



GO NEWS

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Working Together to Grow a Vibrant Phelps County Economy

#GROW 37

Phelps County, Nebraska

Volume 16 Number 1 | Spring 2021



Nutt Selected as PCDC Priceless Pick

Tom Nutt, a former PCDC board member, has been selected as the 2020 President's Priceless Pick.

The award is given annually to someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in economic development.

Outgoing PCDC President Reed McClymont selected Nutt for his contributions on the Phelps County Board of Commissioners, his term on PCDC's Board of Directors, his tireless support for various community endeavors, and most recently his work as co-chair of the Holdrege Veterans Memorial Committee.

"During his tenure, the committee has solidified its vision, mounted a successful fund-raising campaign, secured support from CERT to conduct a sustained fundraising effort into the future and figuratively and literally laid the foundation for a successful project," McClymont said.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

New Report Shows PCDC's Major Impact on Area Economy, Jobs

PCDC investments have spurred jobs and growth in the past five years, and a new report shows just how big of an impact PCDC has made.

The recently-released economic impact report prepared by NPPD economist Ken Lemke showed PCDC contributed to a \$284 million impact on the local economy between 2016-2020.

PCDC supported projects such as the Cobblestone Hotel, Washington Square Apartments and the Briggs & Stratton expansion. In addition, PCDC gave grants for downtown business improvements and to new residents in the form of down-payment assistance for homes.

The total impact figure includes not only projects directly assisted by PCDC but also investments made by companies that rely on the overall strength of the market such as Becton Dickinson, which has made upgrades valued at \$210 million since 2016.

PCDC Board President Phil Hinrichs said he is optimistic about the future as the report shows PCDC helped create nearly 200 jobs and helped attract more than 300 new residents in the past five years.

"I am excited to see the strong investment across the entire county," Hinrichs said. "I am especially impressed by the 189 new jobs and 309 new residents!"



PCDC MARKET IMPACT 2016-2020

- **\$73.4 million** of private investment stimulated by direct PCDC assistance or investment.
- **\$329.3 million** total economic impact (includes direct, induced and indirect impacts) of all projects occurring in the market, including expansion and new equipment installations at BD and PMHC.
- **\$62 million** in labor income generated during construction phases of all projects.
- **189** new jobs in Phelps County.
- **\$87.1 million** market value added, also called Growth of Regional Product (includes direct, induced and indirect impacts).

See more impact numbers on page 5.

SOURCE: NPPD Chief Economist Ken Lemke, PhD



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Diedrichsen Steps Down After Eight Years on PCDC Board

Fred Diedrichsen has retired from the Phelps County Development Corporation Board of Directors after serving for eight years.

Diedrichsen, who worked for 42 years as a local dentist, has volunteered on many local boards and appreciates opportunities to lead and serve in the community.

“As with any board I’ve ever been on, I’ve enjoyed all the information I received on the PCDC board,” he said. “You have all the information from both sides. You really know what’s going on, and it’s sometimes unfortunate you can’t share all of that.”

Diedrichsen has been involved in some

exciting local economic development projects in the past eight years, including:

- The renewal of the LB840 sales tax by 83 percent,
- Purchasing, naming and the continued development of the Iron Horse Industrial Park,
- Bringing the new Cobblestone Inn & Suites to Holdrege,
- Growing the community through GO! HOME and GO! DREAM grant programs.

Diedrichsen said PCDC’s work has spurred activity and is laying the groundwork for future jobs and growth in the county.

“What we are doing today is a lot different than what we were doing eight years ago when I started on the board,” he said. “I think Holdrege is primed to have great things happen in the next few years.”



Fred Diedrichsen

Holdrege Native Moon Selected As Newest PCDC Board Member

A Holdrege native has been elected to replace Fred Diedrichsen on the Phelps County Development Corporation Board of Directors.

