



GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Working Together to
Grow a Vibrant Phelps
County Economy

GO! Updates

GO! HOME

Changes are coming to the GO! Home program in 2019 to focus on bringing new residents to Phelps County.

Here's what's available:

Renter Relocation Grants:

Up to \$1,000 in renter relocation assistance to help Phelps County employees living outside the county to move into the county.

Down-payment Assistance Grants:

PCDC will match employer funds of up to \$2,500 to help employees living outside of the county purchase a home in Phelps County.

GO! BUSINESS

Building Exterior Impact Grant:

PCDC will provide \$1,000 grants to upgrade business exteriors. Available to any business in the county.

Training Grants: Matching grants for employee training and education.

For information on all GO! programs, visit PCDC's website at www.phelpscountyne.com.



Courtesy Drawing

DREAM Program Spurs Apartment Project

A downtown building will be remodeled and transformed into high-end apartments thanks to a GO! DREAM grant from the Phelps County Development Corporation.

The building at 201 West Ave. will become Iron Horse Flats, a "luxury" apartment complex with more than a dozen living units.

Chanse and Cristina Beinke of Loomis, owners of Smart Choice Management, purchased the building on October 15 and are hoping to have available occupancy by the spring of 2019.

"We are doing a complete renovation of the entire building, and it will be 18 apartments when we are finished," Chanse said.

Chanse said his company will "gut and remodel" the entire building. "It will be a brand new 'old' building."

The completed apartments will be a combination of one, two and three-bedroom units and will feature granite countertops, high-end appliances and 9-10 foot ceilings.

Renovations will include exterior enhancements, such as removing an old chimney, tuck pointing brick, painting and repairing stucco, adding awnings and new signs.

Chanse said his company is investing more than \$1 million into the project, and they were happy to receive a substantial grant from PCDC to help fund the project.

PCDC's GO! DREAM program was created to encourage downtown improvements by giving building owners the resources they need to bring to life the dreams they have for their historic buildings, with an emphasis on creating downtown living units.

The Downtown Revitalization Economic Assistance Mission gives grants to downtown building owners to update building facades and replace signs and lighting. It also offers low-interest loans to bring buildings up to code to create downtown living units.

"We are very excited about the Iron Horse Flats project," PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said. "It's focusing on downtown, adding affordable living spaces and upgrading a building."

Rent prices for the new living units will be determined once the project is complete. Potential renters interested in the property may reserve a unit by calling (308) 651-0460 or applying online at www.ForRentNebraska.com.

For more information about the GO! DREAM program, please contact Carley or Ron at PCDC at (308) 995-4148.

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Stevenson touts 'wide-angle lens' view of community improvements

As the new year begins, a new president will take the reins of the Phelps County Development Corporation. Doug Stevenson, who has served as president for the past two years, will step down from his leadership role, and board member Reed McClymont will take his place.



Doug Stevenson

Looking back over the past two years, Stevenson said he is proud of what has been accomplished.

"If you look at our community through tunnel vision, you'll see a couple improvements," he said. "But, if you look at us with the wide-angle lenses, I don't think there is a community in the state of Nebraska with a population base under 10,000 that has witnessed the improvements and the accomplishments that we have. That's been my enjoyment."



Reed McClymont

Some of the recent community enhancements to celebrate include

- Major investments by large employers like by BD, Briggs & Stratton/Allmand Bros., Cargill and Phelps Memorial Health Center.
- Investments and successes by smaller business like the Bridal Isle and Lost Way Brewery, to name a few.
- Improving the housing shortage with projects like Iron Horse Flats and Washington Square Apartments.

"Our accomplishments are helping businesses to grow, expand and retain," Stevenson said, deferring any credit away from himself.

"All of the accomplishments we've had over the past couple years, really has little to do with myself," he said. "It has everything to do with our staff, which is second to none; our Board of Directors, involved, dedicated and determined;

and our Phelps County community, truly the best people in the State of Nebraska."

