



FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE
 VOLUME I ■ 2015

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

Food Processing Industry Returns to Falls City

edge



In July 2014, Project “Sausage King” was in its infancy stages as the Colorado based company began to look at Falls City for the relocation of its food processing plant. This project was a recipe for success from the beginning and Falls City is excited to welcome the food industry back to our community. The local building owner, Ray Kasel, and Colorado based sausage company owner, Rick Rue, were well acquainted as both were operating successful companies in Denver along Walnut St. These operations are located right in the heart of downtown Denver neighboring such iconic attractions as Coors Field and the 16th St. Mall. So many of America’s urban city centers are undergoing a transformation, a revitalization if you will, and Denver is along for the ride. Forbes notes in its March 2013 issue, “Denver’s civic and business leaders began work on the city’s Lower Downtown neighborhood in 1989 with the issuance of \$240 million in bonds.

Today LoDo is a trendy ‘hood of over 100 restored Victorian warehouses and buildings filled with art galleries, boutiques, local eateries and nightclubs. Now Denver is in the midst of a 20-year, seven-mega project plan to expand the revitalization efforts through the rest of the downtown district.” That downtown district is home to Gold Star Sausage and Denver’s revitalization plan triggered Mr. Rue’s efforts to start looking at a new location for his operations. Locations that included California, Texas, and Falls City, NE. Fast forward to November of 2014 when Gold Star Sausage made the announcement that Falls City, NE would be its new home for its private label production of hot dogs and sausages of all varieties. The USDA certified production facility will be located in the Industrial Park at 810 East 5th St. Company President Rick Rue notes, “We are excited about this multi-million dollar project which will include significant capital investment, infrastructure upgrades, and the creation of 40+ new employment opportunities. We look forward to opening the Falls City, NE location early in 2015.” The jobs being created are in the food processing industry and will include managers, quality assurance, maintenance, production, line supervisors, and office personnel.

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NEDA Legislative Day

The Nebraska Economic Developers Association's (NEDA) legislative day was held on February 4, 2015 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:

LB457 Change the Site & Building Development Act and terminate the Industrial Recovery Fund

LB569 Change the Business Innovation Act

LB156 Change the amount of credits from \$3 million to \$5 million allowed under the Angel Investment Tax Credit Fund

LB318 Intent to fund planning and development regions

LB321 Adopt the Nebraska Industrial New Job-Training Act

LB395 Adopt the Nebraska Enterprise Act and authorize grants for economic development projects with priority given to those that will create 100 or fewer jobs

LB657 Appropriate funds for state government expenses. NEDA supports the line item to establish the Nebraska Developing Youth Talent Initiative

LB36 Adopt the Community College Gap Assistance Program Act



Falls City EDGE has a special interest in the Community College Gap Assistance Program Act (LB36) and Charlie Radatz, Chair of the Tri State Labor Basin Committee, traveled to Lincoln to testify on this particular bill. Radatz notes, "This bill would help pay for programming for those classes that aren't eligible via traditional financial aid sources including the welding class we offer in Falls City. This bill would create a funding mechanism that would build the workforce our industries need and give Southeast Community College a reason to assist us with solid skills programming options in our area."

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.

Recapping 2014...Did You Know?

- **3 construction projects got underway in 2014 and totaled \$3+ million dollars in new investment—Sacred Heart Activity Center, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness, and the USDA Farm Service Agency.**
- **In 2014, 29 jobs were added to the industries located in the Falls City Industrial Park.**
- **Consolidated Grain and Barge welcomed 9,000 trucks during peak times of the 2014 harvest.**
- **\$50,000 dollars in grants and outside investment helped advance 5 different projects in 2014 including the Falter Museum, Lane Leadership Program, a Regional Housing Study, welding programs and the Sacred Heart Activities Center project.**
- **Tri State Truck and Tractor employment numbers grew to 6 with 3 full time and 3 part time workers.**
- **Vantec was awarded 11 new molds in 2014 which adds to the list of products being manufactured at the Falls City plant.**



[To view the full 2014 Annual Report click here](#)

Food Processing Industry Returns to Falls City (con't from page 1)

EDGE President Bart Keller, City Administrator Gary Jorn, and EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer traveled to Denver in late February to tour the Denver plant and learn more about the facility plans for Falls City, the skills required for the jobs being created and to make sure Falls City was meeting their needs as they transition operations from Denver to Falls City. We were welcomed by Rick, Ray, and a Colorado sized snowstorm that dropped 10+ inches of snow the previous day! We arrived at Gold Star Sausage and it was apparent revitalization was all around us as a \$25M dollar urban luxury apartment community development project was under construction directly across the street from the facility.



