



# GO NEWS

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Working Together to Grow a Vibrant Phelps County Economy

#GROW 37

Phelps County, Nebraska

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## Applications Open for HDJ Scholarship

Applications are due Feb. 15 for Phelps County high-demand jobs scholarships.

Zach Gray, a 2013 graduate of Holdrege High School, earned \$6,000 in high-demand jobs scholarships and started his law career in Holdrege as an attorney at Anderson, Klein, Brewster, Brandt in mid-October.

He will combine his agriculture and law degrees to help clients in agricultural and water law along with general law work including business formations, real estate, wills, trusts, estate law and taxes.

“Growing up in a small town and on the family farm, I always wanted to get back to the small-town way of life and to the Holdrege area,” Gray said. “Holdrege, and Phelps County in general, is a great place to start a family and a career, and it’s a great way of life.”

Applications are available at [www.phelpsfoundation.org](http://www.phelpsfoundation.org).

## GROWING OUR OWN

# Axios Helps Students Realize Talents and Connect With Local Careers

Phelps County students have benefited from local career readiness programs, talent assessments offered by schools and advice from guidance counselors about colleges and scholarships.

But, a new non-profit program combines all of these functions plus connects students with local employers.

The goal of Axios Workforce & Talent Development Inc. is to fill local high-demand jobs and to help students find careers that match their specific talents and abilities.

The program, created by Holdrege resident Alex Mahundi, provides a holistic approach to workforce development through education, faith and collaboration. It serves students in grades 8-12 and beyond.

“I want each student to become the best version of themselves,” Mahundi said. “When I see someone thrive and have joy, it brings me joy.”

Mahundi is originally from Tanzania, Africa, and attended



Alex Mahundi (far left) and Phelps Memorial Health Center staff Kylie Christensen and Taylor Daly (far right) introduce Loomis High School students to careers at the hospital.

Colby Community College in Colby, Kan., and then earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and biology from Fort Hays State University. He is currently pursuing an MBA from Wayne State College through online classes. He has previously worked with youth in his roles as program director at the Don Sjogren Community YMCA, as the director of mission and connection at Trinity

Evangelical Church and as the Holdrege High School girls’ head soccer coach.

“After working with kids and young people for so many years, one of the common things I have seen is lack of direction especially when it comes to finding what’s next in their career and life,” Mahundi said.

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## RECRUITING A TALENTED FUTURE WORKFORCE

In Phelps County, residents value a strong work ethic, responsibility and good character. That’s why many area employers are now emphasizing recruiting a future workforce from within. Employers and organizations have started the following programs to introduce local students to future careers:

**Janssen Auto Technician Training Program** — PCDC partnered with Janssen Auto, Central Community College and Holdrege Public Schools to offer a new auto technician training class.

**BD Apprenticeships and Scholarships** — BD offers a mechanic apprenticeship and scholarships to students who want to work at BD.

**CSI (Create, Solve, Innovate) Lab** — PCDC and several employers and organizations donated to create a mobile lab that travels to area schools to introduce students to skills sets needed for local careers.

**Briggs & Stratton School Support** — Briggs and Stratton is investing in local students by purchasing supplies for robotics programs and CAD classes.



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# City of Holdrege Begins 2021 With New City Administrator

The City of Holdrege has selected North Platte native Chris Rector as its new City Administrator.

Rector, who has been the Gibbon City Administrator for 20 years, was scheduled to start his new role in Holdrege on Jan. 4. He replaces Bob Rager, who served as the as Holdrege's City Administrator for just over 20 years.

Rector said he applied for the Holdrege opening because he was looking for new challenges and wants to make a difference. During his first six months on the job, he plans to focus on "learning how Holdrege operates and working with the staff and citizens to identify the needs of the community."



**Chris Rector**

During his tenure in Gibbon, Rector led the construction of a new swimming pool and several street paving projects. He was on the initial planning stages for construction of a new City Hall community room and fire hall addition/renovation. He is proud that in his 20 years there, Gibbon never increased the city's mill levy.

Rector earned a bachelor's degree in public administration from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and completed the Nebraska Certified Public Manager® Program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

In Gibbon, he was involved in the Gibbon Chamber of Commerce and coached youth baseball through the Gibbon Ball Association.