Stevenson said the biggest frustrations of working in economic development are time and confidentiality.

"Accomplishments never happen fast enough," he said. "Being the president, you get involved with everything no matter how big or small. On the outside looking in, it's easy to think nothing is going on or very little. But when you see all that is going on from the inside – the opportunities, the planning, the meetings, the looking into the future to provide programs that work, and not be able to tell anybody – to face criticism and have to bite your lip – to have your integrity challenged, to listen, and to discuss and to trust your core beliefs. Everyone has their view or opinion, and they deserve to be heard. In the end, it's doing what is best for the community as whole."

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said Stevenson always seeks information and searches for "the right thing to do for the community and the organization. Doug's one of those community leaders who does it without a lot of fanfare and show. He likes to get stuff done. He works well with so many different people. He's not quick to jump to conclusions."

Stevenson said it was his dad who taught him to bite his tongue, gather facts, ask the hard questions and then make a decision.

"Every item, project or situation that comes up has multiple sides and views," Stevenson said. "I've found, unfortunately through experience, that if you react by emotion without the facts – good or bad – your reaction or statements or actions are generally wrong."

While Stevenson is stepping down from his role as president, he's not stepping down from PCDC or from working to improve the community.

"Years ago, when I left the City Council, I said that I would be back doing what I can to help the community," he said. "That hasn't changed. I'll do what I can to help our community – my community – get better. I really don't care if I'm sweeping floors or making presentations – the goal never has changed – just make it better."

ALLMAND ANNOUNCES MAJOR EXPANSION

At least 20 new local jobs created with expansion of long-time Holdrege plant

The expansion of a local manufacturing plant will help strengthen the local economy in 2019 by adding new jobs and opening the doors to new developments.

Allmand Bros. Inc., a subsidiary of Briggs & Stratton Corporation, announced in December its plans to expand the Holdrege facility. It will be the first business to use a portion of the Phelps County Development Corporation's Iron Horse Business & Industry Park.

The expansion will allow Allmand to increase production capacity and its speed in getting products to market. At least 20 new local jobs will be added along with the facility expansion. The project includes adding five new assembly lines, a prototyping lab, a new paint system, robotic weld cells and enhanced technology. It is expected to be complete by the end of 2019.

"By expanding the footprint, capabilities and efficiency of our current facility, Allmand will be equipped to meet increased demand for its products across all of its markets including oil and gas, construction and infrastructure," said Ben Duke, senior vice president of job site and standby at Briggs & Stratton. "Allmand is an 80-year-old company backed by a 110-year-old company. With that amount of expertise in the industry and in power, the expansion will provide the capacity for Allmand to innovate and grow well into the future."

Briggs and Stratton purchased Allmand Bros. in 2014.

In addition to serving customers in the oil and gas industry, with the support of Briggs & Stratton, Allmand has expanded its lineup of premium job site products to serve the construction, building and rental markets. Because of this diversification, Allmand is now enjoying record levels of business.

In addition to producing light towers, industrial heaters and solar LED arrow boards, the Allmand plant recently began manufacturing the Maxi-Air™ Portable Air compressor and a full line of Maxi-Power™ Mobile Generators.

According to a Briggs & Stratton company



ABOVE: An Allmand employee works on one of the several products manufactured at the Holdrege plant. The company will add at least 20 new jobs with an expansion project announced in December. **LEFT:** Allmand will expand to the west onto PCDC's Iron Horse Business & Industry Park, becoming the first tenant to build on the property.

press release, the expansion aligns with the company's focus on growing its commercial business. Over the last five years, the company has grown commercial sales by more than 70 percent, and the Allmand business plays an important role in continuing this growth.

Allmand will expand its existing footprint to the west on a portion of the PCDC's 134-acre Iron Horse Business & Industry Park.

PCDC, the Holdrege City Council and the Phelps County Commissioners and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development worked closely with Briggs & Stratton to encourage the expansion of the Holdrege site.