“Frank-o-matic” hot dog machine.

Once inside, the tour, which included wearing hair nets and smocks instead of hard hats and safety glasses, validated what a great company Gold Star Sausage will be for Falls City. The employees were friendly, the facility was top notch and clean as could be. Rick noted the Falls City plant will offer opportunity for growth and the acquisition of additional customers. The design of the Falls City plant allows for separate preparation areas for raw and finished product which Gold Star Sausage customers desire. He also envisions expanded product lines in the future and a Falls City location will allow them to grow their national distribution as well as capitalize on export.

Gold Star Sausage is proud to say they use only fresh, domestically produced, beef and pork trimmings. Their batch cook process and quick freeze techniques combine old-world craftsmanship with modern day efficiencies. “Falls City EDGE welcomes Gold Star Sausage to the community and we appreciate their contribution to the economic health and vitality of the region,” stated EDGE Executive Director, Beckie Cromer. “Gold Star Sausage is a great company and we look forward to the facility to be up and running very soon!”

For more information on Gold Star Sausage please visit their website at <http://www.goldstarsausage.com/>



Members of the Nebraska team included:
Beckie Cromer, Garry Clark and Mary Plettner

FABTECH 2014

In November, Beckie Cromer, along with members of the Lincoln Area Development Partnership and Nebraska Public Power District, attended FABTECH in Atlanta, GA. This tradeshow is the largest metal forming, fabricating, welding and finishing event in North America. EDGE Executive Director, Beckie Cromer stated, "It was one of the best tradeshow I have ever attended. The Nebraska booth saw a lot of traffic and we received many business contacts/project leads." The group will be participating in this event in 2015 and NPPD has already secured booth space for next year's show.

Welcome to our new investors!

Randy & Lori Gottula
Mike & Brenda Garriott
Jim & Shirley Jones

Peru State College – Graduate Programs

Local investments, from the public and private sectors, helped catapult this organization to unprecedented success and we are always excited to have new investors join this effort! For more information on becoming an EDGE investor contact Cassey at 402-245-2105 or assistant@fallscityedge.com

F&M “Investing in Falls City”

F&M Bank is investing in the future of Falls City with their $\frac{3}{4}$ million dollar interior remodel project which includes a complete redesign of their long-standing space at the historic corner of 17th and Stone St. Construction is well under way and this full service bank plans to be up and running in their newly remodeled space by the fall of this year. The F&M project can be described as a complete facelift and will showcase a new lobby area which includes a beverage station and a TV, updated offices, integrated teller stations and much more. “It will be a completely different bank when you walk in this fall,” said Executive Vice President, Kevin Malone. “We are creating a new and improved area for our customers to do business.”

Currently, F&M staff is housed in the rear of the building while the front half of the bank is under construction for the next 3 months. Customers have access via the side and rear entrances of the bank during this phase of the project. Once complete, the employees will then move to the front of the bank while AHRS Construction, and local contractors including: Jones Air Conditioning, Kawres, Jim Hills, Chaney Furniture, El Camino Electric and Hunzeker Masonry finish up the remainder of the building. “We are making great headway with the construction,” said Malone, “and we are very excited to unveil the finished project to the community!”

If you are curious to see the construction progress, check out their [F&M Bank Facebook page](#) or stop in and see it for yourself. The staff at F&M would be glad to give you a sneak peek!



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 April 14th.

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



[Register Here](#)

The classes will be held in the Industrial Arts lab of Falls City High School April 14 through May 9 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 5PM – 8:30PM and Saturdays from 8AM - 12:30PM. Tuition is \$465 per student. For more information about the class, course outline, and the required student personal safety equipment please contact the Falls City EDGE office at 402.245.2105 or director@fallscityedge.com

Positive Messages at EDGE Annual Meeting

The EDGE Annual Meeting and Banquet was held on Wednesday, January 7th with approximately 100 member-investors attending the event. Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director, served as Master of Ceremonies.

The banquet is an annual event that brings together so many volunteers who do so much for the community. EDGE's top accomplishments for 2014 were showcased in a display and the Annual Report was distributed to investors at the meeting. The most notable success stories of 2014 included the addition of Gold Star Sausage Company to the industrial park, Ames True Temper choosing to remain in Falls City, and WASP, Inc. being awarded the "2014 Nebraska Business of the Year". EDGE President, Bart Keller summarized the evening's event by saying, "I am proud to be at the helm of an organization that continues to reach new milestones that make our area a better place to do business, work, and live."