He and his wife, Sara, have been married for 15 years and have two sons: Sterling, 10; and Hudson, 8. When he is not working, Rector enjoys hunting, camping with his family and restoring old cars.

# Osborn Retires; Nelsen Selected as Holdrege's New City Attorney

Natalie Nelsen was appointed as Holdrege's new City Attorney in December, taking over for Rodney Osborn who served in that position for more than 30 years.

"I have always had a passion for helping people and serving the community that I live in," Nelsen said. "When I was asked to serve as city attorney, I felt like this was a great opportunity to get involved in our local government and help guide decisions for the future of Holdrege."

Nelsen is originally from Eustis and graduated from Doane College with a bachelor's degree in sociology/criminology and from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law with a juris doctor of law.

Nelsen was in private practice with Dier, Osborn & Cox, P.C., L.L.O. from 2008-2017 and

left there to become the Deputy County Attorney in June 2017. During her years of private practice, she provided legal services for area villages and advised private clients in their work with cities and villages.

In addition to her new city duties, Nelsen will continue in her role with the county and will also continue her private law practice, focusing primarily on estate and business planning, adoptions and guardianships.

Nelsen has served on the Phelps Memorial Health Center Board of Directors since 2015 and is currently the vice president. She also serves on the legislative committee of the Nebraska State Bar Association and is the President of the Phelps County Bar Association. Earlier this year, she was named the 2020 Prosecutor of the Year by the Nebraska Conservation Officers Association.

Nelsen has three children, Makenzie, 13; Micah, 10; and Gracyn, 8. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family, watching her kids' activities, running, reading and traveling.



**Natalie Nelsen**

## DOWNTOWN VITALITY

# New Owners Begin Renovations on Hotel Dale

A historic downtown Holdrege building will soon help fill a shortage in local workforce housing.

Colorado-based company Christopher Hayden LLC purchased the Hotel Dale in downtown Holdrege in September. Some renovations, including cleaning and painting, are moving along quickly while other plans are slower due to COVID-19 product and service delays.

The Dale Residences will house 34 clean, minimalist-style fully furnished apartments.

“The building has beautiful bones and can be brought back to the high standard it was when originally built,” said Nancy Clark, one of the company’s members. “That building is a gem underneath the years of having been forgotten.”

Her company has renovated similar buildings “once lovely and long-overlooked” in smaller towns in Kansas and Colorado, including their latest project The Max in Lamar, Colorado, which Clark said is nearly a twin to The Dale. This is their first project in Nebraska.

“We are thankful to be associated with a community like Holdrege, a great Nebraska town,” Clark said.

According to a 2017 Phelps County Housing study, a shortage of workforce housing was one of the county’s challenges. It recommended that 100 rental units should be created over five years. The Dale Residences will help solve that shortage.

Renovations so far have included cleaning, painting the main lobby a bright white, installing



**Renovations on the historic Hotel Dale (now called The Dale Residences) have started as the property was purchased by new owners in September. Renovations could take a year. Photo Courtesy of Melissa Ann Wills.**

security cameras in public areas and creating a key card system for renters, refreshing an office space that is currently available for lease, some exterior painting, turning an old ballroom into a gathering space, and laundry room renovations.

Business tenants El Agave restaurant and Dale Hotel Barber Shop will remain as renters.

Apartment rents will start at \$500 monthly. The options include one-bedroom or two-bedroom units and studios. All units will be fully furnished with new beds, bed frames and furniture in a minimalistic style. Potential renters interested in living at The Dale should send inquiries through the website: [www.thedaleresidences.com](http://www.thedaleresidences.com).

## ruralMED Completes Move to Downtown Headquarters



Exterior work has been completed on ruralMED’s new headquarters in downtown Holdrege. Those Blasted Signs and Designs created the sign and installed awnings, Breinig Masonry installed the brick, and General Glass of Holdrege provided glass for the windows and door.

PCDC awarded a \$22,500 grant to help ruralMED renovate and move its company headquarters to downtown Holdrege. It is now located in the spaces formerly occupied by the Hamburger Inn (507 West Ave.) and Bob & Norm’s flooring (511 West Ave.)

“Having ruralMED headquartered in downtown Holdrege is a big deal,” PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said. “It adds vibrancy to downtown. It will also attract clients, vendors and other professionals to downtown Holdrege. And, it improves two buildings that are now occupied after having been vacant for some time.”