Jeff Moon, managing broker at AgWest Land Brokers, LLC, began his board service in February to help lead economic development activities in the county. Moon graduated from Holdrege High School in 1995. He and his wife, Haley, also an HHS graduate, moved back because they wanted to raise their kids where they grew up.

Moon graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with an agribusiness degree and a master’s degree in geography. He is an accredited farm manager and accredited land consultant. He is a graduate of the Leadership Education/Action Development (LEAD) program

in Class 33. He has worked in land real estate sales and management for more than 10 years in Nebraska.

Moon said Phelps County’s “hard-working and generous” people are its greatest asset. “They are people who want to provide a good life and place to live for their families.”

Continuing to provide good employment opportunities and housing for the next generation are two of the county’s biggest challenges when it comes to economic development, Moon said.

Moon said his experience in land real estate transactions will be an asset to the board.

“I’m committed to serving the community and this board where I am needed and bring the most value,” he said.

In addition to the PCDC board, Moon also serves on the Christian Homes board of directors and is the Holcomb Evangelical Church Awana Director.

Jeff and Haley, who works at Family Medical Specialties, live on a farm north of Holdrege and have two children; Jake, 12; and Jenna, 10.



Jeff Moon

MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY

Abramson Appliance Celebrates 100 Years

Abramson Appliance in downtown Holdrege has introduced every major appliance since the beginning of appliances and continues to provide hometown sales and service to the residents of Phelps County.

The local family-owned appliance store will celebrate 100 years in business in 2021.

Mark Abramson is the third generation to sell and service appliances. His grandfather, G.M. (Gustaf Malcom) Abramson, started the business in 1921 just north of the current location at 313 West Ave. Mark's father, Evald, purchased the appliance store in 1965.

Mark remembers visiting the store often as a child.

"I'd come down after school to hang around," Mark said. "I'd ride along with them on service calls."

After Mark graduated from high school, he earned an associate's degree

in electronics and worked various jobs before deciding to join the family business. He purchased the business from his parents (Evald and Mary Lou) in 1991.

One of Mark's business philosophies is to stay competitive in pricing with the "big box" stores and offer great service, even if customers haven't purchased an appliance from him.

"The difference between us and the big box stores is that we deliver, we install and we haul off your old one," Mark said. "When we leave after an installation, you are ready to do your laundry or dishes."

Abramson's sells and services refrigerators, stoves and ovens, dishwashers, microwaves, freezers and washers and dryers.

The brands he sells are Maytag, Frigidaire, LG Speed Queen, which offers commercial grade washers and dryers for the residential market.



Mark Abramson is the third generation of his family to own and operate Abramson Appliance in downtown Holdrege.

New Owner Brings Beachy Feel, Fresh Look to Gutterz

New life is being infused into Gutterz Fun Center with a new owner.

Daryl McNeil became part-owner of the business with his friend and previous owner Brent Hinrichs in February 2020. He purchased the other half and became full owner as of January 1, 2021.

In the past year, renovations have included creating a more "beachy" feel with fresh paint on the outdoor bar, new patio furniture, and clean up of the sand volleyball area.

"People really enjoyed that last summer," McNeil said. "We even extended the season with some patio heaters."

Interior renovations included new synthetic bowling lanes, an upgraded oiling system for the lanes and a fresh coat of paint on the walls and ceilings.

McNeil has already purchased new pinsetters to be installed after bowling leagues are done this year.

Outdoor renovations will also continue this year with plans to create a dedicated cornhole area for cornhole leagues and tournaments with lights, a scoring system and drink holders. He is also extending the cement on the back courtyard area and adding a fireplace and televisions to increase the outdoor entertaining space.

Sand volleyball leagues will start in May and June, and McNeil estimates based on popularity last summer that he may add one more

night of coed league play for a total of three nights per week.

"By the end of this year, the bowling alley will be completely upgraded, and the outdoors will be completely upgraded," McNeil said.

In addition to the facilities, the Aviator Restaurant has seen an increase in diners. McNeil said they used nearly every dish in the restaurant for a recent Wednesday lunch steak special.

