



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

edge

Ames True Temper Closure Averted.... Back to Business



Consolidation – the act of combining business activities – is a reality in business. In a global market where US companies are competing with China, India, and other developing countries it’s a race to continually review business practices and reduce expenses to stay competitive in the market place.

In March of 2013, [Ames True Temper](#), a leading manufacturer of striking tools, announced it would cease operations at their Falls City plant by the end of 2013 due to a consolidation plan being implemented by corporate officials. The last few months local workers --still 23 strong-- were offered a reprieve as ATT extended production at the Falls City plant to February and eventually April of 2014.

Then, once again, as the deadline rapidly approached an unexpected final announcement was made...closure averted!

This livelihood saving announcement on March 19th from Griffon Corporation, a New York based firm that acquired

Ames True Temper for \$542 million dollars in 2010, the family of workers at Ames True Temper will be forging an ever growing presence in Falls City to show the striking tool business is alive and well! Ames True Temper is planning a tremendous “come back” in Falls City and we are pleased they will remain as an extremely valuable member of our industrial community. Stay tuned for information about more good things to come because future plans call for continued growth, capital investment and the potential for a larger footprint in the Falls City community.

Ames True Temper officials have always been very complimentary about the cost of doing business in Falls City as well as the reliability of our workforce. They also value the strong work ethic of their loyal employee base. Corporate decisions that impact communities, businesses, and families are made every day and Falls City is pleased to accept the most recent decision that keeps Ames True Temper alive and well in our community!

In this issue

- 2013 Governor's Cup **P.2**
- EDGE Grant Funding **P.2**
- EDGE Celebrates B/I Week **P.3**
- FCSH Supports Falls City **P.4**
- NEDA Legislative Day **P.4**
- GEAPS 2014 **P.4**
- Falls City Recertified **P.5**
- Housing Update **P.5**
- Falter Museum Project **P.6**
- SE Nebraska Career Fair **P.6**
- Entrepreneurial Education **P.7**
- Welding Class Available **P.7**
- Meet Kristy Dixon **P.8**



Nebraska Awarded 2013 Governor's Cup

Governor Dave Heineman announced on March 3rd, 2014, Nebraska was named by [Site Selection](#) magazine as the 2013 Governor's Cup award winner. The award recognizes Nebraska as the number one state in the nation with the most qualifying new and expanded facilities per capita.



"I'm thrilled that Nebraska has earned the 2013 Governor's Cup award for economic development" said Gov. Heineman. "We are focused on improving business and creating jobs in our state. Businesses locating in Nebraska are impressed with our friendly and honest citizens, our strong work ethic, low energy costs, low costs of living, great education system and an outstanding quality of life." Catherine Lang, Director of Nebraska Department of Economic Development added, "Earning the Governor's Cup over this outstanding field confirms the hard work of our economic developers, in combination with all the amenities Nebraska offers, is getting noticed by corporate players in our global economy."

Site Selection magazine is a 60-year-old Atlanta based publication that is recognized as the leader in reporting on area economic development. The magazine has been awarding the Governor's Cup annually since 1978.

Falls City EDGE Offering Grant Funding



Falls City Economic Development and Growth Enterprise, Inc. ("EDGE") has established the 2014 Richardson County Asset Modernization Initiative, offering "modernization" resources to Richardson County manufacturers and agricultural/food product processors. The Initiative is intended to stimulate modernization of assets by County businesses.

The program offers a direct grant in an amount up to 3% of eligible purchase not to exceed \$15,000 for new or used (manufactured after 2005) machinery and equipment acquired and placed in service in 2014. Applications are being accepted now and funds will be available on a continuing basis until the year's budgeted allocation of \$35,000 is exhausted. Applications are available by contacting the Falls City EDGE office at 402.245.2105 or director@fallscityedge.com and should provide sufficient detail as to the project scope and growth expectations of the industry applicant.

WASP, Inc. is the first industry to participate in this pilot program with the addition of a new Cincinnati 350 Ton press brake which will improve the capacity, speed and safety of metal fabrication providing increased production to support growth. Steve Hagstrom, Controller at WASP, Inc., notes, "This investment (which garnered WASP a \$6,603.06 grant) will allow the company to grow and will likely lead to additional employees and capital investments going forward."

