



GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Working Together to Grow a Vibrant Phelps County Economy

JOIN the PCDC Builder's Bureau!

Local contractors and suppliers are encouraged to join PCDC's Builder's Bureau to stay better informed on opportunities to bid on area construction projects.

The builder's bureau helps contractors:

- Stay informed of new projects in the region
- Have an opportunity to review project plans and specs and to bid on projects
- Receive regular updates on industry news and trends
- Have a voice on area building issues

The builder's bureau currently has 35 members, and 12 project opportunities have been distributed so far in 2019.

In 2018, 23 project opportunities were distributed to 32 members. In 2017 (the first year of the builder's bureau), 5 projects were distributed to 24 members.

The builder's bureau annual fee is \$50. Contact Stacy or Ron at PCDC for more information or to join the Phelps County Builder's Bureau.



Gov. Pete Ricketts (fourth from left) attended the Allmand Inc. expansion groundbreaking in May.

CONSTRUCTION SEASON PCDC Spurs Summer Shovels

After a long, cold Nebraska winter, shovels are now moving dirt instead of snow in Phelps County.

Construction has begun or resumed on several major projects, and two projects are expected to break ground soon. PCDC grants and support have boosted or spurred several of the ventures.

Crew Housing Subdivision

Mesner Development of Central City is hoping to break ground in late summer on the new Crew Subdivision in east Holdrege. The subdivision will include up to 40 living units that could be rented or purchased.

The project was made possible by a grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic

Development. Holdrege was one of 14 communities selected to receive grants through the new rural workforce housing program established by LB518.

The \$318,500 state grant combined with a \$250,000 grant from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and \$250,000 in LB840 funds from the Phelps County Development Corporation will be used to help finance the project.

Cris Larson, projects director at Mesner Development, said they will build 10 duplexes similar to the Sunrise Lane duplexes built in Holdrege a few years ago. The three-bedroom duplexes are for low-income earners (less than \$34,000 annually for a household of two), and rent will be set at \$485 plus utilities

(lawn care, snow removal and trash fees are included in the rent).

Mesner has also agreed to build up to three townhomes (up to six living units). Lots will be available for other developers/builders to purchase and construct up to seven more townhomes.

"We welcome builders," Cris said. "We really need other builders to come out and build some housing in the subdivision."

If all 7 of the additional townhomes are constructed quickly, there are plans to open up the subdivision further, which would allow enough lots for 12 more townhomes.

Mesner has also sought bids

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Jim Wiser Announces Retirement from PCDC Board of Directors

Jim Wiser announced his resignation from the PCDC board of directors in late May after volunteering for local economic development efforts for the past 12 years.

Jim said it was a hard decision to leave a board that he loved serving on. But, health issues were preventing him from attending meetings and giving his full effort.



Jim Wiser

“That’s the best board I’ve worked on in my life,” Jim said. “Everybody worked together. People listen on that board. They get things done.”

One of the biggest accomplishments of his 12 years was establishing a 134-acre industrial park, which opens opportunities for new or expanding businesses in Holdrege.

“We all worked together and got the Iron Horse Industrial park going,” Jim said. “Now, I’d like to see 4-5 businesses out there in the industrial park with about 20 employees each.”

Jim started his own small business, South-Central Diesel, in 1971 with two employees. The company now has 14 employees and continues to grow under the direction of Jim’s son, Mike Wiser.

South Central Diesel services and repairs diesel injection products and turbochargers and is a distributor for turbochargers. The company recently won a sales achievement award from BD Diesel Performance and received the 2018 Holset Gold Level Distributor Award for distribution of Holset Turbochargers.

Jim served as president of the PCDC Board right after the Vision 2020 plan was created. He

said the board and staff have now accomplished about 97 percent of the projects in that plan, including downtown improvements, renewing the LB840 sales tax, committing money to a new ballfield and now housing solutions.

“We set our goals and strategic plan to get some of those things accomplished,” he said. “There’s just so many things we got done these last 10 years.”