This year's keynote speaker was Chuck Schroeder who is a native of western Nebraska ranch country and recently named founding Executive Director of the University of Nebraska Rural Futures Institute (RFI). Through a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, the Rural Futures Institute mobilizes the diverse resources of the University of Nebraska and its partners to support rural communities and regions in building upon their unique strengths and assets to achieve their desired futures. Prior to joining the RFI, Schroeder served as President and Executive Director of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mr. Schroeder gave an inspiring message on hope and the vitality of rural America that inspired all in attendance. Schroeder noted Falls City is a vibrant community with strong leadership that is keenly focused on continuing to build upon recent successes.

Marc Morehead, Vice President of the Investor and Community Relations committee, awarded Merz Farm Equipment and WASP, Inc. with EDGE's sixth annual Co-Investor of the Year Awards. Marc highlighted these companies by saying:

"WASP Inc. celebrated its 25th year in Falls City with a nod from the Nebraska Diplomats as the "2014 Nebraska Business of the Year"! Governor Dave Heineman recognized WASP for their corporate citizenship at a banquet honoring this growing Falls City industry. WASP celebrated substantial job growth by surpassing the 100 employee mark in 2014 after slow but steady growth over the last decade which includes the addition of 76 jobs. WASP has also made a significant investment---totaling ½ million dollars---in equipment that will help them work smarter and faster as well as a 40X60 building expansion which gives them room to grow."

"Merz Farm Equipment celebrated 2014 in style by unveiling a ½ million dollar investment that was more than a year in the making. The Grand Opening celebration welcomed 400 guests who toured the 4000 square foot expansion that modernized the business and has given Falls City's northern corridor a grand new showpiece. The upgrades include a new showroom, high tech conference room, new offices, customer lounge and service office. Merz Farm Equipment has realized three generations of strong leadership and they are committed to giving their customers the best experience in the business. 2015 will mark their 30th year at this location and we look for continued success and growth from this Massey dealer."

During the business meeting Mitch Merz was elected to serve a 3-year term as a General Director. EDGE President Bart Keller concluded the meeting by saying, "We are always excited to have new members get more involved with EDGE at the board and committee levels. If you want to find out more about becoming involved in the exciting things EDGE is doing, please talk to Beckie Cromer or any board member. I urge you to get involved and help make a difference in Falls City and Richardson County."



Lights! Camera! Action!

[Southeast Nebraska Communications \(SNC\)](#) continues to do great things for this community and their newest venture has turned Falls City into the “place to watch”. That’s right...watch! fctv1, a partnership between SNC and Flood Communications, launched fctv1 live, on air during their inaugural broadcast on March 3, 2015. This new service provides up to the minute local broadcast of news, weather and sports for Falls City and the surrounding area. SNC is providing coverage of local events including school activities, local interest stories, City and County meetings, and other area happenings such as Cobblestone, Sauce and Cycles and the Richardson County Fair! The offerings will also include cooking instruction, outdoor shows, and public service announcements. Area community events, including area sports action, will be broadcast live or offered on a tape-delayed basis. The audience can look forward to watching high school football and basketball games that will offer instant replay as well as parades, school musicals, play productions and so much more!

SNC is pleased to announce that Grant Otten, who is Falls City’s newest resident, is the reporter that will be traveling the region covering the news in our local area. Grant brings a wealth of experience to fctv1 and he will be out and about daily to cover the news in the area. So far, Grant has covered public meetings, baseball and basketball games,

emergency police, fire, and ambulance calls, politics as well as local special interest stories. If you are interested in learning more about how to obtain fctv1 in your home or if you are interested in learning more about the advertising opportunities available through fctv1 contact SNC, 402.245.4451.



Hey Falls City...we'll see you on the big screen!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Falls City EDGE collaborates with many partners throughout the year and hosts many community events. Here are some of the upcoming events:

- April 27th CBG Headquarter Visit
- TBA Gold Star Sausage Job Fair
- May 2 & 3rd Falter Museum Grand Opening
- May 7th Nebraska Diplomats 2015 Business & Industry Recognition Day
- May 8th 11:30am-2:00pm Business & Industry Week BBQ at AirLanco
- June 24th 10:00 am Southeast Nebraska Resource Network meeting
 - July 10 & 11th – Main Street Sauce & Cycles Event

Southeast Nebraska Career Fair held at PSC

Peru State College held its annual Southeast Nebraska Career Fair at the Al Wheeler Activity Center on February 25, 2015. 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.

"This was a great opportunity not only to meet with the students & graduates, but to network within the college as well".
 Cassey Whalen,
 FC EDGE
 Admin. Assist.

