



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

FALLS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH ENTERPRISE  
 VOLUME I ■ 2009

**EDGE Celebrates Banner Year—  
 Looks Toward the Future**

... A Message from Kevin Malone, EDGE President

Annual meetings always offer the opportunity to reflect on the past and look toward the future. This year’s Third Annual Meeting of EDGE held on January 7<sup>th</sup> was no exception.

We celebrated a banner year for economic development in Falls City and Richardson County—2008 was unprecedented in that we generated multi-million dollar new investments and growth in area employment. Following are a few of this year’s *shining moments*:

- In April Community Medical Center began construction of a \$21 million dollar medical facility. The new Center is scheduled to open this year. The development represents the fifth major multi-million dollar construction project undertaken in Falls City within the past five years, following the new high school track and field, the Water Treatment Plant, the Library and Arts Center and the Aquatic Center.
- In May Iowa-based Vantec, Inc. announced it would locate a \$4.4 million dollar custom plastics injection molding operation in the Falls City Industrial Park spec building and create 25 new full-time positions. The facility began production in November.
- Work continued throughout the year on transforming the historic Hotel Stephenson into a modern 48-room hotel and conference/convention center—a cornerstone for further revitalization and development of our Downtown Main Street.
- In December plans were unveiled for a new \$32 million dollar Missouri River Bridge at Rulo. EDGE in collaboration with the Tri-State Corridor Alliance has been instrumental in generating support for the project. Nebraska and Missouri roads officials are looking to begin construction in 2011.

The Falls City area is experiencing exciting times and we can all take pride in our success. Now is not the time to rest on our laurels. Read on to learn about the actions and public policy positions EDGE will take in the coming year to *strategically position and build for the future*. Let’s continue to work together as a private-public economic development team and make 2009 an even greater success!

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# EDGE Vice Presidents Outline 2009 Action Plans

## Steve Kottich, Vice President – Marketing & Sales Committee

The Marketing and Sales Committee's strategic objective is *to aggressively brand, market and sell Falls City business location opportunities, to retain/expand existing business investments, and to generate new business investment prospects*. Over the past two years, the Marketing & Sales Committee has been highly focused on converting business prospect leads to sales, including Vantec Inc. and Hotel Stephenson projects that generated over \$5.55 million dollars in investment. We have also worked closely with existing businesses to encourage retention/expansion and to address growth needs, including developing a welders training program. The Richardson County Labor Study was completed in 2008 and serves as an excellent tool in proving we have an available, qualified workforce. Throughout the year, we participated in state and regional marketing events to generate new business leads. And we have continually updated and enhanced the [EDGE website](#) to serve as the cornerstone of our marketing program. In fact, this year hits, page views and unique visitors increased dramatically over last year—total hits were up 28.5%, page views up 94.5% and unique visitors up 88%.



In 2009 we will focus on three strategic priorities: retaining and growing existing business investments and employment, generating new business development leads and developing our marketing tools to be prepared to make the sale. Key actions this year will include:

- Target major existing businesses/employers:
  - Complete at least one sales call on all major existing businesses/employers, including calls on corporate headquarters.
  - Work with existing businesses/employers to identify business location leads for the greater Falls City area, including buyer-supplier linkages to the region. Prepare an annual existing industry report summarizing the calls and conduct an existing employer roundtable to present the report and develop actions to build on strengths identified by employers and to address issues of concern.
- Target new prospects:
  - Develop and implement a series of quarterly direct marketing-sales campaigns to reach targeted businesses within 100-miles of Richardson County/Falls City in Missouri, Kansas and Iowa.
  - Make sales contacts at two target industry trade shows.
  - Participate in state and regional cooperative marketing activities aligned with EDGE's sales targets.
- Target EDGE investor members, community stakeholders, and alumni of area high schools living elsewhere through a new *EDGE Business Prospect Lead Referral Program*.
- Build and strengthen partnerships with state and regional partners, including the [Nebraska Department of Economic Development](#) and [Lincoln Area Development Partners](#); utilities, including [Omaha Public Power District](#) and [Nebraska Public Power District](#); and railroads, including [UP](#) and [BNSF](#).
- Develop marketing and sales tools to support actions and update [the EDGE website](#) on an ongoing, frequent basis.