"We are pleased that the company chose its Holdrege facility to make these investments," said Ron Tillery, PCDC Executive Director. "Briggs & Stratton has plants in other parts of the country

with excess capacity, but the Allmand location made the most sense after all factors were considered. We worked closely with the company to address every need or concern quickly and completely."

Tillery said the expansion will help strengthen and diversify the local economy moving forward.

"Congratulations to Allmand on this upcoming expansion," Tillery said. "We look forward to a continued partnership with Allmand to grow their business and grow Phelps County."

PCDC worked with Briggs & Stratton on a land exchange to help the company configure the best possibility for an expansion.

"We welcome Allmand as the first official tenant in our Iron Horse Business & Industry Park," Tillery said. "Their success will pave the way for us to welcome more tenants to the park."

PAVING THE WAY TO BRIGHTER FUTURES

PCDC Work Spurs Grant to Pave Road Leading to Iron Horse Business & Industry Park

The paving of a rural Phelps County road may seem unimportant, but it's actually a huge step toward creating new local jobs and businesses through the development of the Iron Horse Business & Industry Park.

Both the City of Holdrege and Phelps County have agreed to work together to pave a one-mile stretch of Gustin Street between 18th Avenue and Highway 23 on the west edge of Holdrege. The street leads to the east side of the Iron Horse park, and the project will include creating an official entrance to Iron Horse.

In addition to city and county funds, the

Department of Transportation has awarded a \$350,000 economic opportunity grant to help fund the project.

Tillery said that the agreement to pave the road played a deciding factor in Briggs & Stratton's decision to expand the local facility. It was part of the local incentive package to lure the local expansion.

"The paving of Gustin Street was an essential part of the approval process of Briggs & Stratton for this project," Tillery said. "Large companies like Briggs & Stratton have choices where to invest, and we are pleased to have earned their confidence in Holdrege. The local workforce and

plant leadership perform at a very high level, and PCDC is committed to supporting growth at Allmand."

The project could also pave the way for other new business in the 134-acre industrial park.

"Development will occur faster when there's already infrastructure in place," Tillery said. "So, it's possible we could see other development up and down Gustin Street once this paving takes place."

The paving is expected to occur during the summer of 2019, Tillery said, but it is dependent upon weather and contractor availability.

PCDC Plays Role in Keeping Business Thriving During Highway 6 & 34 Construction

After eight months of detours and roadblocks, the Highway 6 & 34 construction through downtown Holdrege is complete.

Vehicles driving through the heart of Holdrege are now greeted with a wider road, clean new sidewalks and wider turning lanes.

While the project may have seemed like it took forever, it was completed on time. And, the Holdrege Concrete Solutions team made the process less painful for business owners and residents.

The group organized a highway groundbreaking on March 27 to begin the project and a Highway Ribbon Cutting and Re-Opening Ceremony on November 29 to conclude the project.

Carley Bruning, PCDC's director of business services, and Allison Fritsche, past chamber president and sales engineer at Glenwood, led the Concrete Solutions team and worked closely with construction leaders to keep the public informed and ensure that businesses along the construction route were promoted.

The Concrete Solutions team started planning for the project nearly a year before it began. They created a Facebook page to keep everyone



Local business owners and employees lined up to officially cut the ribbon for the Highway 6 & 34 Re-Opening Ceremony on November 29.

informed about highway detours and worked closely with the Department of Roads to open intersections as quickly as possible as they were completed.

The Holdrege Concrete Solutions team has provided a model for how to turn lemons into lemonade when it comes to highway construction.

Kurt Vosburg of McCook, the District 7 Engineer for the State of Nebraska, attended the highway ribbon cutting and pointed out the great work done

by Concrete Solutions.

"If ever there was an example of how to do a project, this is it," Vosburg said of the committee's work.

Vosburg also thanked the business people for their patience during the project.

"One day you had 10,000 people driving by your business, and the next day the road was closed," Vosburg said. "We understand it was difficult, and we appreciate your patience."