## PHELPS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION #GROW 37



### GROWING OUR ECONOMY

#### Major Community Projects Completed in 2020:

- Cobblestone Inn & Suites New Construction — \$4.25 million
- Briggs & Stratton Expansion — \$8 million
- Veteran's Administration Clinic Expansion — \$2.25 million
- PMHC/Phelps Medical Group Expansion — \$16 million
- Gustin Street paving leading to Iron Horse Business & Industry Park (PCDC secured grant to spur project)

#### Increasing Population and Housing

- Led efforts to create the new Crew Subdivision that will result in more than 40 new living units
- Partnered to create new workforce home at 11th & Logan
- Provided downpayment assistance for 31 new residents to relocate to Phelps County



### PROMOTING OUR COMMUNITY

- Expanded distribution of the Phelps County Business Journal
- Designed and launched a new logo and enhanced website
- Received the National Rural Economic Developers Association Organizational Excellence Award for 2020
- Commissioned market impact reports in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing and health care
- Provided website and organizational support for the Holdrege Veteran's Memorial Project
- Led efforts to organize a community investment club to create venture capital for entrepreneurial efforts

### SECURING A FUTURE WORKFORCE

- Awarded 10 scholarship totaling \$26,000 to future Phelps County workers for high-demand jobs
- Partnered with Janssen Ford, CCC and HHS to establish a dual-credit auto technician course to fill high-demand jobs



### SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS

- Infused more than \$200,000 to more than 70 local businesses with COVID-19 economic recovery programs
- Supported 7 businesses with grants for facade improvements, new signs or DREAM funds: ruralMED, Cozy Inn Cafe, Wager Irrigation, Trent Fuecker commercial building in Funk, KUVR radio station, Screen Machine and Fye Law Office
- Awarded a gap-financing loan to Holdrege Equipment to support a \$500,000 expansion and renovation project
- Assisted local resident in securing TIF financing to build new Golden Harvest Seed distribution center
- Inducted BD and Glion Scooter into the Phelps County Business Hall of Fame

### RECRUITING NEW BUSINESS

- Began discussions with a medical glove manufacturer to reshore its plant to Holdrege and applied for EDA CARES Act funding to help advance the project to the next level
- Coordinated retail recruitment activities with Noddle Companies, owner of the vacated Shopko building

# PCDC Assists Holdrege Equipment Expansion

Holdrege Equipment, LLC, is renovating and expanding, and PCDC has approved a gap financing loan from its revolving loan fund to assist with the project.

“This project enables Holdrege Equipment to start doing work here that has been conducted elsewhere,” PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said. “It’s adding employment and helping retain existing employees.”

Tillery said an important part of PCDC’s mission is to support the growth and retention of existing businesses, and this loan partnership is a great example of that. PCDC’s priority is to work with job creators and with manufacturing, warehousing and industrial businesses.

“In this case, the project fits both categories,” Tillery said.

The half-million-dollar project includes remodeling and upgrading the building and electrical service to accommodate an increased workload to produce and fabricate parts, remodeling the administrative offices to make it safer and more accessible, insulating, installing a new roof, exterior improvements and replacing the dilapidated asphalt parking lot.

Holdrege Equipment, 1009 West Hwy. 6 in Holdrege, sells mixer/feeders and manure spreaders to cattle producers and provides maintenance and repair on equipment, heavy-duty trucks and trailers. It is the factory authorized representative for Jaylor products in Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado.

The company is owned by Dan Powers, who said the PCDC loan will help directly with the parking lot and driveway improvement.

“Having the financing available has allowed us to complete all the needed facility repairs at one time rather than spreading them out over several years,” Powers said. “Investing now with the current economic, social and political unrest was a tough decision, but we are moving ahead without



**A PCDC gap-financing loan helped with Holdrege Equipment’s recent expansion and renovation project.**

hesitation because of dedicated employees who are working hard through the challenging times.”

Holdrege Equipment has nine employees in Holdrege and is seeking to fill two more positions (an office position and parts manager position).

PCDC gap financing loans are in partnership with a regular bank loan. PCDC loans fill a gap between what a bank will loan and what a business needs to proceed with a project or just get started. Once repaid, the money is returned to PCDC’s revolving loan fund to loan to other business owners. In the past, business owners have secured PCDC loans for technology updates, remodels, start-up costs and succession planning.