"I am very thankful for how well the community has supported it," McNeil said. "I've had people say, 'We've heard about the changes, and we just wanted to come out and see.'"

Gutterz Fun Center is located at 227 Denver St. in Holdrege and is open 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and 11 a.m.-1 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

HOMETOWN LIVING

For expanded stories, visit PhelpsCountyNE.com or follow PCDC on social media.

Local Grads Share Benefits of Phelps Co. Careers

DeWald Finds Professional Opportunity in Rural NE



Nate DeWald
1999 HHS Grad

When Nate DeWald and his now-wife, Sarah, attended Holdrege High School, they said there was “not a chance” they would live back in their hometown someday.

But, that perspective changed once they became parents.

“When you have kids, it makes you think about what kind of environment you want them to grow up in,” Nate said. “From a family perspective, we appreciated what Holdrege had to offer.”

Nate graduated from HHS in 1999 and then earned a bachelor’s degree at Doane College and then his law degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Law. After law school, he worked in Lincoln as in-house counsel for a 500-person corporation and in a law firm that specialized in environmental and water law.

He and Sarah moved to Holdrege in 2010, and he

started a law firm with his friend, Gothenburg native Luke Deaver.

“Frankly, there is a lot of opportunity in rural Nebraska and Holdrege,” Nate said. “For anyone offering professional services, be it a plumber, electrician, lawyer or accountant, there is plenty of work to be done.”

Nate said moving to Holdrege was “easily the best choice of my professional career. No questions. There are things in metro areas like corporate ladders that you don’t have to worry about here.”

Nate said he believes there is something special about Phelps County and Holdrege.

“I think it’s largely due to the deep roots of the families who live here and their willingness to contribute back to the community,” he said. “And, if you are willing to invest in this community, this community is willing to invest in you.”

Ridder Enjoys Raising Family in A Small Town

Christine (Johnson) Ridder has found numerous career opportunities in Phelps County. She is a physical therapist at Holdrege Physical Therapy and Sports Rehab, a real estate agent at Real Estate Connection and is co-owner of a real estate company called CJHC. Her husband, Joe, is a Callaway native and operates Ridder Construction.

Christine graduated from Holdrege High School in 2002 and earned a bachelor’s degree in exercise science from Nebraska Wesleyan University and a doctorate of physical therapy from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Mo.

Moving back to Holdrege wasn’t the plan, but when she and Joe were planning their wedding and living in Omaha, they decided they wanted to live closer to family and raise their future family in a small town. They moved to Holdrege

in 2011.

“We chose to live in my hometown because it is a great place to raise a family,” Christine said. “We have a lot of friends and family here, and we enjoy the smaller town living and all that comes with that. As far as my career goes, I feel like I get to know my patients and clients on a more personal level and often I already know them.”

She enjoys living in Holdrege because there is no commute, has smaller schools that still offer the diverse activities and classes that larger schools do, and it is safe.

“Phelps County is a great place to raise a family and own a business with much to offer,” she said. “Phelps County residents are very supportive of their small businesses and proud of their communities!”



Christine Ridder
2002 HHS Grad

Marquardt Returns to Where She Loved Growing Up



Paige Marquardt
2014 HHS Grad

Paige (Garrelts) Marquardt always knew she wanted to return to her hometown someday.

“This is where I was raised, and this is my home,” she said. “So, I’m very happy to be back!”

Paige graduated from HHS in 2014 and earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in speech-language pathology with a minor in education. She then earned a master’s in communication sciences and disorders from UNK in 2020.

She is now a speech-language pathologist (SLP) and is employed by InSPIRe Rehabilitation. She works with patients and clients at Phelps Memorial Health Center,

Phelps Memorial Therapy Center, Holdrege Memorial Homes, Christian Homes and the Bertrand Nursing Home.

“I chose to work and live in my hometown because I loved growing up in this community,” Paige said. “The majority of my family lives in Holdrege, and this is where my husband and I decided we want to live, work, and raise a family.”