In addition to a hard-working board, he credits the high-quality PCDC staff for helping keep the momentum going.

“We wouldn’t have done as much as we could without the two executive directors we had,” he said “We have such good staff. They are hard workers, and they get it done.”

Another long-time PCDC board member, Tim Rehm, said Jim will be missed on the board because of his lifelong connections and ability to meet conflicts head on.

“Jim was born and raised in Phelps County and knows a lot of people,” Tim said. “He always relied on his lifelong relationships when we needed to get something done. Jim always knows somebody who knows somebody.”

Tim said it’s impressive that Jim continued to operate his successful business in Phelps County even though it could have been located anywhere in the world.

Although Jim suffered from some health issues recently, Tim said he remained dedicated to the work of economic development in Phelps County as best he could.

“He is very passionate, and he always wanted to get things done,” Tim said.

Tim is chairman of PCDC’s board development committee, and he said they always have a list of potential board members. Some of those candidates have already been vetted or have served on various PCDC committees and are familiar with the organization’s work.

They hope to have a replacement on the board within a few months.

Summer Projects

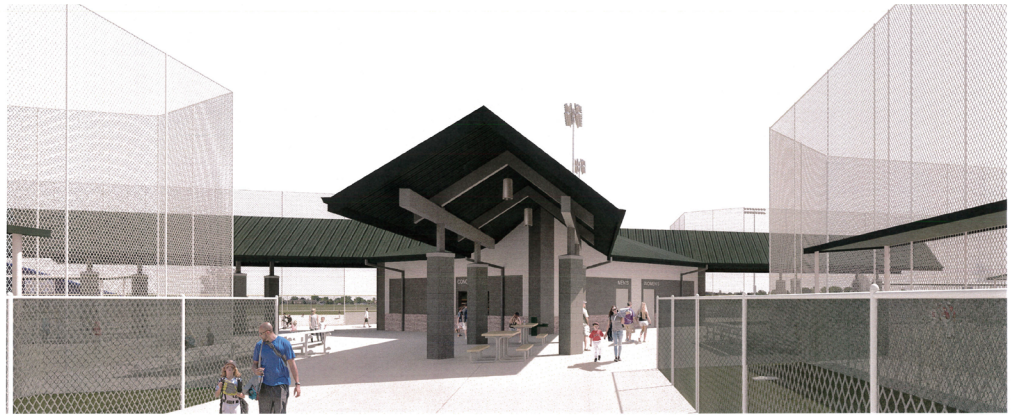
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from local contractors and subcontractors for the duplexes.

Mesner will manage the rental properties. Anyone interested in renting should call Mesner at (308) 946-3826. Homes could be ready for occupancy as early as August 2020.

The new subdivision is east of East Street near 11th Avenue. The 10-acre property is just south of the Sunrise East subdivision. An entrance to the subdivision will be to the north, off of 11th Avenue.

The city has approved the use of tax-increment financing to build the streets, water and sewer in the new subdivision.



Olsson Associates prepared this rendering of the new baseball/softball complex.

Baseball/Softball Complex

Dirt work, grading and installation of new water and sewer lines was completed last summer on the new baseball/softball complex on 18th Street, and construction began this spring on the restrooms/concession stand building.

The building will include women's and men's restrooms, a family restroom, a small room for umpires, a mechanical room, a storage room and concession stand. A large concession window will open to the south, and a smaller window will open on the west. Bierman Contracting of Columbus is the contractor for this portion of the project.

The complex will include four fields with the concession/restroom building at the center.

Once the building is complete, City Administrator Bob Rager said more dirt work/grading will be needed along with lighting, fencing, sprinkler systems, dugouts and grass seeding.

PCDC has committed at least \$1 million in LB840 funds to help fund the complex.

VA Medical Clinic

Dirt work began in late May on an expansion/renovation project at the Veteran's Administration Clinic at 1118 Burlington in Holdrege. An additional 4,000 square feet will be added to the existing clinic, nearly doubling the existing building, and more parking spaces will be added. The clinic will remain open during the construction, however some services may be relocated within the building during the process. The project is expected to be completed by early 2020.

ceilings. The Beinkes are investing more than \$1 million into the project, and they received a substantial grant from PCDC's DREAM program to help fund the project.