Join the EDGE team and invest in the future of Falls City!

Investment levels range from \$5,000 for Visionary to \$100 for Supporters (individuals/non-profits) level.

[Learn more about the opportunities and benefits >>](#)



Falls City EDGE to Celebrate Business and Industry Week with BBQ at WASP

Don't miss it! This year, Falls City EDGE is recognizing [WASP, Inc.](#) (Watkins Aircraft Support Products) during Business and Industry week and the public is invited to attend a BBQ on May 1st from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM with master chef Bart Keller serving as your barbeque extraordinaire! Company officials, including a few from the "northern tribe" of Glenwood, MN, will be on hand to provide tours to the public allowing a unique opportunity to see all the great things going on at their Falls City facility. There are several accolades we can bestow upon WASP during this event including, celebrating an *all-time employment high* of 92 employees, 25 years in business at their current Falls City location and 35 years in Glenwood, MN, the modernization of their equipment including a press brake and air compressor, employee owned for 17 years and counting, as well as a 40 X 60 building expansion. Overall, they are investing over \$500,000 in Falls City in 2014 and that is certainly something to celebrate! "In this increasingly global marketplace, growing business and industry is important to the economic health of Falls City," noted Bart Keller, EDGE President. "We want to thank WASP for providing quality jobs and contributing to the local economy. This BBQ is an excellent opportunity to recognize the achievements and outstanding contributions that WASP has made to the local area."

WASP, Inc. is a *world leader* in the design and production of non-powered airline ground support equipment, a business that began in 1979 in a simple 6000 square foot rental facility in Alexandria, MN. In 1985, the product line was expanded to include package handling conveyor equipment and this new market included customers such as United Parcel Service and Federal Express. Jim Watkins, sole owner of WASP, saw continued success on the horizon and in 1988 he began looking for a 2nd location in the central United States to better serve his customer base. His site selection process took him to Falls City, NE where he was impressed with the quality of people. He felt Falls City offered WASP the best location for an expansion and operations began in an 18,000 square foot building (now Airlanco's Research and Development Facility) located in the industrial park. In 1989, he purchased the current building expanding capacity to 50,000 square feet of manufacturing space and 9,000 square feet of office space.

In 1997, Mr. Watkins sold the business to his employees through an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) transaction. The 350+ employee owners located in Falls City, NE and Glenwood, MN share in the ownership of the business. "We will continue to see employment growth and a greater market share in our industry," said Jeanne Kramer, Employee Owner and VP of Finance. "We continue to strategically invest in new equipment to improve efficiencies and process improvements for our employee owners. These investments provide a great opportunity for continued success."

In 2003, WASP expanded its product lines to include military trailers supplied to the U. S. Government. The company's vision and commitment to a diversified product line and expanded market add to their ability to grow and develop well into the future.

Mr. Watkins once said "It is my hope that someday we (WASP) will be a major local employer and a firm that offers some of the best employment opportunities in the area". Well, Mr. Watkins, WASP has become just that and we are proud to say WASP is a valued local industry! Please plan to join us in celebrating the contributions WASP makes to the Falls City/Richardson County area by joining us for the BBQ and tours on May 1st.

YOU'RE INVITED!

What: BBQ and Tour

Where: WASP, Inc

When: May 1st from
11:30AM-1:30PM



WASP Mission Statement "To be an innovative employer providing premiere products while creating quality of life for our employee owners, today and tomorrow".

Sacred Heart Eighth Graders Show Support for Falls City thru Class Project



The 8th grade students of [Sacred Heart](#) created a “Let’s Support Falls City” gift basket which was donated to Sacred Heart’s annual Booster Club “Green and White Fun (d) Night”. The students purchased 24-\$10 gift certificates from an array of Falls City merchants and each member of the class wrote a personal message thanking the merchant for the support of their school. These 24 gift certificates were nicely displayed in a gift basket that was auctioned off on March 1st and the winning bidder of the basket was asked to pass along the personal message to the merchants so they have a constant reminder of how much Sacred Heart depends on and appreciates their support.

