construction of 30+ new homes and there are challenges that will need to be met in order to successfully move this housing development project to the next level. A rural community of 4325 people generally has a hard time finding a housing developer to invest in the construction of new homes so EDGE is working to creatively advance the housing goals outlined in the [2010 Falls City Housing](#)

[Study](#) using local investors. Our goal for 2013 is to find a group of local investors and begin the construction of 2 new homes. These homes will be located on West 31<sup>st</sup> street next to Wilderness Falls and they will be offered for sale. In addition, there are currently 4 prime real estate lots for sale on 28<sup>th</sup> Street just west of Falls City Healthcare Community. If you would like more information on purchasing a lot for the construction of your own new home contact Dana Rathje at 402.245.2486.

What does the long range plan of this area look like? As lots are sold and homes are built Falls City Industrial Development Corporation, in cooperation with the City Falls City and EDGE, will reinvest funds to pay for the costly infrastructure needed to continue housing development in this area. Falls City wants to see higher value homes being built in order to capture those tax dollars so we have worked hard to provide a great place to build inside the city limits. So, as construction season is upon us now is the time to consider taking that big step and build your own dream home!

# Downtown Happenings

## Stephanie's Epic Cakes

Stephanie's Epic Cakes opened in June in the Falls City downtown business district in a newly remodeled building located at 1721 Stone Street. The cupcakery is open for business 7:30 AM to 5 PM Tuesday through Saturday and features a full line of signature cupcakes, brownies, cookies, specialty coffees and cappuccino. Stephanie also creates fabulous confection concoctions for that special day—so if you have a wedding, birthday, retirement, graduation or open house in your future give Stephanie a call with your special order. The baker, Stephanie Wendtlandt, and her husband Henry own and operate the business and Stephanie reports things are going well! "We've had some sell out days and welcomed several new friends to our Facebook page "Stephanie's Epic Cakes."



Stephanie collaborated with many partners along her journey to opening a new business including Falls City EDGE, Rural Enterprise Assistance Program, Southeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership (SENCA), and the Small Business Administration. EDGE provided Stephanie with business guidance, referral to partner organizations, site location assistance as well as a cash contribution of \$500 to her SENCA Individual Development Account.

If you're out and about perusing main street Falls City stop by and check out the shop if you haven't already. Stephanie loves having visitors and chances are when you're there a fresh batch of goodness will be coming out of the oven in a few minutes! Welcome Stephanie's Epic Cakes!

## Falter Art Gallery

An art gallery honoring internationally renowned artist and illustrator, John Philip Falter, plans to open in the spring of 2014 in Falls City located at 1624 Stone St. Falter produced a body of work impressive in volume with a variety of subjects and today many hang in museums and eminent collections worldwide. A gallery in Falls City, the inspiration for so much of his work, will allow generations of Falter enthusiasts to view his collection in his beloved hometown.

The Falter Gallery Committee, comprised of 15+ community leaders, is working to raise funds and gather Falter's works of art to help take this extraordinary project to the next level. Funds will be used for the purchase of art and prints and to renovate the space to provide a museum quality display for John's art. Falls City EDGE has contributed to the project by assisting the committee in writing a \$7000 Union Pacific Railroad grant. These grant funds, if awarded, would add to the fundraising efforts that have already commenced. If you would like to donate or find out more information about the project visit [www.johnpfaltergallery.wordpress.com](http://www.johnpfaltergallery.wordpress.com) or email [faltergalleryfc@gmail.com](mailto:faltergalleryfc@gmail.com).

## SNC Hires Summer Intern

Southeast Nebraska Communications (SNC) is Falls City's second business to utilize the InterNE program which provides both financial assistance to businesses creating new internships and connects Nebraska's college students to hands-on internship opportunities. Joe Santo, a 2009 graduate of Falls City Sacred Heart and a student majoring in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management Information Systems at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, will spend his summer gaining valuable hands on experience as an Information Technology Technician with SNC. With the summer months upon us, it's a good time to remind businesses about this valuable program designed to enhance student's business skills and experience. Interns gain valuable business experience that will help them in future careers, while successful internships help businesses develop tomorrow's leaders. In fact, these internships often create lasting connections between students and the business because more than 50 percent of Intern Nebraska graduating interns become full-time employees at their places of internship. For more information about how your business can benefit from this program, contact Beckie Cromer at 402.245.2105 or [director@fallscityedge.com](mailto:director@fallscityedge.com).



**EDGE is looking for team members to serve on each of its committees. If you would like to volunteer in an organization tasked with building a prosperous economy and growing job market please contact the EDGE office at 402-245-2105. Each team, its mission, and the regularly scheduled meeting times are listed below. Please consider giving your time.**

### *Product Development and Public Policy*

**Chairman:** Dana Rathje

**Meeting times:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 12:00 PM.

**Mission:** Maintain open communications with key public and private organizations to support and implement efforts that will improve the Falls City area “product” and increase opportunities to generate more prospects considering Falls City/Richardson County.