PCDC GIVES DONATION TO STEM EDUCATION

A new mobile STEM lab designed to spark learning opportunities and bring cutting-edge technology to area students received a \$15,000 boost from the Phelps County Development Corporation.

The PCDC Board of Directors approved the donation to help fund the CSI (Create, Solve & Innovate) Lab that is being created through a partnership between the Educational Service Unit 11, area manufacturers (including BD) and public power companies.

A total of \$125,000 is needed to launch the CSI lab that will be made available to 1,450 south-central Nebraska seventh and eighth graders.

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said the lab could help in efforts to create a quality Phelps County workforce in the future.

“They are focusing on many of the same high-demand job categories that have been identified for scholarships,” Tillery said of the lab. “The real benefit is the lab is supporting the development of a workforce from within rather than recruiting people.”

PCDC Board Member Fred Diedrichsen said the board originally budgeted a \$5,000 donation for the project but decided to triple the donation to represent \$5,000 for each of the three Phelps County school districts.

Diedrichsen said work-force development is a hot topic both locally and nationally, and he sees the CSI lab as a way to introduce students to new technology and get them excited about local



careers.

“We have the best chance of supplying our workforce if we can keep students here,” he said.

The lab will feature 10 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) opportunities, including a 3D printer lab, a CNC machine, an engineering workshop with motors, multi-meters and wires, a robotics innovation lab, MakeyMakey + Raspberry Pi Lab, Virtual Reality, Smart Home Automation, Electronics, Sensor Station, Robotics Innovation Lab, Advanced Manufacturing and Plotter/Cutter lab.

Dave Arnold, president of Royal Engineered Composites in Minden, said the idea for the CSI lab came after seeing other similar models created by Nebraska Public Power District and BD in Broken Bow. Most of the technology presented to students in the lab is used every day at Royal and other businesses in local communities.

“There’s a wealth of technology all around us, and this reflects that,” he said.

The CSI lab will be made available to each of the 13 schools in the ESU 11 region for two weeks each year for the next three years. The lab will also be available for summer programming opportunities. Schools include Holdrege, Alma, Arapahoe, Axtell, Bertrand, Cambridge, Elwood, Eustis-Farnam, Franklin, Loomis, Minden, Southern Valley and Wilcox-Hildreth.

The \$125,000 being raised to support the lab includes staffing costs for three years for ESU 11 staff to organize and maintain the lab and equipment. The CSI lab may be ready to test at a few schools by the spring of 2019 with the goal of being fully operational by the 2019-20 school year.

For more information about the CSI lab funding, please contact Ron Tillery at ron@phelpscountynye.com or (308) 995-4148.

Scholarships Available for Local High-Demand Careers

Students interested in future careers in Phelps County are encouraged to apply for the 2019 High-Demand Jobs Scholarships.

The scholarships are provided by PCDC and the Phelps County Community Foundation and are intended to local help graduates obtain training in high-demand careers in Phelps County.

This will be the sixth year the

scholarships have been provided.

The high-demand careers are in nursing, agribusiness and technology, diesel mechanics, engineering technology, mechatronics engineering, injection mold technology, electromechanical technology, tool and tie making, construction trades and welding. Applications are due February 15 and are available at www.phelpsfoundation.org



Blake Johnston, Ethan Johnson, Nolan Breece and Lex Swanson are a few of the former scholarship winners who are now working in Phelps County.

EXPANSION PLANNED FOR LOCAL VA CLINIC

Decision to Stay at Current Location Opens Washington Square Opportunity

The US Department of Veteran's Affairs has announced an expansion project at the Veteran's Administration Clinic in Holdrege.

Angela Williams, site director for the Grand Island VA Clinic, said construction is expected to begin in late 2019 on the property at 1118 Burlington and should be complete by early 2020.

The plan is to expand and renovate the clinic. An additional 4,200 square feet will be added to the existing clinic, nearly doubling the existing building, and more parking spaces will be added.