Kudos to the parents and teachers who have instilled the value of hometown support—what a great message! Let’s follow these students’ lead and continue to support our local merchants.

NEDA Legislative Day

The [Nebraska Economic Developers Association’s \(NEDA\)](#) legislative day was held on January 30th, 2014 in Lincoln at the Capitol building. NEDA members, including EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer, met with state senators to discuss economic development and tourism-related legislation.

Specific bills discussed included:

LB754 Provide funding for career education programs

LB1012 Change provision relating to blighted areas under Community Development Law

LB1067 Extend the sunset dates under certain tax incentive laws

LB1091 Transfer funds from the cash reserve fund to the job training cash fund and change job training grant provisions.



NEDA members encouraged state senators to maintain contact with their economic development officials in the communities they represent as a source of information when researching and discussing economic development issues that directly impact Nebraska communities.

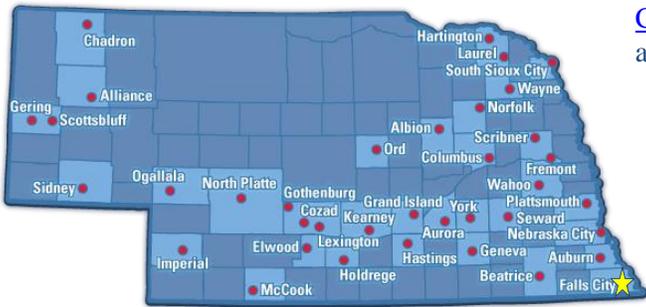
GEAPS 2014

In February, EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer attended the 2014 [GEAPS](#) (Grain Elevator and Processing Society) Expo in Omaha, NE. This show hosted over 400 exhibitors in the grain related industries and logged the best attendance on record at 3,379. This marketing event was a great opportunity to network with exhibitors as well as see Airlanco’s innovative product line being marketed to expo attendees. Mike Beaver, Airlanco Sales Manager noted, “The GEAPS show is a great kick off to the construction season. Airlanco will see a lot of new orders following GEAPS and we look forward to a successful and productive 2014.”



Airlanco booth at 2014 GEAPS Expo

Falls City Recertified for Another 5 Years



Every five years, communities with the [Economic Development Certified Community \(EDCC\)](#) designation must submit a recertification application that includes the following:

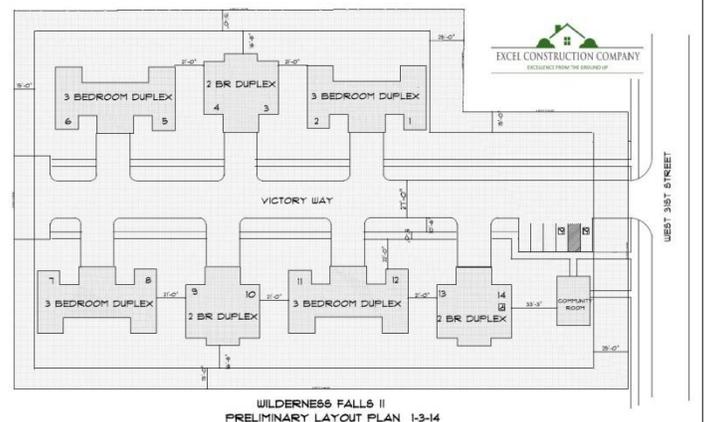
- A long-range community strategic plan that includes economic development
- Marketing materials to support strategic plan
- A long-range funding plan
- Current and consistent information in LOIS (Location One Information System) and community websites
- Fully populated demographic information in LOIS for community
- An economic development evaluation delineating successes and disappointments
- A letter from applicant municipal government identifying lead economic development agency and local contact person for this program.



Falls City EDGE submitted the recertification application in December of 2013 and we are pleased to report Nebraska Department of Economic Development granted Falls City with their recertification status on April 1, 2014.

Housing Update: Opportunity to Buy or Lease

[Excel Development Group](#), headquartered in Lincoln, NE, has submitted funding for a Phase II senior housing development adjacent to the Wilderness Falls area located at 31st and Barada St. The proposed project includes seven duplexes—eight three-bedroom units and six two-bedroom units—and will include a Community Room which will be a great addition to this thriving senior community. The funding review process will commence in April and if funds are approved construction will start as early as July 2014 and extend into the summer of 2015. These units will be available for lease.