### *Marketing and Sales*

**Chairman:** Kevin Malone

**Meeting times:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 8:00 AM

**Mission:** Fill the pipeline with more prospects considering Falls City/Richardson County and make steady progress towards meeting sales objectives identified in the EDGE Strategic Plan.

### *Investor and Community Relations*

**Chairman:** Charlie Radatz

**Meeting times:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 12:30 PM

**Mission:** Keep EDGE Investors informed of EDGE projects and activities, recruit new members, and plan investor and community events.

## *Political Visits continued*

EDGE, through its Product Development and Public Policy Committee, supports local, state and federal policies, legislation, funding sources and programming that will enhance the business and regulatory climate for capital investment and job creation, especially those rural in nature and rural initiatives. It is imperative that we keep our economic development priorities at the forefront of our elected officials so we can advance our goals and continue our success. One of EDGE’s great successes, the new Missouri River Bridge at Rulo, involved strong collaboration with our public officials as the alliance developed and implemented a focused public policy advocacy agenda, including traveling to Washington DC and Lincoln to meet with leaders, to secure state and federal funding for the new bridge.

EDGE works to develop relationships with legislators charged with creating public policy agenda’s that support economic development. It is also important for public officials to see how programs such as the SBA and CDBG programs are working in their communities. These relationships have emboldened our organization and we are pleased with the strong partnerships we’ve established with our leaders as it is a very important part of the economic development strategy.

# EDGE Hosts Quarterly SERN Meeting

The [Southeast Nebraska Resource Network \(SERN\)](#) is a group of development resource and service providers interested in the betterment of Southeast Nebraska. SERN members meet quarterly to share information about successes, initiatives, resources, and programs for the region. SERN meetings are an excellent opportunity for local community leaders, volunteers and municipal staff to be connected with Federal, State, and Local resources to discuss ideas and opportunities for potential projects in southeast Nebraska.



*Julie Taylor-Costello presents an overview of Peru State College's ICE program at the SERN meeting in Falls City.*

On Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> Falls City EDGE hosted the Quarterly SERN meeting at Personal Care Inc. Approximately 35 guests, including local community and business stakeholders as well as SERN members from throughout the region, attended the meeting. Highlights from the business meeting included Michael Foutch with his presentation on Small Business Administration Programs and Beckie Cromer with her updates on Falls City's projects and accomplishments.

"The informational presentations from SENDD, the SBA and Peru State College were excellent and timely and I always appreciate the time to network with and learn about current activities from colleagues. Falls City was a great host and it was fun to have the meeting in an old repurposed building!"

Elizabeth Chase, Director  
Nebraska Main Street Program

Julie Taylor-Costello, Director of the [Institute for Community Engagement \(ICE\)](#) was the feature presentation for the day. She shared an overview of the ICE program at Peru State College. The program's mission is to foster a greater understanding of the leadership role students can play in community development by creating opportunities for students to engage with society and apply what they have learned in meaningful ways.

Emily Bausch of [Southeast Nebraska Development District \(SENDDD\)](#) closed the day with her presentation on the nuisance enforcement program. She shared information about the contractual services available through SENDDD designed to assist communities with nuisance code enforcement.

## EDGE Welcomes New Member Investors

### Advocate Investors (\$500-\$999)

Mr. Automotive

### Supporter Investors (\$100-\$499)

Alan Kelley

Bob & Wendy Engles

John & Cindy Bangert

Mike & Cheryl Finck

Benny & Mary Sickel

Falls City Area Jaycees

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)

# A Message from the EDGE Director

Government programs programs programs....there are a lot of them and many can be too complicated to understand or it's difficult to find the one that really meets your needs. Falls City EDGE works very hard to determine what programs are out there, how our businesses and industries can benefit from the opportunities these programs present, and then we arm you with the information necessary to make these programs work for you. Recently, Falls City has been very successful in applying for and receiving approval for many projects. I thought this would be a great opportunity to remind you to call the Falls City EDGE office if you have a project so we can assist you in making that project a reality.

Many times we get caught up in the alphabet soup that is our government---SBA, REAP, TIF, NIFA, WTG, CDBG, LB840, HUD, InterNE, NMTC---but please know we are here to assist you navigate through the process and give you guidance along the way. We've worked with companies who are trying to become more energy efficient, industries that need worker skills training, corporations modernizing their assets, individuals creating a business plan, businesses looking to provide internship opportunities or startups looking for gap financing.

If you are looking to grow your business, invest in equipment or train your employees please call the EDGE office and join the list of employers benefiting from those programs that are tailored to grow and expand your business.

~Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director

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

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Beckie Cromer, Executive Director  
Carla Rhodd, Administrative Assistant

Visit us online

[www.fallscityedge.com](http://www.fallscityedge.com)

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