For information on Holdrege Equipment, visit [www.holdregeequipment.com](http://www.holdregeequipment.com). For information about gap financing loans, visit [www.phelpscountyne.com](http://www.phelpscountyne.com) or call Tillery at (308) 995-4148.

## Axios Matches Students With Local Careers .....

**Continued from page 1**

Often, parents or educators push kids to attain a four-year degree.

“I think we need to take a step back and see what is best for each kid to be successful,”



**Alex Mahundi**

Mahundi said. “My passion is when I invest in somebody to help them discover how they are wired and their strengths.”

After researching what was already being done in the area of career readiness, he came up with a holistic approach and curriculum and encourages students to answer three questions:

1. Who are you? (What are each student’s unique gifts and talents?)
2. What do you want to do with your life? (What is each student’s passion and purpose?)
3. How are you going to get there? (What career training is needed beyond high school?)

Mahundi’s program reaches students through a once-a-week semester-long class. He launched a “pilot” class in the fall of 2020 at Loomis High School, where he had a class of 10 freshmen and another class of 17 seniors.

The curriculum includes strength-finders assessments, tools to help students find their purposes (what they want to do and not what their parents or others want them to do), financial education on budgeting and how to pay for college and find colleges that best fit their career interests and personalities, and character development (characteristics of a good employee). He has invited local financial experts, partner employers and current college students to speak.

Mahundi hopes to reach local students when they are freshmen and sophomores so he can connect them with local employers for summer jobs, internships or shadowing opportunities before they graduate high school. Those early experiences will give students an opportunity to determine if they truly enjoy a potential career path, thus increasing their chances of sticking with it in the future. It also allows local employers to connect with future employees.

“We are looking at kids and how they are wired,”

Mahundi said. “The number one reason kids don’t finish studies is because it’s not a good match for their skills and personalities.”

Mahundi’s work is funded by local businesses who partner with him to help discover area talent to fill high-demand jobs. Early partners are Legacy Purpose LLC, LandMark Implement, Svoboda’s Ace Hardware, South Platte Crop Consulting, SCEDD, Bruning Bank, Phelps Memorial Health Center, First State Bank of Holdrege and Lundeen-Isaacson Insurance of Holdrege

In his first semester of work, Mahundi found two students whose talents and desires might lead to careers as diesel mechanics. They are showing interest in pursuing those high-demand jobs.

Mahundi will continue with classes at Loomis High School this spring and at Bertrand High School. He will also offer an after-school class for Holdrege High School students and is hoping to reach students during the school day eventually at HHS. His goal is to partner with community colleges, hire employees and replicate the program across the state.

Contact Mahundi at [alexander13.mahundi@gmail.com](mailto:alexander13.mahundi@gmail.com) or (308) 293-8320.

## Phelps Medical Group Announces New Director

Ros Beebout has been hired as the new Director of Phelps Medical Group.

Beebout will oversee the daily operations

of the clinic and collaborate with patients, visitors and healthcare professionals. She will also be responsible for compliance, rules, and regulations of the facility.

Her strengths lie in her experience and the knowledge of clinical operations that she's gained over the years

working directly with providers and staff.

Beebout graduated from Kearney State College with a bachelor's of science degree in business administration. She has worked for more than 25 years in clinic management, including former positions in Ainsworth and Valentine.

She and her husband, Bruce, live in Kearney.



**Ros Beebout**

## Holdrege Physical Therapy Adds Second Therapist

Physical therapist Christine Ridder will begin seeing patients at Holdrege Physical Therapy and Sports Rehab, 701 4th Ave., in January.

Ridder has a special interest in women's health and postural restoration, which is a science

based on asymmetries throughout the human body and recognizing postural adaptations/weakness that contribute to pain and dysfunction. She is also trained in dry needling, blood flow restriction, Graston, Cupping and Mulligan techniques.

Ridder 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.

She is a Holdrege native. Christine and her husband, Joe, have two children, Jack, 6; and Grace, 4.

Christine enjoys spending time with family and friends, going to the lake, traveling, biking and anything that involves the outdoors.