Our number one priority will be to aggressively follow-up and pursue all business development leads generated from our direct marketing-sales campaign. We will continue to pursue leads from state and regional partnerships, existing industry, member investors and other networks.

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## Bart Keller, Vice President – Investor and Community Relations Committee

The Investor and Community Relations Committee's strategic objective is *to maintain private and public investments and continue to gain internal support for EDGE by demonstrating accountability and "return on investment" garnering sufficient resources to effectively implement the economic development strategic plan/growth strategy*. We have strived to maintain positive relations with EDGE investors and community stakeholders. Over the past two years, we have continually reached out to our member investors through multiple channels to inform and engage. The *lunch and learn* series of briefings were very well received and provided an interactive forum to learn more about EDGE and the business of economic development. We have also worked closely with local media to keep the community informed on our program of work and accomplishments. We delivered gift baskets to express our appreciation to our major employers for their investment in our community and jobs provided to area residents.

(Cont. next page >>)

## Bart Keller, Vice President – Investor and Community Relations Committee (Cont.)

In the coming year, our Committee will focus actions on three strategic priorities: fostering positive investor relations, fostering positive community relations and generating capital investments needed to support EDGE's program of work. Key actions this year will include:

- Continue to reach out to investors through multiple channels, including conducting quarterly *lunch and learn* briefings and actively engage investors in EDGE's program of work, tapping into a wealth of expertise and talents.
- In addition to the EDGE annual meeting and banquet, organize a mid-year *networking* event.
- Develop and implement an EDGE *Employer of the Quarter Appreciation Program* to recognize and thank local employers for their investment and jobs.
- Develop and implement quarterly *employer tours* to highlight local employers' operations and career/job opportunities.
- Work with the *Falls City Journal* and area schools to develop a series of EDGE sponsored *employer spotlights*.
- Proactively work to identify opportunities to speak to community and civic organizations throughout Richardson County to increase awareness of EDGE's program of work and to encourage county-wide support for EDGE and a *unified vision* for growth and development.
- Organize a *Greater Falls City Area Opportunities Fair* connecting local businesses, entrepreneurs and residents to resources and growth opportunities. The fair will showcase an array of local, regional, state and national resources which include opportunities from entrepreneurial/small business start-ups to careers to franchises.
- Develop and implement a capital campaign to secure investment commitments for the next three-years.

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## Beth Sickel, Vice President – Product Development & Public Policy Advocacy Committee

Our Committee's strategic objective is to enhance *the competitiveness of the business location product –the greater Falls City area—to compete more frequently and effectively for business investments and to decrease the number of missed business location/expansion opportunities*. Over the past year, we have led public advocacy to insure funding for major transportation infrastructure projects, including the Rulo Bridge and Highways 73 and 159 and we developed a public policy agenda to guide EDGE's position and approach on public policy issues (see page 4).

In 2009 our strategic priorities will focus on: increasing product inventory—marketable sites and buildings, developing local incentives, increasing quality housing inventory, workforce development, and advocating for public policies and funding in support of EDGE's mission, goals and program of work. Key actions this year will include:

- Establish an Industrial Sites and Buildings Task Force to develop and advance a plan of action to increase product inventory—marketable sites and buildings.
- Aligned with EDGE's public policy statements, develop public policy positions and advocacy actions on current issues impacting the competitiveness and growth and development of the greater Falls City area. Continue to monitor priority transportation infrastructure projects to ensure funding to complete projects, as well as to identify any future transportation infrastructure issues/barriers to growth that need to be addressed.
- Establish a Comprehensive Plan Task Force to review the Plan and recommend overall priority goals, policies and strategic actions to advocate the City act on.
- Establish a Housing Task Force to develop and advance a comprehensive planned approach to increase inventory of quality housing.
- Establish a Workforce Development Task Force to develop recommendations to address area employers' current and future workforce education and skills needs.
- Establish an Incentives Task Force to develop and advance a plan of action to develop local incentives programs.





EDGE

# Public Policy Statements

The EDGE Board recently adopted the following statements to guide our position and approach on public policy issues.