Have you seen the construction activity going on just west of Wilderness Falls on W 31st St.? The Falls City Homefront, LLC community housing investment project is well underway. AHRs has been busy excavating, pouring concrete for basements and streets, extending water and sewer lines all in preparation for the arrival of 2 market rate homes that are available for purchase. The 2 bedroom home arrived on March 31st and the 3 bedroom should arrive by mid-April. Anyone interested in viewing the homes available for purchase should contact [Miller Monroe Co.](#) or [Falls City Realty](#) for more information.



\$7000 UPRR Foundation Grant Kick-Starts Falter Museum Project



A fund raising campaign is in full swing with hopes an art studio, honoring internationally renowned artist & illustrator, John Philip Falter, will open in his boyhood hometown of Falls City, Nebraska in the fall of 2014. The museum will be located on the corner of 17th and Stone St. in the historic, former RCB&T building. This prominent site, which is located in Falls City's Main Street district, will be renovated into a space that will provide a museum quality display for Falter's art. His most notable work includes over 125 Saturday Evening Post covers, fine portraits including such notables as Clark Gable, James Cagney, and Louie Armstrong, illustrations of 40+ books, as well as renowned works of American trains and depots including Falls City's UPRR depot built in 1925.

Falls City EDGE submitted a successful Union Pacific Railroad grant, in the amount of \$7000, which kick started the fundraising campaign which now stands at approximately \$45,000 dollars. "UPRR has a long-standing commitment to improve the quality of life in the communities they serve and their support is greatly appreciated" said Beckie Cromer, Executive Director of Falls City EDGE, "This is a great start to the campaign and we look forward to welcoming UPRR representatives to Falls City in May for the presentation of funds."

The committee has a goal of raising \$225,000 -- \$100,000 for construction and \$125,000 in operating revenue -- and renovations are expected to begin this spring. For more information or to make a donation to this worthwhile project please contact Committee Chairman, Dobby Falter Haws at 402-489-5938 or by visiting <http://www.johnpfaltergallery.wordpress.com/>

Southeast Nebraska Career Fair held at PSC



Kristy Dixon (left) and Patty Schwab, Nebraska City Area Economic Development Executive Assistant, promote Southeast Nebraska career opportunities at the Southeast Nebraska Career Fair.

Peru State College held its annual Southeast Nebraska Career Fair at the Al Wheeler Activity Center on March 19th, 2014. EDGE participates in the career fair annually as a member of [Southeast Nebraska Partners for Progress](#) - a regional organization that consists of partnering communities from Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee and Richardson counties. The organization's focus was to talk to students about the many benefits of seeking employment upon graduation right here in southeast Nebraska. Kristy Dixon, Falls City EDGE Administrative Assistant noted, "as we provided resources to these students about employment and business opportunities in southeast Nebraska, we were pleased to find many of the students have plans to stay in the area after graduation."

Upcoming Events

April 24 – WASP Corporate Visit, Glenwood, MN

April 25 - AGI Corporate Visit, Winnipeg, Canada

May 1- WASP BBQ and Public Tour

August 8 - Consolidated Grain and Barge Corporate Visit, Mandeville, LA

Entrepreneurial Education Still Going Strong

Since 2010, Falls City High School has teamed up with the Richardson County UNL Extension Office to offer instruction in entrepreneurial education to its high school business class students. EDGE sees great value in having the Extension Office in our community so an annual contribution of \$4,000 is granted towards entrepreneurship programs as well as implementing a manufacturing/education partnership aimed at matching local high school students with local industries.

Students in Mrs. Eickhoff's business class learn the ins and outs of starting a business with Jami Ankrom, 4-H Extension Assistant with the Extension Office.

Jami visits with the students over a 14-week time span assisting the students with developing their very own business plans. The business plans are then presented to the class and submitted for a final grade. The students are tasked with developing a plan that meets the needs of the local community, while taking into consideration industry competition, start-up costs, product/services offered and skills needed to create a viable business idea.

