



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

edge

FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE VOLUME II ■ 2011

Construction Will Begin on Wilderness Falls Housing Development



“Working with Falls City EDGE really made this project possible.”

-Paula Rhian, Development Director,
 Excel Development Corporation

[Excel Development Group](#) will begin construction of the \$3 million dollar Wilderness Falls senior housing development in June. The new development will be situated south of Community Medical Center on 31st and Barada Streets.

The project includes eight duplexes—fourteen two-bedroom units and two three-bedroom units. Additional project activities involve the construction of five or more market rate homes as well as infrastructure development, including electric, water, storm sewer, sanitary sewer and paving of new streets. Construction is expected to take 12 months.

“Every community needs choices when it comes to senior living facilities,” notes EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer. “Excel Development Group will provide Falls City with experienced, innovative development and management services which will be an added benefit for seniors looking to

retire here. We’re hoping this development retains and attracts seniors to the Falls City/Richardson County area.”

“The EDGE staff helped us find additional funding sources and local partners that were key in getting both a Federal Home Loan Bank grant and tax credit funding,” said Paula Rhian, Development Director for Excel Development. “In this first round of funding from the [Nebraska Investment Finance Authority](#) only five projects were selected. As a Falls City High School alum, I am proud to say that Wilderness Falls was one of them.”

“The Wilderness Falls project includes capital investment, infrastructure improvement, increased tax base, job creation and quality of life improvements—all key components of economic development success,” said Cromer.

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EDGE Recruits Staffing Services, Inc.

Staffing Services, Inc. (SSI), a Lincoln-based firm, opened an office in Falls City on March 15. In making the announcement EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer said, “EDGE proactively recruited SSI to the community to meet area employers’ continued growing demand for local employment services. We were impressed with owners Steve Dworsky and Steve Rothwell and are confident SSI will provide professional, reliable services to the Falls City community.”



The firm has placement expertise in a variety of career fields, including industrial, technical trade and office/clerical areas of employment. They offer several options to meet employers’ staffing needs from a Direct Placement program to a Temp-to-hire option to a Day-to-Day program. The firm provides pre-screening and can customize the evaluation process to meet employers’ specific needs.

According to SSI Placement Specialist Sherry Rogman, “Searching for good employees can be a time consuming, costly and frustrating process. Staffing Services strives to close the gap between individuals who are serious about becoming gainfully employed and employers who are just as serious about finding and retaining employees who demonstrate a true ability and desire to perform tasks.”

SSI’s office is located in Falls City at 1210 Stone Street and is open daily Monday through Friday. Nate Nicholson from Wakefield, NE, has been hired as the new placement specialist and looks forward to working with area job seekers and businesses. Nate can be reached by calling 402.801.8010.

“We have enjoyed a very positive working relationship with EDGE,” said owner Steve Dworsky. “Beckie Cromer worked closely with our company to address our business location needs. Falls City should be proud of the positive attitude of the community and proactive approach demonstrated by EDGE.”

Learn more about SSI's services at the EDGE Lunch and Learn on April 5 at noon at Bredeaux Pizza.

[For more information on SSI's services, visit their website at www.staffingservicesne.com »](http://www.staffingservicesne.com)

[Visit the EDGE website to learn more about the Falls City area’s workforce advantages »](#)

Rulo Bridge Going Up

Crews have been working since September making progress on the \$32 million dollar Rulo Bridge. The 1,026-foot spar over the Missouri River, scheduled for completion in the fall 2012, will carry traffic on U.S. 159 from Nebraska to Missouri.

“We currently average approximately 45 workers a day on all three projects, including the Mainspan, Missouri Approach and the Nebraska Approach,” said Mike Habegger, Nebraska Department of Roads Project Manager.”

Habegger noted, “The Mainspan project, which was the first project to start and is over the river, is making progress; however, is slower than initially planned due to high river elevations hampering progress. The Missouri Approach is ahead of schedule with three of the five total piers constructed; the remaining two should be completed by the end of March. The Nebraska Approach is just getting started.”



“It’s exciting to see the concrete pilings going up—a sign of new economic opportunities the bridge will bring to the residents of Richardson County, as well as to our neighbors in Kansas and Missouri,” said Charles Radatz, Chair of the Tri-State Alliance and an EDGE Board of Director.

City Takes Action to Enhance Incentives

In February the Falls City Council approved an amendment to the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Reuse Loan Plan. The Council also unanimously approved adopting a HUD-EDI Economic Development Reuse Loan Fund Plan to provide loans to businesses for site and infrastructure development and other economic development activities. According to City Clerk Gary Jorn, "The amendments open the incentives to more possible applicants, including all local industrial, commercial, retail and service businesses. They also include anyone located in the Downtown/Main Street Redevelopment District."