**Christine Ridder**

## Rahmann Begins Work As PMHC Marketing Director

Phelps Memorial Health Center has chosen Holly Rahmann as its new Director of Marketing and Business Development.

Rahmann began her position Oct. 12 and will be responsible for developing and implementing a marketing plan that encourages growth and success at Phelps Memorial.

Rahmann graduated from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla., with a bachelor's of

science degree in agricultural communications. Prior to coming to Phelps Memorial, Rahmann worked nearly a decade in agricultural marketing and public relations.

She and her husband, Bryson, live on an acreage south of Minden and have two children, Grace and Heston.



**Holly Rahmann**

## Dr. Peterson Joins Team at Phelps Medical Group

Danika Peterson, MD, is Holdrege's newest doctor at Phelps Medical Group.

Dr. Peterson earned a bachelor's of science degree in biotechnology from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and then a doctorate of medicine from Creighton University School of Medicine. She completed her family medicine rural residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha and Kearney.

Dr. Peterson provides primary care services to people of all ages including diagnosing and treating illnesses, managing chronic conditions, and preventive care. Her services include general primary care, pediatrics, women's health, lactation medicine, geriatrics and obstetrics. She is currently pursuing further training in lactation medicine.

Dr. Peterson is originally from Atkinson. She and her husband, Dr. Jacob Peterson, live in Holdrege with their children, Adeline, 4; and Leon, 1. Dr. Peterson enjoys spending time with her family and friends, thoughtful conversations, thrift shopping and home renovations.



**Dr. Danika Peterson**

## PMHC Promotes Hill to Human Resources Director

Alicea Hill has been promoted to Director of Human Resources at Phelps Memorial Health Center.

Hill has been a Human Resources specialist at Phelps Memorial for the past five years and has more than 20 years of experience in the human resources field. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in human resources.

In her new role, Hill is responsible for the overall administration, coordination, and evaluation of human resource functions. Her efforts will be to recruit, retain, and engage teammates and build and maintain a healthy organizational culture at PMHC. She will work directly with Phelps Memorial department directors and more than 300 teammates.

Hill lives in the Holdrege area with her husband, Mike, and they have three children: Jordan, Carolyn and Tyler.



**Alicea Hill**

## HHS Grad Joins Cutting Room Staff

Harley Scott, a 2016 Holdrege High School graduate, has joined the staff at Cutting Room Barber Studio in Holdrege.

Scott is a recent barber college graduate at the College of Hair Design in Lincoln. He also attended Mid-Plains Community College in McCook.

He will apprentice under owner Tim Rehm, specializing in classic barber services including skin fades, tapers, and straight razor techniques.

Scott said he hopes to "master the lost art of barbering, but with a modern twist."

During his apprenticeship, he will be available Thursdays through Saturdays for walk-ins or by appointment at 995-6630.

His hobbies include cooking and remodeling. He is a member of Trinity Evangelical Church in Holdrege.



**Harley Scott**



Blare, Ryan and Jody Bauer



Seth &amp; Hana Mach Family

## Machs Purchase Nelson-Bauer Funeral Home

Ryan and Jody Bauer transferred ownership of Nelson-Bauer Funeral Homes and their interest in Bauer-Torrey & Mach Funeral Homes to Seth and Hana Mach on October 1.

"Since moving to Holdrege 22 years ago, Jody and I and our son, Blare, have been blessed by the formation of many relationships while serving others during difficult times in their lives," Ryan said. "I have been associated with funeral service; caring for others as they grieve, and giving dignity to the deceased for almost 35 years. Throughout that time, we have treasured friendships that will last a lifetime with family members, clergy, colleagues, healthcare providers and community-minded people in several communities. There comes a time where caregivers know it is time to begin the transition of turning gratitude into grace and focus on their own family and self-care."

New owner Seth Mach is originally from Fullerton. He majored in pre-mortuary science at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and then graduated from the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. Hana grew up near Smith Center, Kan., and also attended UNK where she majored in secondary education. She later earned a master's degree in counseling and is the secondary guidance counselor for Wilcox-Hildreth schools.

"We are honored to continue the long-standing tradition of compassion and dignified care of our predecessors here in South Central Nebraska," Seth said. "The professional, and courteous

care and services will remain the same; only the ownership has changed. Our reputation (Nelson-Bauer Funeral Homes and Bauer-Torrey & Mach Funeral Homes) in funeral service is well known in Nebraska, especially throughout our service area. We provide dignified and honest, professional services to honor a loved one; and genuine care for the living. Ryan and Jody Bauer have been a tremendous help throughout the entire transition."