"The primary reason for this project is to meet the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) standards and provide the right amount of space for the services being offered in the clinic," Williams said. "We are planning to expand tele-health services, and we are continually assessing the need for new services. Redesigning the clinic will help to ensure we are meeting the needs of our veterans."

Williams said the clinic served 1,599 veterans in 2018 at the Holdrege clinic.

The clinic will remain open during the construction, however some services may be relocated within the building during the process.



The VA Clinic at 1118 Burlington in Holdrege will begin an expansion project in 2019.

The contractor for the project is Syberia Enterprises LLC based in Kearney.

"The proposal from Syberia Enterprises, LLC, was the lowest price found technically acceptable," Williams said.

PCDC Director Ron Tillery said PCDC had assisted with the project when the VA was considering a new clinic building on the

north parcel of the new Washington Square development.

However, with the VA's decision to expand the existing clinic, that 1.7-acre Washington Square parcel on Highway 183 is now available for another project.

For information about the Washington Square site, please contact Tillery at ron@phelpscountyne.com or (308) 995-4148

Little Blue Bus Jewelry Business Opens on Highway 183

Holdrege resident Brandi Light has opened a retail store on Highway 183 to showcase her hand-stamped jewelry.

Light opened Little Blue Bus Jewelry at 417 Burlington next to My Favorite Party Shoppe in October. She previously owned a retail store in Kearney called All My Art & Soul from 2015-2017. She closed the store when she and her husband, Derik, moved to Holdrege.

Residents might have previously met Light in her blue bus that she gutted and used as a traveling store for her products.

Light's new Holdrege store features handmade bracelets, earrings and necklaces all handcrafted by Brandi.

She said her most popular items are anything in the shape of Nebraska, jewelry with exploring or camping themes and leather earrings.



Brandi Light opened Little Blue Bus Jewelry on Highway 183 to sell hand-stamped jewelry.

Light is originally from Macksville, Kan. She and Derik have a daughter, Briley, 9; and a son, Calin, 7.

Little Blue Bus Jewelry is open 10 a.m.-5:30

p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturdays.

Customers can also order from her Etsy shop at www.etsy.com/shop/littlebluebusjewelry.

BD's New Plant Manager Originally From England

Stuart Rogers has been hired as the new plant manager at BD Holdrege.

Rogers joined BD more than 10 years ago as a shift leader in the Plymouth, UK, BD plant. He served in several roles of progressing responsibility in both operations and continuous improvement. Prior to joining BD, Rogers worked in a variety of other roles in manufacturing including quality, logistics and operations.



Stuart Rogers

Rogers is originally from England. His wife, Jane, and their three children will be relocating to Nebraska from the United Kingdom.

Gothenburg's Brundage Hired to Lead CNNPID

Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District has hired Devin Brundage as the new general manager.

Current General Manager Don Kraus is retiring in January after 46 years with the district, including the last 26 years as general manager.



Devin Brundage

Brundage, 49, began his career with Central in 1992 as an electrical engineer and was soon appointed electrical superintendent in charge of supervising operations and maintenance crews and directing capital purchases and improvements for Central's four hydroelectric plants and the communications and control facilities. He was named assistant Gothenburg Division manager in 2015 and was

promoted to Division manager in 2017.

Brundage was raised on a farm near Cairo and is a graduate Centura High School and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is actively involved in community service in Gothenburg, where he is a member of the school board and the Gothenburg Improvement Company, an entity dedicated to economic development and community improvement.

He and his wife, Jami, are the parents of a son, Braeden, who is currently enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and stationed in Havelock, N.C.

New Shelter Insurance Agent Begins Work in Holdrege

Rodrigo Retana-Aguilera will be the new Shelter Insurance agent in Holdrege.

Prior to joining Shelter, Retana-Aguilera worked as an insurance agent for Combined Insurance Company. Prior to that, he was a Sales Representative for Platte Valley Auto in Kearney.



Rodrigo Retana-Aguilera

He is originally from Wichita, Kan., and currently lives in Kearney with his wife, who is attending graduate school at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Retana-Aguilera said he loves helping people and is excited to join the Holdrege business community.