Eligible activities include:

- Purchase of land and buildings
- Construction or renovation of real estate
- Equipment and machinery purchase, both new and used
- Working capital
- Public infrastructure improvements directly related to job creation and job retention activities or as a part of spec site development which facilitates the creation of jobs
- Job training costs

Types of assistance include:

- Direct loans
- Deferred loans
- Interest buy-down
- Loan guarantees
- Grants for public infrastructure improvements

"EDGE and the City continue to work together to leverage new funds to facilitate growth and development," said EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer. "We are focused on stimulating overall business growth and development—from small/entrepreneurial businesses to large-scale industrial projects. The enhancements to these incentive programs will complement EDGE's efforts to retain, attract and grow businesses in Falls City and the Chamber/Main Street's downtown district revitalization plan."

[For more information on these and other incentive programs, please contact EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer.](#)

Wilderness Housing Development *(continued from page 1)*

This project addresses a direct need as outlined in the recently completed [Falls City Housing study](#) and is the result of 18 months worth of time and effort in a very complex process which included many community partners. Those directly involved with making this project a reality include employees, members and committees of EDGE, the City of Falls City, Richardson County and Community Medical Center, as well as local realtors and Sacred Heart Helping Hands.

Upon successful completion of the Phase I Wilderness Falls project, EDGE will begin discussions on a potential Phase II senior housing development. In addition, EDGE is currently working with the engineering firm of Olsson and Associates on the master planning of the remaining 27 acres south of Community Medical Center which will focus on development of single-family residential homes.

[For more information and/or to obtain a pre-application for Wilderness Falls, please contact Beckie Cromer.](#)

WASP Receives \$6,000 Worker Training Grant

Due to the economy and a highly competitive industry marketplace, Watkins Aircraft Support Products, Inc. (WASP) has been focusing on reducing costs and improving the speed of delivery times as competitive differentiators. The company's efforts have led to increased sales and employment. However, the company needed to take further cost saving measures to ensure continued success. WASP applied for and received a \$6,000 Nebraska Worker Training grant to provide performance and efficiency training for their 40 employees.



Terry Sain conducting lean efficiency training at WASP

The company chose Sain, Inc., a leading lean enterprise solution consulting firm, to deliver the training. Sain's week of workforce training and applications focused on matching the production and incoming sales rates, eliminating waste in production and standardizing processes, rendering them efficient and repeatable over time. The training is expected to result in employees being able to build smarter, faster and more efficiently, thus positively impacting sales and employment levels.

The Nebraska Worker Training program makes funding available to businesses for retraining and upgrading existing employees skills. Use of program funds is extremely flexible. The type and length of training programs, training vendors and materials are chosen by the company.

[To learn more about the Nebraska Worker Training Program, visit the Nebraska Department of Labor website »](#)

[For customized, confidential assistance with your workforce development needs, please contact EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer.](#)

\$165 Million Wind Farm Dedicated



The Flat Water Wind Farm, located near the Nebraska-Kansas border in Richardson County, was dedicated in February in a ceremony that included NE Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy, the CEO of Gestamp Wind, other state and local elected leaders, OPPD representatives, press and area citizens.

Sheehy told the crowd that the \$165 million wind farm represents an important step in expanding Nebraska's wind energy capacity and helps to strengthen the Richardson County economy by creating new jobs and new investments.

Sheehy, citing numbers provided by state Sen. Lavon Heidemann, who represents the area but could not attend the ceremony, said the wind farm has already been an economic boom to the area, by providing about 150 jobs during construction. Local officials estimate that about \$100,000 per week was spent during a five-month construction period on such things as salaries, lodging, fuel and groceries.

Javier Mateache, CEO of Gestamp Wind based in Houston, TX, said the company is proud to be in Nebraska and in Richardson County. "We feel we are part of the community," Mateache said. "We are committed to help you with your commitments."



Left to right: Gary Gates, President and CEO of OPPD, and Javier Mateache, CEO of Gestamp Wind

The wind farm consists of 40 turbines that can produce 1.5 megawatts each or a total of 60 megawatts for the entire wind farm. Gestamp Wind is selling all of the electricity generated to OPPD under a 20-year power purchase agreement. OPPD estimates the 60 MW of electricity can power about 18,000 homes. It is the largest wind farm in OPPD's service territory.

[Visit EDGE's website to learn more about the area's wind energy location advantages »](#)

Entrepreneurs Return Home and Purchase Business

Home for Luke and Celeste Jones was always Falls City; and in 2006, after living in Superior, NE, the couple returned to their home town. “We chose to move back to Falls City because of our close ties with our families and felt it was a great place to raise our three children. We loved the family atmosphere that Falls City provided to us growing up and wanted our children to experience the same,” said Celeste.