Ames Companies Headquarter Visit

City Administrator Gary Jorn and EDGE Executive Director Beckie Cromer completed a corporate headquarter call to the Ames Companies, formerly Ames True Temper, in Harrisburg, PA. It was an informational visit and they had an opportunity to meet with Bob Novak, the newly hired Vice President of Manufacturing. It was noted that the Ames Companies were in the beginning stages of laying out a sustainable growth plan for the Falls City plant and there was strong interest in investing in Falls City and returning valuable jobs to the area. Mr. Novak, who will be evaluating all locations and processes within the Ames Companies, had an opportunity to tour the Falls City location in early January and the visit went very well. We look forward to the opportunities that await this location in terms of investment and job growth throughout 2015.

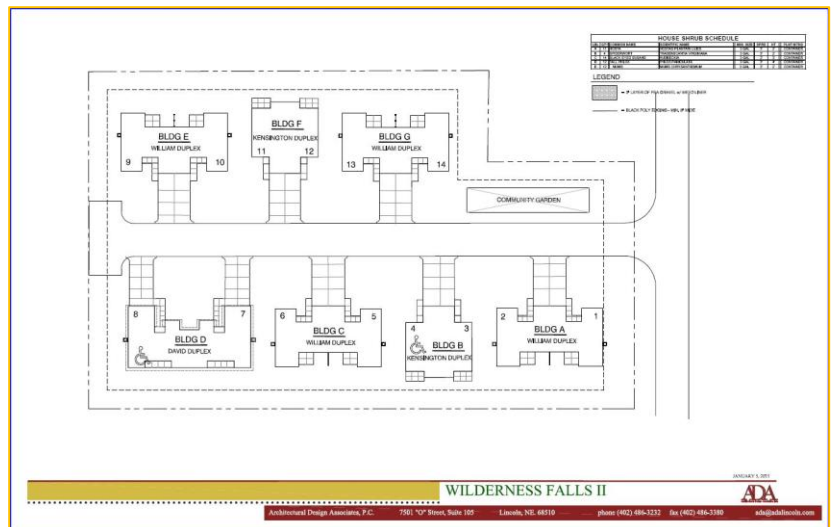


To learn more about the Ames Companies visit their website at www.ames.com.

Excel Development Phase II

Falls City EDGE, in cooperation with Excel Development Group, has unveiled plans for a Phase II housing development in the Wilderness Falls subdivision on West 31st St. Applications for funding the project were submitted in February and project announcements are expected in April. If funded, Phase II would include 4-2 bedroom units, 8-3 bedroom units, and 2-4 (family only) bedroom units. A community garden is also a part of the plan and will be a great place for tenants to test their skills at planting flowers, vegetables, herbs and fruit. There are currently 25 seniors on a waiting list who will get first priority if the project is constructed.

The 2-bedroom units will rent for \$500 per month, the 3-bedroom units for \$550 per month and the 4-bedroom rents will be \$600 per month. A public meeting was held on January 28th where only positive testimony was submitted for the project and Falls City scored highly on the initial threshold review in March. Project announcements will be made in April and if Wilderness Falls II receives funding construction will begin this summer!



A Message from the Director

A+, Out of Stock, 100%, No Vacancy, 4.0 GPA--- all of these signal success or perfection in one way or another. Success is measured by so many different factors and when you accomplish great things it should be celebrated. So, it's time to CELEBRATE Falls City! We have realized some great accomplishments in the last few years so you may be asking yourself what's all the excitement about and my answer would be---**Falls City has now realized 100% occupancy of its industrial building portfolio!**

What does that mean from an economic development standpoint? Well, let me share some of the statistics/facts that go along with a healthy, vibrant industrial park:

- We have 7 (a record number) local industries including Airlanco, the Ames Companies, Herzog, Consolidated Grain and Barge, Vantec, WASP and Gold Star Sausage.
- Today, nearly 275 people work in our Industrial Park generating millions of dollars in income for area families.
- Industry employment projections for 2015 point to continued growth with Gold Star Sausage planning to add 40 new jobs and WASP aiming to reach the 130 employee mark (a gain of about 20 workers) by the end of the year.
- These companies are growing our tax base by making significant capital investments---building additions and modernization of equipment.
- Our industries occupy a total of 238,120 square feet.
- Falls City Utilities garner significant revenue from the local industries which in turn helps the city maintain our infrastructure and keep operating costs down.
- The last time Falls City had a 100% occupancy in its industrial park was in the late 1990's.
- Another important factor in the overall health of our industry base is that our companies are small to mid-size and industrially diverse with agriculture, plastics, metal fabrication, and food processing.

Economic Development takes strategy, planning, and volunteerism—a true recipe for success. Many of the success noted above took vision and kudos to those that had the courage to build a spec building in 1999, or the foresight to choose a Falls City location for their business, or confidence in our workforce to grow and expand! Congratulations Falls City---you have much to be proud of!

Beckie Cromer, EDGE Executive Director

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