Iron Horse Flats

Exterior work has started on the Iron Horse Flats apartment complex at 201 West Ave. in downtown Holdrege. Chanse and Cristina Beinke of Loomis, owners of Smart Choice Management, started renovating the interior of the apartments last winter. Once completed, the building will house 18 high-end downtown apartments featuring granite countertops, high-end appliances and 9-10 foot

Phelps Medical Clinic

Construction began in May on the Phelps Memorial Health Center expansion. The hospital will build a new health clinic attached to the northeast corner of the hospital to replace and expand the existing Phelps Medical Group building, which would be demolished.

The new clinic will have 17 patient exam rooms and a communication hub in the center to reduce wait times for patients. It will also feature expanded spaces for oncology services.

The project is estimated to be finished in December 2020.

Cobblestone Hotel

Behind-the-scenes work continues to progress on the new 45-room Cobblestone Hotel to be built at Washington Square on Burlington Street. Investors have been meeting for the past year to finalize financing, appraisals and design. A ground breaking is expected sometime in the next several months.

Business Expansions

Two ground breakings occurred this spring on major business expansions in Phelps County. Southern Public Power is building a new regional office in Funk, and Allmand Inc./Briggs & Stratton broke ground on its addition, which will add five new assembly lines to the local plant.



Southern Public Power broke ground on a new service center in Funk in April.

Ten Local Students Awarded Scholarships

Graduates will return to work in high-demand jobs

Ten students studying construction, agriculture, nursing and automotive repair received generous scholarships because they plan to return to Phelps County to work after graduation.

The high-demand jobs scholarships are part of the Phelps County Development Corporation's efforts to create a quality local work force. This year, \$26,000 in scholarships were awarded ranging from \$2,000-\$4,000 each.

Scholarship winner Dylan Nelson is a 2019 graduate of Holdrege High School and plans to attend Southeast Community College in Milford this fall to study automotive collision repair technology. He said it was always his plan to return to Phelps County to work after his education.

"I don't think I'd want to live anywhere else because it just feels like home here," Dylan said. "All the people I love and care about are here."

Dylan said auto-body repair has interested him since he was younger. He started a detailing business when he was a sophomore in high school and cleans, buffs and details anything from cars and trucks to boats, tractors and semis.

Dylan said the scholarship made sense for him because of his goal to return to Phelps County.

"It's kind of a good agreement to keep me motivated to further my knowledge in auto-body," Dylan said. "I thought it was a good all-around scholarship, and I'm glad I received it."

Two of the 2019 scholarship winners are siblings to previous winners. Dantley Edgren is the brother of former scholarship winner Colter Edgren, and Tyler Bialis is the brother of former scholarship winner Jamie Bialis.

Dantley also plans to attend Southeast Community College in Milford to study automotive collision repair technology.

"I grew up always interested in cars, me and Colter both," Dantley said. "He was interested in the mechanical, and I was more interested in how the cars looked."

Dantley's current part-time job at Turner Body Shop in Holdrege reinforced his decision as he fell in love with the work he does on vehicles at Turner's.

Colter received the high-demand jobs scholarship in 2015 and now works full-time at



2019 High Demand Jobs Scholarship Recipients



Dannull Engine.

Scholarship winners must sign a contract stating their intention to return to the county to work after their education. The scholarships are funded through LB840 sales tax funds, private donors and matching funds from the Phelps County Community Foundation.

The scholarships are intended to encourage

graduating seniors and non-traditional students to pursue work in local high-demand jobs: nurses, agri-business and technology positions, diesel mechanics, engineer technologists, mechatronics engineers, injection mold technicians, electro-mechanical technologists, machinists, tool and die makers, construction trades, welders and commercial truck drivers.