Luke and Celeste Jones

Luke is a salesman at A & M Greenpower in Hamburg, IA. Celeste, who graduated from Union College and the University of NE with a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degrees, works as a full-time physician’s assistant. They also own farmland in Brown County, KS. In December of 2009 the couple purchased Jonesbrook Estates, an assisted living facility in Falls City, and have since invested their time, talent and money in renovating and expanding the facility.

“Jonesbrook Estates, LLC is more than your average assisted living,” said Celeste. “You will find amenities and a wide array of support services that enable residents to enjoy a lifestyle of convenience, security and freedom. Jonesbrook Estates provides residents with an environment to live independently, in which they are able to maintain or improve on their current lifestyle. It’s a special combination of housing, personalized services and wellness monitoring designed for those that need some help, but do not need the skilled care provided by a nursing home. Our goal is tailor our services to the individual needs of each resident.”

Amenities offered include:

- Private one- or two-room suites with private handicap accessible bathrooms and showers
- Three home-cooked meals daily
- 24-hour staffing
- Emergency response call system
- Transportation available for appointments, shopping, and group outings
- Weekly housekeeping services
- Laundry service
- Wide variety of activity programs
- Cable TV
- All utilities (except telephone)
- Personal care services, such as bathing and dressing
- Kitchenette in each room
- Individual apartment temperature control



Extensive renovation of the facility is nearly completed. Each unit is complete now with a private handicap accessible bathroom and shower, and kitchenette. All new plumbing, heating, cooling, carpeting and windows have been done in each unit. It will be one of the nicest assisted livings in the area. [Visit www.jonesbrookestates.com to learn more about the facility and its amenities »](http://www.jonesbrookestates.com)

“We feel Falls City is gifted with a great deal of family-owned businesses that truly care about the success of other businesses being created in town,” said Jones. “Their success is dependent on one another’s success and they make available a network to help each other create opportunity. It clearly goes back to the family atmosphere that Falls City provides. We are all willing to help each other make Falls City businesses succeed.”

Falls City EDGE values the contribution small, entrepreneurial businesses make to growing and diversifying the local economy. [For confidential assistance with starting and growing your business in Falls City, please contact Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director.](#)

New Medical Services Business Opens in Falls City



Personal Care, Inc. is located at 3003 Old Hwy. 73 and is open 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Mon.-Fri. or by appointment.

Personal Care, Inc. (PCI) opened its doors for business in Falls City in March, providing new, locally-owned medical services to the Falls City area. PCI provides CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) therapy and in-home oxygen and respiratory supplies, complementing an array of [health care businesses in the community](#). The business is owned by physical therapist Dave Nachtigal and his wife Laurie. The Nachtigals also own Physical, Occupational and Respiratory Therapy Services which provides services in southeast Nebraska/ northeast Kansas as well as the Hiawatha and Falls City Fitness Centers.

PCI is staffed by two full-time employees and three to four part-time employees. Kristi Hullman, office assistant/LPN, and Michelle Wilcox, respiratory therapist, offer clients a wealth of knowledge. Customers will also enjoy PCI's first-class office setting.



According to Dave Nachtigal, the services of 14 area contractors that employed 34 area workers were utilized during the construction phase, injecting significant dollars into the local economy. He noted, "EDGE has done a great job in providing a business-friendly environment and I appreciate Falls City's progressive nature which has aided in so many successful projects."

The Falls City Chamber of Commerce has scheduled a ribbon-cutting ceremony at PCI on April 8 at 10:00 a.m.

Herzog Falls City Expansion Celebrated

An appreciation event hosted by EDGE was held on March 23 to celebrate [Herzog's](#) growth and expansion in Falls City. Herzog's management team—Jerry Caylor, Kenny Newville and Sam Cobb—welcomed community leaders as they highlighted the newly constructed three plus miles of track completed east of the facility last fall.

The team recognized that Herzog's substantial investment in the community was made possible thanks to the Gruber family who generously sold 60 acres to the company to accommodate the current expansion as well as future growth. Kenny Newville said, "The Gruber family is the star of today's event. They were a great partner to work with and without their cooperation we couldn't have expanded the track and doubled our storage capacity."



Left to right: Jerry Caylor, Herzog General Manager of Railcar Repair Shops, and landowners Dan Gruber and Delmer Gruber

Herzog's Railcar Shop in Falls City provides expert, cost effective rail car repair services for railroads, leasing companies as well as their own fleet of railcars. Falls City's location on the [Union Pacific](#) and [BNSF](#) rail lines make this an ideal site for Herzog whose rail car repair facilities are fully equipped to handle most any repair maintenance service. They provide preventive maintenance, wheel replacement, car modifications, and exterior and interior painting. These state-of-the-art equipped shops are AAR M-1003 and M-214 certified. Herzog purchased the Falls City location in 1998 and has made tremendous improvements to the facility. Jerry Caylor, General Manager of Railcar Repair Shops, stated "Falls City currently has 40 employees working on two shifts and we are in need of hiring six to eight more employees with welding experience."