1. EDGE supports local and state policies, legislation, funding sources and programming that will enhance the business and regulatory climate for capital investment and job creation.
2. EDGE supports funding and programming for education and skills training at all levels that will provide for the development of a well-educated, highly trained and skilled workforce to meet the needs of our employers.
3. EDGE supports funding for infrastructure improvements that will provide connectivity for businesses and residents and assist in the development of the greater Falls City area as a growing industrial, commercial, residential and tourism destination.
4. EDGE supports performance-based incentives and tax credits that will leverage private investment and stimulate economic growth and employment.
5. EDGE encourages the City of Falls City continually review, update and implement the City's comprehensive plan—a guide for future growth and development, including land use and annexation. EDGE supports the use of tax increment financing (TIF) as an economic development tool to redevelop and revitalize areas of the community and expand business and housing developments. (*See sidebar article on TIF.*)
6. EDGE supports main street, leisure and tourism developments that will generate new wealth and enhance the overall attractiveness of our area as a place to live, work and play. EDGE also supports collaborative efforts to market living, working and entrepreneurial opportunities that will attract and retain residents, workers, entrepreneurs and visitors to the greater Falls City area.

For more information on EDGE's public policy positions or TIF, contact Executive Director [Beckie Cromer](#).

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF) —a Viable Economic Development Tool

In 2008 Falls City EDGE sponsored a well-attended TIF seminar with many community leaders and civic representatives in attendance. The purpose of the program was to educate the community about TIF and its many benefits.

TIF is a public financing method, approved by Nebraska voters, that has been used for redevelopment and community improvement projects statewide for more than 30 years. It is primarily designed to finance the public costs associated with a private development project. Existing, assessed real estate taxes continue to be paid to the taxing entities and the new real estate taxes paid, based on property improvements, are used to pay the TIF bonds that finance infrastructure improvements. As traditional federal and state funding coffers are depleted, TIF provides an alternate financing tool for municipalities.

TIF projects can be commercial, residential, industrial or involve a mixed use. Examples include improvements to infrastructure, utilities, schools and housing developments all of which are vital to a progressive and prosperous community. TIF projects provide increased site value and the investment generates increased tax revenues needed to repay the public investment. The property tax increases generated from the redeveloped site are applied to the TIF bonds until they are repaid, or for 15 years, after which the increases revert to local government taxing jurisdictions.

In the past six years, Auburn, NE has completed six TIF projects—four private businesses and two public works improvements. The private business developments included funding for a funeral home, bowling center and two separate apartment complexes. Auburn Mayor Bob Engles notes, "TIF is one of the few tools small towns have to help stimulate business activity. I have seen cases where the money from TIF determines whether a project happens". In 1997, there were 183 TIF projects in Nebraska. Today, the number of projects statewide is up almost threefold. There were 517 TIF projects under way in 2007. Those projects took property values valued at \$496 million and redeveloped it into \$1.8 billion worth of property. TIF is definitely a growing and popular trend.

TIF provides Falls City a viable opportunity to progressively build for the future. EDGE supports the use of TIF as an economic development tool to redevelop and revitalize areas of the community and expand business and housing developments.

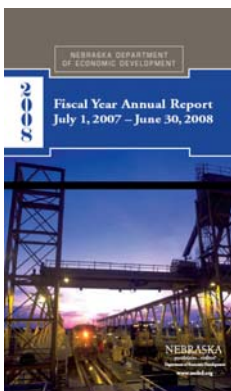
# Governor's *Year in Review*

In Gov. Heineman's *Year in Review* posted on his website, he reflects back on some important accomplishments of the past year. Two accomplishments are specifically related to economic development. He notes:

- "Working with the Legislature, we made progress in our efforts to attract innovative, growing businesses by expanding our business incentives package to include the Nebraska Super Advantage. The new tier provides additional incentives to companies paying higher wages and will help in our business recruitment efforts.
- Last year will also be remembered for an event that helped our state make new connections to international businesses. The reverse trade mission hosted this fall brought many first-time guests to Nebraska and provided opportunities for visitors to interact with Nebraska business leaders and visit growing businesses. This event was a first for our state. It provided our economic development team with several new connections to companies looking to invest in the United States Trade relationships develop and mature over time and the reverse trade mission will be something we revisit in the years to come as we seek to open new doors for trade and international investment."