Although turning the ownership and management duties over to Seth, Ryan plans to continue to remain on staff, assisting in a consulting role for several years throughout the transition period. Jody will continue to work as the Technology Curriculum Consultant in Staff Development at ESU No. 11.

The Machs plan to keep the day-to-day operations consistent. "We recognize the fact that consistency of service is what our client families have come to expect, and deserve," Mach said. "We aspire to have the families we serve witness the same sense of friendship, relationship, and trust; as we advance together. We appreciate the uniqueness of each of the communities we serve and have loved the small-town hospitality that was extended to us nine years ago when we moved to South Central Nebraska."

The Machs plan to host an open house at a later date.

Nelson-Bauer Funeral Homes, Inc., operates from facilities in Holdrege, Oxford, Alma and Wilcox.

## Countryside Market Sold

Countryside Market in Bertrand changed its name and ownership on November 1.

Bertrand area investors purchased the grocery store and gift shop from Jerry and Brenda Johnson, who had operated the store since 2008. The market's new name is Cross Country Market.

Berni Schwarz of Bertrand is the new manager. She said the store has a new point-of-sale system and has added fresh flower sales. The store will continue to serve daily meal specials and keep the gift shop open. It will be closed on Sundays.

The store, 522 Minor, employs four full-time staff and several part-time workers.

## Sun Theater Has New Owner

Adjacent Properties LLC purchased the Holdrege Sun Theater and took ownership in October.

Adjacent was formed in 2019 by Phelps Memorial Health Center with the vision of boosting economic development efforts and keeping business ownership local.

PMHC Director of Marketing and Business Development Holly Rahmann said Adjacent is planning to make some updates to the theater before it reopens, but those plans are still in the preliminary stages.

Current theater manager Suzy McConnell will continue in her role with the Sun.

"We plan to make sure the pricing and schedules are still on-par with what Holdrege Sun Theater customers have always experienced before," Rahmann said.

Rahmann said they don't have a timeframe yet on when the theater will be able to reopen.

Adjacent purchased the property from Strategic Community Investments Group (John & Michelle Williams, Phil & Kim Hinrichs, Doug & Laurie Hohman and Dan & Kimberly Powers). Strategic Investments purchased the Sun in 2008 and renovated it with the help of a PCDC façade improvement grant and a gap-financing loan.

Adjacent Properties also owns Mayfair Apartments, an apartment building with regular tenants and two apartments that PMHC leases for on-call staff and lodging for visiting pain management, spine and orthopedic surgeons and a house near the hospital that provides housing for medical students during their rural rotations.

"Adjacent is open to exploring new opportunities and looks forward to contributing to the sustainability of Holdrege and surrounding communities," Rahmann said.



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# GO NEWS

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## Holdrege BD Expands to Help Fight Covid

The Holdrege BD plant will be a major player in the world's fight against COVID-19.

"The vast majority of the \$70 million public/private investment that was announced in July is being invested in Holdrege," BD Sr. Director of Public Relations Troy Kirkpatrick said. "The remainder is being invested in one of our facilities in Columbus."



Kirkpatrick said BD selected the Holdrege site to set up the new syringe manufacturing lines "because of the available capacity to increase production at this facility and the syringe and needle expertise available at the site."

BD Holdrege is already the world's largest supplier of insulin syringes, producing multiple billions each year. Once up and running, the Holdrege plant will also be manufacturing hundreds of millions of

syringes for vaccination use.

Some of the new manufacturing equipment is already being installed at the Holdrege plant, while other equipment is still being procured and constructed. Kirkpatrick said production lines should be operational by the summer of 2021.

"If the U.S. government needs additional injection devices for the COVID-19 vaccine next summer when these new production lines are up and running, the U.S. government has priority access to all quantities that are produced in Holdrege," Kirkpatrick said. "The additional capacity will be available to the U.S. government for any future pandemic."

Because of the new manufacturing lines, BD Holdrege (which already employs more than 600 workers) has started recruiting for an additional 45 positions, including mechanics and electronic technicians as well as general production operators for all shifts.