She married Austin Marquardt in September 2020. He is a 2013 HHS graduate and works at Nebraskaland Aviation.

Paige enjoys the small-town feel of Holdrege and its safety. She also likes shopping at local family-owned businesses, having multiple activities and events in the community and looks forward to raising a family here.



The new CREW subdivision townhomes in Holdrege will be similar to this townhome in Hastings.

New Townhomes Coming Soon

Three new townhomes (six units) will soon be constructed on the west side of the new CREW subdivision in east Holdrege.

Mesner Development is building the one-level 1,500-square-foot townhomes that will have two bedrooms and two bathrooms, vaulted ceilings, a two-car garage and a storm safe room. Appliances will be included.

A completion date for the homes is not yet available, but work has started on the homes.

Mesner will work with local Realtors to sell the homes. PCDC arranged for local Realtors to tour

similar townhomes built by Mesner in Hastings.

The townhomes are projected to be priced at less than \$200,000 per unit.

PCDC also purchased 19 CREW Subdivision lots and is seeking interest from contractors/developers.

"It's our intent to price the lots at or near cost as an incentive to generate more housing," Tillery said. "The lots will be eligible for other PCDC housing assistance, too."

Preference will be given to contractors who want to develop multiple lots. Lot costs are negotiable, but the final home price must be below \$275,000.



HOUSING STATS 2016-2020

309

New Phelps County residents
with help of GO! Home Grants

\$9.9 million
in housing developments
spurred by PCDC investments

49

New living units created with
help from PCDC

PCDC ANNOUNCES 2021 GO! HOME GRANTS

PCDC will offer GO! HOME grants again in 2021 to encourage commuters to become residents and to help create more housing.



NEW RESIDENT RELOCATION GRANTS

Down-payment Assistance Grants:

PCDC will match up to \$2,500 paid by any Phelps County employer to assist a current or new employee living outside the county to move to Phelps County. PCDC also offers these grants to public employees without an employer match.

Renter Relocation Assistance Grants:

PCDC will offer up to \$500 matching grants to help current employees living outside the county or new employees move to the county as renters. Applicants currently living in Phelps County don't qualify. Must apply through employer.

NEW HOMEOWNER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Residential Exterior Improvements Grant:

PCDC is offering up to \$1,500 matching grants to new or current county residents who purchase a new home and want to make improvements. To qualify, the home cannot be valued at more than \$275,000 and must be owner-occupied. Grants could help fund sidewalk or driveway installation or repair, replacing roofs, windows or siding; building or improving a garage; painting or a home addition. PCDC will pay the contractors directly on behalf of the applicant.

CONTRACTOR'S RISK MITIGATION PROGRAM

New Construction Reimbursement Grant

PCDC is offering contractors or developers matching grants up to \$2,500 to encourage the construction of new homes. They can

be single-family or multi-family houses, townhomes or duplexes built for sale to the general public. The final sale price of the home cannot be more than \$275,000.

Renovation Reimbursement Grant

This program gives contractors up to a \$1,500 matching grant to improve or renovate homes for resale. The grant applies only to projects with an investment in materials and/or labor amounting to at least 10 percent of the completed project resale value.

Lot Clearing and Landfill Fees Reimbursement Grant

PCDC will give \$1,000 matching grants to contractors for labor or lot improvement fees such as landfill fees, demo costs, asbestos remediation and dirt work. The project must support workforce housing including single-family, townhomes, duplexes or condos valued at \$275,000 or less.

DeWald, Deaver L'Heureux Announces Staffing Updates Sauder Named Partner



John Sauder

DeWald Deaver L'Heureux Law Firm announced in January that John A. Sauder has become a partner within the law firm.

Sauder, who is originally from Puerto Rico and is fluent in Spanish, joined the firm as an associate attorney in 2017. He is a trial attorney, and his primary practice areas include criminal defense, family law, civil litigation, and juvenile law.