To note, EDGE President Kevin Malone and former Executive Director Chuck Whitney participated in the Governor's reverse trade mission.

To read the entire *Year in Review*, go to the [Governor's website](http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/columns/2009/01_09/010209.html): [www.governor.nebraska.gov/columns/2009/01\\_09/010209.html](http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/columns/2009/01_09/010209.html).



## NE DED Annual Report Now Available Online

Anyone wanting to learn about the many programs and services available through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) can now preview the department's 2008 fiscal year report online at: [www.neded.org/files/PIO/ann\\_rep/2008/2008NeDED\\_AnnualReport.pdf](http://www.neded.org/files/PIO/ann_rep/2008/2008NeDED_AnnualReport.pdf).

The 2008 report summarizes a number of activities, including the state's efforts in business recruitment and expansion, housing development, job training, international trade and investment, and travel and tourism to name but a few.

"We have designed and focused our annual report to be one of our key marketing materials," said Richard Baier, director of DED. "The report details the many programs and services undertaken by the department to improve and build the state's economy and infrastructure."

## News Updates

- Falls City EDGE is pleased to announce funds have been committed to provide cooperative support for a new Extension Assistant position in the UNL Extension Office in Richardson County. This position will conduct and administer the Extension programs in 4-H, School Enrichment, Afterschool, and Youth Development in Richardson County. EDGE is happy to be a partner in this collaborative effort to develop our area youth.
- In mid-November last year EDGE sponsored a meeting with Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) to inform citizens of their past, current and future planning for the renewal of their licensing at Cooper Nuclear Station. NPPD President and CEO Ron Asche's presentation was very informative. Cooper Nuclear Station is a valuable asset to residents of southeast Nebraska. NPPD employs 101 Richardson County residents and provides valuable resources for generating electricity. The Falls City EDGE Board passed a Resolution of Support for Cooper Nuclear Station at the December 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Our support will help in maintaining the viability of Cooper Nuclear Station for years to come.
- Southeast Nebraska Economic Development Association (SeNEDA) hosted Lynnette Wood of J.W. Prairie Wind Power (JWPW) in October last year. JWPW recently submitted a *Request for Proposal* to Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) for their proposed wind farm in Nebraska. Wood's presentation provided an overview of JWPW, wind turbine technology and an overview of the proposed wind farm project in Richardson County.



### **Public Investors**

City of Falls City (\$90,000\*)  
\*Estimate based on 2% of municipal gas and electric revenue

Richardson County (\$25,000\*)  
\*Fiscal Year 2008 Commitment

### **Private Investors**

**Visionary Investors (\$5,000 >)**  
Community Medical Center  
Dorr and Clark Funeral Home  
Farm & City Supply  
First National Bank & Trust  
Halbert, Dunn & Halbert, L.L.C.  
Hartman, Edward and Sandra  
Richardson County Bank & Trust  
Southeast Nebraska Communications

**Champion Investors (\$2,500-\$4,999)**  
Armbruster Motor Co.  
Martin, John & Kathy  
Morehead, John & Amalia  
Vandeberg, Rodney  
Falls City Journal

**Catalyst Investors (\$1,000-\$2,499)**  
Animal Health Center  
Bachman, Merle & Trula  
Careage Estates  
Check-In Motel  
Falls City Pharmacy  
Falls City Lions Club  
Falls City Mercantile Co.  
Froeschl Construction Inc.  
Grand Weaver Hotel  
Hullman's Ford  
Jim Hill's  
Miller-Monroe Company, Inc.  
Parkside Dental Clinic  
Sun Mart Foods  
Weaver, Merz & Goltz

**Advocate Investors (\$500-\$999)**  
Aitken, Robert W. (CPA)  
American National Bank  
Brott Law Office  
Falls City Care Center  
Habben, Dr. Jon & Kathy  
Harris, Ed & Deb  
James, Dr. Charles R. (DDS)  
Jones Heating & Air Conditioning  
KLZA/Kanzaland Radio Group – Sunny 101.3