2019 Scholarship Winners

The 2019 scholarship winners are **Hunter Brenn**, Holdrege High School 2018 graduate, studying agriculture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (second-year recipient); **Tyler Bialis**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying agriculture at Southeast Community College in Beatrice; **Drake Johnson**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying agriculture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; **Mackenzie Koch**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying nursing at BryanLGH (second-year recipient); **Sarah Pelton**, 2018 Bertrand High School graduate, studying nursing at Bryan LGH (second-year recipient); **Dylan Nelson**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying automotive collision repair technology at Southeast Community College-Milford; **Seth Connell**, Holdrege High School graduate studying carpentry/construction at Southeast Community College in Milford; **Alec Lovitt**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying carpentry/construction at Central Community College-Hastings; **Dantley Edgren**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying automotive collision repair technology at Southeast Community College-Milford; **McKayla Meyer**, Loomis High School graduate, studying agriculture at Central Community College-Hastings.

Report Shows Labor, Wage & Commuting Trends

Updated Study Keeps Phelps County Ahead In Recruitment Efforts

A new labor supply study for Phelps County reveals some interesting trends in wages, worker availability and local commuting patterns.

Nebraska Public Power District Economist Kenneth M. Lemke, PhD., completed the study and produced a 26-page report as a business recruitment resource for PCDC. The final report is published on the PCDC website and gives business leaders the information they need to make growth or expansion decisions.

“NPPD provides this and other reports to assist our customer communities in their efforts to grow local businesses and improve an area’s economy,” Lemke said. “We focus on providing answers to the most often asked questions about the size and composition of the labor market.”

Lemke said the report makes a community more competitive for potential projects. He prepares about 5-10 reports each year for Nebraska communities.

Rick Nelson, senior economic development consultant for NPPD, said the information in the new labor report is “vital” when responding to requests for information from site consultants and business owners who are evaluating new communities or regions.

“Having data like this on hand enables PCDC to respond quickly to such requests, and speed is important in these decisions,” Rick said. “It also helps set them apart from other groups as being responsive and providing requested information.”

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said the most recent local labor study was completed in 2008, so it was time for updated information.

Ron said he is grateful to NPPD staff who worked diligently to create this report for PCDC.

“We need to have up-to-date accurate information to share with employers and targeted industries that we are trying to recruit,” Ron said. “They don’t want to have old information.”

The report indicated that a new employer providing jobs with competitive wages and benefits would be a welcome addition to the

Labor Study Key Findings

Commuting Stats

■ In 2015, nearly **38 percent** of Phelps County residents were **commuting to jobs outside the county**. However, that number is lower than other area counties. In Gosper County, 75 percent of residents commute outside of their county to work. In Harlan County, that number is 70 percent, and in Kearney County, 64 percent. In Buffalo County, 29 percent of workers commute outside of their county to work.

■ By contrast, **44 percent of the jobs in Phelps County are held by residents commuting from other counties**, including 6 percent from Buffalo County and 5 percent from Harlan County.



Wage & Career Trends

■ In Phelps County, the **average annual salary per worker is \$40,931**, which is higher than the other counties in the labor area but is \$3,920 less than the state average.

■ It also breaks down average hourly wages paid for various job categories and how many people work in those jobs. For example, 171 teachers work in Phelps County at an average hourly wage of \$19.65 per hour while 161 work in nursing/home health at an average hourly wage of \$11.28, and 45 engineers are working in the county at an average hourly pay of \$31.98.



Population

■ The report also shows population trends, including cultural population changes and age distribution. For example, **it shows that 26 percent of Phelps County’s population is age 45-64**, while 12 percent are ages 15-24.

■ The most significant deviations between Nebraska and the Phelps County labor area occur in manufacturing. In Phelps County, **16.7 percent of nonfarm wage and salary workers are employed in manufacturing**, compared to 10.1 percent statewide.



employment base in Phelps County.

“The response to such employment opportunities would be substantial,” the report stated. “There is a sizable labor force population base living within the Phelps County Labor Area.”