Sauder received his Juris Doctorate from the Creighton University School of Law in 2017 and his bachelor's degree from Thomas Aquinas College in California in 2014.

Sauder and his wife, Danielle, have three young children and they enjoy the advantages and benefits of living and working in Holdrege.

Smith Begins Clerking Position



Madeline Smith

DeWald Deaver L'Heureux Law Firm recently hired Madeline Smith, who is currently in her second year of law school, as a law clerk.

Since law-school classes are still happening virtually, it created a unique opportunity for the Holdrege law firm to hire a clerk.

"Because of the COVID world we now live in, Madeline lives in Holdrege with her husband and is able to obtain small-town law firm experience before she graduates," attorney Luke Deaver said.

Smith grew up in Omaha and graduated in 2018 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a bachelor's degree in psychology and criminal justice. While at UNL, she met Holdrege native Trevor Smith, and they married in September 2020.

"He grew up in Holdrege, and we both love the area, so when we got married I moved here and we bought our first home," Smith said.

She is currently in her second year of law school at the Nebraska College of Law. She expects to graduate and take her bar exam in 2022.

Smith plans to work in the Holdrege area as an attorney after graduation with a focus on family law, juvenile law, estate planning and small business formation.

Williams Begins Work At Ag Service Associates

A former Phelps County high-demand jobs scholarship recipient has started a new career as a sales agent at Ag Service Associates - Crop Insurance in Holdrege.



Brennan Williams

Brennan Williams graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December with a degree in agricultural economics and a minor in agronomy and began his new position on January 4.

Ag Service Associates specializes in crop insurance and serves clients in Nebraska, South Dakota, Colorado, Kansas and Texas.

Brennan graduated from Holdrege High School in 2017 and knew he wanted to return to Phelps County after college.

"I've always enjoyed it here, the people and the atmosphere," he said. "I have always liked that small-town feel."

As a child, Brennan saw his parents, John and Michelle, give back to the community. They were part of an investment group that purchased and restored the Sun Theater. "I really got the experience of giving back, and I'd like to figure out how I can give back and help the community grow," Brennan said.

Shultz Moves from Ohio for 4-H Role

Ohio native Emily Shultz began work as the new Phelps/Gosper 4-H Extension Assistant on Feb. 1. In her role, she will help lead youth 4-H programs.



Emily Shultz

Shultz earned a bachelor of science degree in animal science and a minor in religious studies from the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio.

"I just happened to stumble across this position online and it was the perfect opportunity to start a career within Extension and to finally move out of Ohio," Shultz said. "I knew I would love Holdrege once I traveled here

for an interview and saw what a close-knit community it was and fell in love with all the farmland!"

In Ohio, Emily was involved with her church where she volunteered as a Sunday school teacher for the 3 and 4-year-old class. She also organized the petting zoo for her community's Fall Festival. Her hobbies include reading, hiking, baking, and traveling.

Linden Joins CNPPID Staff

Alex Linden joined the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District staff on December 14 as the new Public Relations Specialist. His responsibilities



Alex Linden

include publicizing CNPPID through its website and social media channels, writing and editing news releases, designing publications and promoting Central at events.

Linden, a native of Phelps County, spent 13 years as the Sports Information Director at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln where he handled all aspects of media relations

for the NWU Athletic department. During his tenure, he earned numerous awards from the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) for his printed publications. A career highlight was covering the NWU men's basketball team on their way to winning the 2018 NCAA Division III National Championship.

Linden grew up on the family farm north of Holdrege and graduated from Holdrege High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in Sport Management from Nebraska Wesleyan where he was also a varsity letter winner on the football team.

Over the past several years, Linden has returned home to volunteer at the Phelps County Fair and still maintains a small cow-calf herd raising animals for local 4-Hers.



Taylor Ag/Golden Harvest Completes New Building

Claude Taylor of Atlanta has opened his new Golden Harvest seed sales and treatment facility on west Highway 6 & 34 in Holdrege just in time for the 2021 planting season.