### **Advocate Investors (\$500-\$999)-cont.**

Malcolm, Dr. Terry (DDS)  
Mary's Appliance  
McPeak, Dr. Eric  
Neal Parsons Law Office  
Pony Creek Rentals  
Poppe Realty & Management  
Radatz, Charles & Karen  
Solid Rock Anesthesia  
Stripes & Signs  
Tier One Bank  
Time Warner Cable  
Walnut Creek Cabinets

### **Supporter (Individual & Non-Profit) Investors (\$100-\$499)**

Bartek, Dr. Tom & Kathy  
Campbell, Don & Laverne  
Castle, Mike & Jean  
Chesnut, Bev  
DeBusk, Larry & Carole  
Eickhoff, Ryan & Halbert, Andy  
Falls City BPO Elks  
Falls City Rotary Club  
Finck, Ray & Ruth  
Froeschl, Mary  
Gentry, Charlotte  
Gerlt, Gail R. & Marlene  
Gist, Martin & Mary Jane  
Godemann, Ted & Mona  
Jenkins, Bill & Becky  
Johnson, Rick & Susan  
Keller, Bart & Gayle  
Kottich, Steve & Diana  
Malone, Kevin & Janet  
McKim, Jerry & Nancy  
Morehead, Marc & Marcia  
Oliver, Jerry & Sharryll  
Parrish, John & Barb  
Richardson County Business Development Assn.  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Sailors, Chuck  
Schock, Bill  
Sickel, David & Alyce  
Simpson, Kenny & Tami  
Sikora, Fred and Pam  
Stalder, R. Merle  
Stice, Donnie & Julie  
Veigel, Merle & Sara  
Vision Inn  
Vrtiska, Kim & Kris  
Weaver, Paul & Letha  
Weinert, Paul  
Wilhelm, Madaline  
Wolfe, David & Martha

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

Beckie Cromer, Executive Director  
Becky Fischer, Administrative Assistant

### 2009 Board of Directors

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V.P. of Marketing & Sales - Steve Kottich, Miller Monroe Co.  
V.P. of Product Development & Public Policy –  
Beth Sickel, Southeast Nebraska Communications  
V.P. of Investor & Community Relations –  
Bart Keller, Farm and City Supply  
Secretary/Treasurer – Beckie Cromer

Brad Campbell, Councilman, City of Falls City  
Brian Daake, Dorr & Clark Funeral Home  
Dr. Jon Habben, Superintendent, Falls City Public Schools  
Chris Halbert, Halbert, Dunn & Halbert, L.L.C.  
Edward & Sandra Hartman  
Dan Hill, Jim Hill's Paint & Glass  
Ryan Larsen, Community Medical Center  
Marc Morehead, Richardson County Bank & Trust  
Dana Rathje, Falls City Pharmacy  
Charles Radatz, Tri-State Corridor Alliance  
James Sefried, Richard County Board of Commissioners  
Jerry Oliver  
The Honorable Rodney Vandenberg, Mayor of Falls City

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Gary Jorn, City Clerk/Treasurer, City of Falls City  
Donna Landis, Manager, Falls City Chamber of Commerce

### A Message from the EDGE Executive Director ....

I am so happy the old saying is true—when one door closes another door opens. I've been given an opportunity to lead a great organization and we have an exciting program of work planned this year. I've had the opportunity to partner with Economic Development for many years but it's very exciting to be an integral part of Falls City EDGE. I am fortunate to have a very passionate Executive Committee and Board of Directors and we wholeheartedly believe in the potential of the greater Falls City area. I encourage each investor to log onto the EDGE website and review our 2009 Strategic Plan. It is filled with great marketing ideas, it validates our commitment to our current employer base because retaining and expanding that base is vital to our community, and it outlines how we will develop our most valuable products—Richardson County, Falls City and its workforce.

EDGE has a lot of momentum going into 2009. We will capitalize on that momentum and aggressively market our special corner of the state. I look forward to accomplishing many great things with Falls City Economic Development and Growth Enterprise. Stay tuned....

Beckie Cromer, Executive Director