One of the business plans submitted was for a locally-owned shooting range called 'H & J Shooting Range'. Students Mitchell Harling and Zach Jordening developed a plan focusing on safety, respect and responsibility to meet the needs of hunters and competition shooters in the Falls City area.

The business plan required they develop a monthly budget, noting equipment, office, utilities and payroll expenses. They knew that creating both short-term and long-term goals would determine the success of their business. Goals include items such as advertising objectives, developing a loyal customer base, eventual site expansion and increasing their staff. Most importantly, they knew a plan must be in place for the bosses to take a day off!

Jami communicated that 133 students have taken part in the entrepreneurship program at the high school since 2010. We are pleased that so many students have shown an interest in starting a business in our community and just know that, in the future, one of these innovative ideas will find its way to our downtown district or a greenfield site near you!

Now Taking Enrollment for Summer Welding Class

A 60 – hour revamped welding course designed to meet local industry needs is being offered at Falls City High School this June. The course offering, which includes input from Airlanco, Herzog, and WASP, will include 20 hours of lecture and 40 hours of lab time and include 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 processes
- Manipulative skills and welding positions



The classes will be held in the Industrial Arts lab of Falls City High School June 3 through July 3 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 5PM – 8PM. Tuition is \$465 per student and scholarships are available to those who qualify. The lab will be renovated to accommodate updated welding equipment being donated by Southeast Community College. For more information about the class, scholarship information, course outline, and the required student personal safety equipment please contact the Falls City EDGE office at 402.245.2105 or director@fallscityedge.com.

H&J Shooting Range



A Safe Environment to Have Fun

Mission Statement:
H & J Shooting Range provides a safe environment for people to shoot weapons. Safety, Respect, and Responsibility are the necessities at the range. The range is a safe place to have fun with your family and friends while practicing caution.

Budget and Expenses

- Utilities - \$250 per month
- Supplies - \$57,762
- Employees - 3 part time, \$8.00 per hour = \$1,500 total per month
- Insurance - \$300 per month
- Maintenance - \$200 per month
- Advertisement - \$100 per month

Budget and Expenses for 1 year: \$85,962



Meet Kristy Dixon

We are pleased to announce that Kristy Dixon has joined EDGE as Administrative Assistant. Kristy was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, relocating to Falls City last spring. She is a graduate of Omaha Central High School and has plans to return to the University of Nebraska at Omaha this fall, continuing work on a bachelor's degree with a Non-Profit Organization focus.

"I am very excited to be a part of EDGE and assisting with the continued economic growth and development of Falls City and Richardson County." Kristy said. "This is an excellent opportunity for me to learn all about Falls City and introduce myself to many of its residents through EDGE committees and member events." Kristy and her husband, Brian, have two daughters Chloe, a kindergartner at Falls City North School, and Leah, a soon to be pre-schooler. Kristy and her family enjoy traveling and spending time outdoors - especially hiking, fishing and exploring area state parks.



You can reach Kristy at the EDGE office or by emailing assistant@fallscityedge.com.

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

Connect with us



2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bart Keller, Farm and City Supply
Steve Kottich, Miller Monroe Co.

Kevin Malone, F&M Bank

Dana Rathje, Richardson County Bank & Trust

Ray Joy, Southeast Nebraska Communications

Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director

DIRECTORS

Brian Daake, Dorr & Clark Funeral Home

Don Ferguson, Councilman, City of Falls City

Chris Halbert, Halbert, Dunn & Halbert, L.L.C.

Edward & Sandra Hartman

Tim Heckenlively, Falls City Public Schools

Tim Hersh, Mayor, City of Falls City

Dennis Hullman, Hullman's Ford

Seth Post, Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.

Ryan Larsen, Community Medical Center

Marc Morehead, Richardson County Bank & Trust

Jerry Oliver, Councilman, City of Falls City

Charles Radatz, Tri-State Corridor Alliance

David Sichel, Richardson County Commissioners

Rodney Vandeberg, Vandeberg Family Foundation

EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

David Branch, Manager, Falls City Area Chamber

Gary Jorn, City Administrator, City of Falls