The report showed the population of the Phelps

County Labor Area (Phelps County plus the seven contiguous counties) totaled 102,272 in 2017 with a Phelps County population of 9,060.

The completed 26-page report is available on PCDC’s website at www.phelpscountyne.com/site-selection/market-research.

GO! HOME PROGRAM MAKING A DIFFERENCE

PCDC GO! HOME GRANTS
LAUNCHED IN 2017.
SINCE THAT TIME,
GRANTS HAVE WELCOMED
103
NEW RESIDENTS



A down payment assistance grant from PCDC's GO! Home program helped new Holdrege Shelter Insurance agent Rodrigo Retana-Aguilera and his wife, Cecilia, purchase a new home in Loomis. The home was also built with a grant from the GO! Home program.

GO! HOME PROGRAM STATS BY YEAR

RENTER RELOCATION GRANTS

\$1,000 GRANTS to assist employees living outside the county or a new employee move to Phelps County and rent a home or apartment.

2018 — 9 RESIDENTS (6 GRANTS)

2019 — 13 RESIDENTS (5 GRANTS)



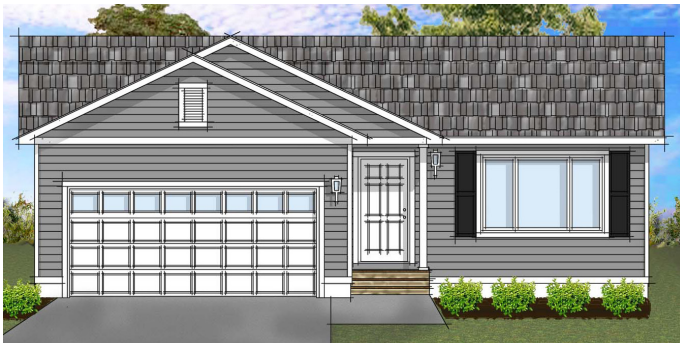
DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS

PCDC matches employer contributions up \$2,500 toward a down payment on a home to encourage new residents/commuters to relocate to the county. In 2019, grants were opened to public employees and those who are self-employed with no matching grant required.

2017 — 19 RESIDENTS (5 GRANTS)

2018 — 34 RESIDENTS (13 GRANTS)

2019 — 28 RESIDENTS (8 GRANTS)



Two dilapidated homes were torn down at 11th and Logan and will soon be replaced with a new home thanks to PCDC's GO! Home Phoenix program and a partnership with the South-Central Economic Development District Inc.

“Anytime we can get our associates closer to our operations, the better. It’s more than just having a better commute when it’s snowy. It’s also that having them in the area and the community just really helps to build a strong, healthy economy here.”

— Brian Deakin, Human Resources Manager at BD

BD matched 10 down payment assistance grants in 2018 and will match up to another 10 in 2019.

New Fitness Center Opens Downtown

A new coed 24-hour fitness center option is now available in downtown Holdrege.

Janel & Todd Moore and Shelly & Tracy Cisneros opened Evolve 24/7 on June 3 at 311 East Ave.

“People had stated how they needed something that was available more hours,” Janel said. “We thought that was a niche market where community members could workout anytime they want.”

Members will receive an entry code and a key fob to enter the gym, which features treadmills, elliptical machines, stationary bikes and free weights. It also features new dual-purpose weight machines that each exercise more than one muscle group.

A women’s-only circuit room and personal training are also available.

PCDC awarded Evolve 24/7 a DREAM program grant for exterior enhancements and a First Impressions Grant for signs. Janel said a grand opening will be scheduled once exterior improvements are completed.

Call (308) 999-6348 for more information about the new gym.

Nebraska Star Beef Expands Warehouse

Nebraska Star Beef, located at 73938 J Road in Phelps County, recently expanded its operation with the addition of an 8,000-square-foot warehouse/shipping center.

Nebraska Star Beef, which started in 2011, produces all natural (antibiotic-free, hormone-free) Angus beef from its family-operated business

in northern Phelps County. The company also owns and operates three restaurants, Angus Burgers and Shakes in Kearney and Omaha and Sozo American Cuisine in Kearney, where its premium beef is served. It also produces Lucky Brand beef jerky and Nebraska Star Beef seasonings.