Taylor, who has been a Golden Harvest dealer for 18 years, said he is excited about the new Holdrege location just west of the Plains Motel. His business was previously located in a building at his home in Atlanta plus in additional rented space in another warehouse.

“There is opportunity for growth potential,” Taylor said of his business’ move to Holdrege.

“The Holdrege area has treated me well.”

PCDC consulted with Taylor on his project and helped support him in establishing a new business in Holdrege. Taylor said he also appreciated the support he received from the City of Holdrege personnel.

The 9,600-square-foot building houses seed and offers seed treatment services for area farmers. The building has 900-square foot office along with warehouse space.

He added a canopy around the office area to improve curb appeal.

Local Irrigation Business Expands to Kearney

Husker Irrigation has expanded to Kearney.

Toby Clayton, owner of the local Zimmatic pivot dealership, said the expansion opportunity came about when the previous Zimmatic dealer in Kearney no longer wanted to be in business.

“We were asked by Lindsay to put a store in there, and we so we did,” Clayton said.

Husker Irrigation opened in the Holdrege area in 2007. The business sells and services Zimmatic pivots (produced by Lindsay) and installs sub-drip irrigation and trenches underground pipe and wire.

The Kearney location, 2106 East Hwy. 30,

opened the first week of January 2021.

“We have customers in that area already, so the new location will blend in well with what we already do,” Clayton said.

Husker Irrigation typically has 10-12 employees in the Holdrege office, 1515 S. Lincoln, and will employ five-six in the Kearney office.

For more information, contact Clayton at (308) 995-8340 or visit the website at husker-irrigation.zimmaticdealer.com.

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS!

PCDC Offers Digital Marketing Grants

Is there a training that you want to attend but just can't afford? Or, maybe you want to buy a new point-of-sale system, but it's more than your budget allows. Or, you hope to someday start selling your products online but haven't had the time to make the move.

PCDC is here to help with the Digital Marketing Support Program.

“We launched this program to help business owners last spring during the pandemic,” PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said.

“We have seen how this extra money can help businesses grow, and so we want to continue this opportunity in 2021.”

The program provides up to \$1,000 grants to businesses operating from a storefront or fixed location in Phelps County to help with the following:

- Creating a website,
- Upgrading or enhancing an existing website,
- Purchasing ecommerce software or subscriptions,
- POS software,
- Advertising/Marketing (social media, radio, newspaper, tv, etc.)
- Business education and support programs including membership in GROW Nebraska or the Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce or to attend workshops or webinars.

Grants may in the form of a reimbursement to the business or may be paid directly to the service provider at PCDC's discretion.

To apply, complete a two-page application that can be downloaded from the PCDC website at phelpscountyne.org/business-services/financial-assistance





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GO NEWS

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Video Showcases PCDC's 2020 Impact

Due to COVID-19 concerns, PCDC created an annual business meeting video instead of hosting a spring gathering and plans to host a community awards celebration in the fall.

PCDC hired videographer Brian Gnuse to record speeches and the business portion of the meeting. The completed video is now available on the PCDC website.

The video is about 10 minutes and includes:

- Messages from PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery, outgoing Board President Reed McClymont, and incoming Board President Phil Hinrichs, who explains PCDC's 2021 plan of work.
- Recognition of outgoing board member Fred Diedrichsen
- Introduction of new board member Jeff Moon.
- Testimonials from local business owners impacted by PCDC, including David and DeEtte



Bailey of Gifts & Things (Magic Multiplier/Digital Development Grants), Kara Faber of the Phelps County Community Foundation and Trevor Smith of Nebraskaland Aviation (High Demand Jobs Scholarships), Dan Janssen, owner of Janssen Ford (partnership for new auto technician training program) and Jim Kaplinski of Briggs & Stratton/ Allmand Inc. (PCDC help with plant expansion).

See the video at www.phelpscountyne.com.