Kenny Newville, Herzog's civil engineer responsible for designing the layout of the track, stated that before the three plus mile expansion Herzog could only store up to 180 cars; and now, thanks to the expansion, they are able to store and switch out approximately 425 cars doubling Herzog's storage capabilities. "Herzog is able to provide maintenance to more cars and conduct business in a more efficient manner and with railroad maintenance budgets currently at record levels this expansion project looks to be very productive," said Newville.

Legislation Aimed at Enhancing Talent and Innovation

A series of legislative bills are being pursued this year to advance business innovation and workforce recruitment efforts in Nebraska. The four legislative bills making up the Talent and Innovation Initiative were introduced in the Nebraska Legislature in January as part of the Governor's budget recommendations.

"The Talent and Innovation Initiative is about enhancing the level of business specialization and attracting new, advanced companies to Nebraska," Gov. Heineman said. "We want to help the private sector grow. This is about job opportunities. The idea for this initiative came from the Department of Economic Development, Nebraska business leaders and a series of recommendations in the Battelle study released last September. We've taken the suggestions and evaluated them in the context of our existing economic development programs."

Aimed at enhancing Nebraska's economic momentum, the Talent and Innovation Initiative includes four proposals:



LB 386, the Nebraska Internship Program aims to increase the number of college and university students interning with Nebraska businesses. Funded with \$1.5 million annually in redirected job training funds and a 100 percent match from companies creating new internships, the program would provide job experience for juniors and seniors at the state's four-year institutions or students in their second year at a Nebraska community college. (LB386 was introduced by Senator Lavon Heidemann.) Grants of up to \$3,500 in metro areas or \$5,000 in non-metro areas would be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis to companies creating new internship opportunities, with no more than five grant-qualified interns each year at any one business. Internships would pay at least minimum wage and could range from 12 weeks to year-long programs.

LB 387, the Business Innovation Act would provide competitive grants for private sector research at Nebraska institutions, technical assistance in new product development and testing, and help expand small business and entrepreneur outreach efforts. The effort will be paid for with \$1.5 million in redirected funds and \$5.5 million in new funding. The proposal would expand Small Business Innovation Research programs, including offering grants for application development, and provide funding to help with prototype development, commercialization, and applied research at Nebraska institutions. Additionally, it would provide assistance for microenterprise projects.

LB 388, the Site & Building Development Fund would increase the number of industrial and commercial sites available and ready for business development using \$3 million in redirected resources and at least a one-to-one match from communities. An estimated \$1.5 million in annual funding would come from directing a portion of the Real Estate Document Stamp fee paid for projects other than housing development. Funding could be distributed as grants, loans and credit enhancements to help with demolition, new construction and rehabilitation. State funding would be focused on land and infrastructure costs with 40 percent of funding going to non-metro areas.

LB 389, the Angel Investment Tax Credit would encourage investment in high-tech and other startup enterprises in Nebraska by providing refundable state income tax credits to qualified investors investing in qualified early-stage companies. The program would be capped at \$5 million annually, with \$3 million coming from redirected funds and \$2 million in new funding. The minimum investment would be \$25,000 per year for individuals and \$50,000 for investment funds. Eligible small businesses would have fewer than 25 employees, the majority of whom live and work in the state.

The Talent and Innovation Initiative is based on recommendations provided in a [2010 comprehensive review of Nebraska's economic climate by the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice](#) and findings of the [Legislature's Innovation and Entrepreneurial Task Force](#).

EDGE Welcomes New Member Investor Southeast Ready Mix/Concrete Industries, Inc.

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](#).

Upcoming Alumni Events

EDGE is excited about the upcoming high school alumni reunions as they offer an opportunity to remind current and former residents of the excellent education system and the great quality of living we have here in Falls City.



Falls City High School Reunion is scheduled for June 25 and 26.



Falls City Sacred Heart Reunion is scheduled for July 9.

EDGE, in cooperation with the Chamber/Main Street groups, is looking forward to planning hospitality events in conjunction with the alumni reunions. “We’re considering hosting an open house at the EDGE office inviting alum to stop by for free refreshments and an opportunity to learn about recent economic development projects. We’re also looking at sponsoring bus tours of the community to showcase Falls City’s business and quality of living amenities, including the aquatic center, library and arts center, Community Medical Center, Excel senior housing development, Grand Weaver Hotel, Falls City Industrial Park and others,” said EDGE Executive Beckie Cromer. “More information will be coming soon—check our [Facebook](#) page for updates.”

On Friday June 24, the Chamber will be sponsoring “*Hot Rods on Harlan*” and providing free ice cream sundaes.

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