"This company gives me the opportunity to help families, individuals and businesses protect their life, health and possessions," he said. "Being able to provide that kind of peace of mind to the community is very morally rewarding."

He is a multi-line insurance agent and will provide auto, home, business and life insurance. He will be based out of the Shelter office at 502 4th Ave. in Holdrege.

Business Opportunities

If you are looking for business opportunities in Phelps County, PCDC can help. Give us a call today to find out about local businesses for sale and franchise opportunities.

Currently, businesses for sale include a graphic arts print shop and a party-supply and cleaning products supply store.

Here's another opportunity:

SAIL INN LOUNGE: This business opportunity includes a long-time reputation for great food and fun times. The business is located in a leased space at 1507 Burlington St. All furniture, kitchen appliances and food/liquor is included in the sale. Listing is by Colby Gray at Country Road Realty.

Call Carley or Ron at PCDC today for more details on business opportunities or visit www.phelpscountyne.com to find information about local franchise opportunities and buildings and sites for sale.

PCDC Website Wins Marketing Award

PCDC's website received first place honors at the Mid-America Economic Development Council's annual awards ceremony in early December.

The council presented awards in entrepreneurship, workforce development, economic impact and marketing. PCDC received the first-place award for a marketing program in the small division for communities less than 50,000 people. The award recognizes an overall effort to market a community, county, state or region.

PCDC's website is created and managed by Golden Shovel Agency based in Little Falls, Minn., with regular content updates and input from the PCDC staff.

Darren Varley, client services manager at Golden Shovel, said that local input, a strong brand and a dedication to marketing the community is what makes PCDC's site stand above the rest.

"One thing that separates this client from a lot of our clients is they have a big passion for the community and are very actively involved in marketing the entire community," Varley said. "PCDC's ambition and how they've rebranded themselves and the programs that promote #GO37 has made Holdrege, Neb., very appealing."

Golden Shovel works with more than 150 clients across the United States and Canada, and PCDC has risen to the top with the level of enthusiasm and energy that it puts forth.

Varley has not visited Holdrege, but he said based on the publicity he has seen from PCDC that "Holdrege kind of seems like the community I would want to live in."

Visit PCDC's website at www.phelpscountyne.com.

Your **SOURCE** for
local business
opportunities
and economic
development news
in Phelps County!

GO news

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BRIGGS & STRATTON GIVES \$5,000 TO ROBOTICS

The Holdrege Public Schools Robotics Club received a special surprise when they gave a presentation to the Holdrege Rotary Club on Dec. 6.

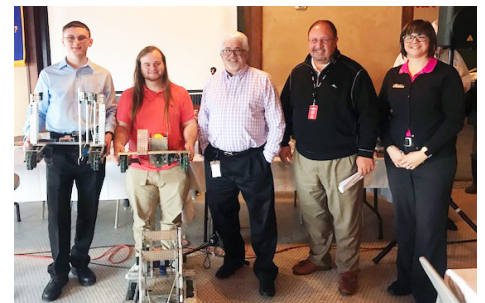
After the presentation by HPS Teacher and Robotics Club Leader Don Kosmicki and two students, Daniel deFreese and Ryan Salisbury, Briggs & Stratton gave a \$5,000 donation to help the club purchase new equipment.

deFreese said the gift came at the perfect time.

"I kind of felt joy that we got the money, and some relief, because we've always struggled with finances basically all the time," deFreese said.

deFreese, a junior at HHS, said this year the club will have to purchase all new systems to continue competing.

Kosmicki had previously met with Briggs & Stratton Operations Manager Jim Kaplinski about a possible grant opportunity, but he wasn't sure if the club would be chosen for the grant — until the Rotary meeting. Kosmicki said the robotics competitions are switching to a new technology, which requires purchasing new controllers, motors and other equipment.



From left: Ryan Salisbury, Daniel deFreese, Don Kosmicki, Jim Kaplinski and Rotary President Allison Fritsche.