Nebraska Star Beef is owned and operated by the Klute family from Kearney. They stand out from other beef companies because they raise, harvest, age and process their own beef.

Kayla Pfister, office manager at Nebraska Star Beef, said they built the addition to create more space to store and ship their beef.

Nebraska Star Beef first started shipping its frozen beef in about 2012, and they initially hired a fulfillment company to store and ship their products. About four years ago, they decided to handle their own shipping and built a small garage to do so.

“We basically outgrew the garage, so we put in a large warehouse behind our office at our feed yard, and now we have lots of room,” Kayla said.

The new warehouse has a large a walk-in freezer, and there’s plenty of space for shipping and storing frozen products. So, they are also helping other businesses by warehousing and shipping products for them.

“We want to make sure we are making use of our space to not only help with our shipping fulfillment services, but we thought we could also help Nebraska companies that are just starting out in shipping products, Kayla said.

The company also works with many business



Betty Sayers of Holdrege recently launched a business featuring her new product, Spicy Beer Mustard.

owners who purchase employee and customer appreciation beef gift packages.

To learn more about Nebraska Star Beef, visit www.nebraskastarbeef.com.

Local Entrepreneur Starts Mustard Company

Betty Sayers of Holdrege recently launched Buzz Savories LLC to produce and sell her new product, Spicy Beer Mustard.

Betty and a neighbor created the Spicy Beer Mustard recipe a few years ago using locally crafted beer from Lost Way Brewery in Holdrege and honey from Sayers’ bee hives.

The mustard can be used as a dip for peppers, crackers or pretzels and on all kinds of meat: brats, hot dogs, roast beef, ham and chicken.

The mustard is available locally at Lost Way Brewery, Gifts & Things and Fritz’s Meat and is available online from Amazon at Buy Nebraska. Visit buzzsavoriesllc.com for more information, recipes and to sign up for an e-newsletter.

PCDC Approves Grants for Holdrege Law Office, Laundry Mat and Hair Salon

In addition to the recent DREAM program grant for the new Evolve 24/7 Fitness Center, PCDC also approved a DREAM grant for exterior improvements for Anderson, Klein, Brewster & Brant Law office.

PCDC also recently approved a GO! Business Building Exterior Impact Grant to Dirty Duds laundry mat for painting, lighting and other exterior improvements and another grant to New Your Styling Salon for painting, windows, lighting and exterior repairs.

Building Exterior Impact Grants are up to \$1,000 matching grants o improve building exteriors in any Phelps County town. Grants are for

materials only.

The Downtown Revitalization & Economic Assistance Mission (DREAM) grants help restore and improve buildings in the downtown core. Recognizing the significance of the downtown area to a community, the program will address both exterior facades of commercial buildings and interior renovations within the central business district of any Phelps County community.

Please visit www.phelpscountyne.com for more information and grant applications.

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

GO news

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PCDC Announces New GO! Franchise Grants

PCDC has taken the next step in retail recruitment efforts by offering a new incentive to potential franchise owners.

The Phelps County Development Corporation's new GO! FRANCHISE program awards grants of up to \$35,000 over three years to help bring new stores or restaurants to the county.

"We hope this new program will stimulate the interest of people to start investigating franchises," said Ron Tillery, PCDC's Executive Director.

The new GO! FRANCHISE program will provide up-front assistance during the early start-up period so that local investors/franchisees can apply their resources to other areas.

"If somebody is interested in a franchise, we can work with them to identify one that's the best fit for them through our Buxton scout program," Tillery said.



The GO! FRANCHISE grants are also available to existing franchise owners who live outside of Phelps County but may want to add new or additional locations here.

"If it's a franchise owner in Grand Island or Hastings and they want to establish operations here, we will work with them," Tillery said.

Anyone interested in local franchise opportunities should contact Tillery at ron@phelpscountyne.com or (308) 995-4148.