

Phelps County Business Journal

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PHELPS COUNTY, NEBRASKA



NEW! Legacy Loan Program

PCDC has tools to help with business transitions through the new GO! Business Legacy Loan Program that provides long-term gap financing loans (meaning businesses must get a bank loan first) to help new owners purchase an existing business.

Funds may be used to purchase the business or for equipment purchases or improvements but cannot be used toward working capital. The loan cannot exceed 50 percent of the total capital costs.

PCDC can help current business owners with valuations to determine a business' worth and can arrange and facilitate meetings with potential buyers.

For more information about the Legacy Loan program and other PCDC tools for local businesses, please visit phelpscountyne.com and click on the About Us menu and then select Go! Programs.

NEW BUSINESS OWNER BLOOMS DOWNTOWN

Rupe Retires From 60-Year Career

New Owners Move Flower Shop From Kearney To Holdrege

For nearly 60 years, John Rupe worked in the business of "love."

"A flower shop is all about love," John said. "The flowers we send out are given out in love, whether it's to comfort or console or celebrate. You get into a lot of unique situations in people's lives where they need love or wish to send love. That's one of the joys of being the florist."

John and his wife, Sharon, recently sold Holdrege Floral, the business they spent a lifetime building, to new owners Lori and Kevin Hunt and Linda and Bill Dahl.

"Bill and Linda and Lori and Kevin were all very nice to work with," John said. "And, I think they will do a fabulous job for the residents of Holdrege and the surrounding communities."

Although happy to have new quality owners for the flower shop, the sale and retirement are bittersweet for John.

He started working at the floral shop in downtown Holdrege in 1958, the year after he graduated from Eustis High School. His farm roots came in handy in the greenhouse, and the floral shop owners realized John had a talent for arranging flowers. He started in April and by Mother's Day, they entrusted him to make floral arrangements.

John became a co-owner of Holdrege Floral in 1969. He bought out his partner in 1981 and had been the sole owner for the past 35 years.



John Rupe, left, has retired from his 60-year career in the floral business. Lori Hunt and her family are the new owners of Holdrege Floral Expressions.

Now age 78, John had recently contemplated selling the flower shop, but he wasn't quite ready. Then, last May, John tripped while leaving the Rotary meeting and was knocked unconscious. The fall left him with a lower back and neck injury that made it difficult to perform a job that required him to stand all day, and sometimes all night.

After the fall, John more seriously looked for a buyer for Holdrege Floral. He mentioned it to a few potential buyers, and when they weren't interested, he listed the business with HomeTown Realty.

It didn't take long for the word to spread to Lori and Kevin Hunt and Lori's parents, Bill and Linda Dahl.

Lori said she heard through word-of-mouth in November 2016 about Holdrege Floral being for sale. Her family owned Floral Expressions in Kearney for 18 years and was

considering moving the business to Axtell, where they live.

"This seemed to make more sense," Lori said about Holdrege Floral as it was already a well-established business and the only floral shop in town.

The Hunts and Dahls met with John, and the sale happened quickly after that as Floral Expressions became the owner February 1 under the new name Holdrege Floral Expressions.

Lori had worked in her parents' floral and landscaping business since she was 19. She scraped her plans to become a graphic designer after figuring out she liked to be creative but not behind a computer screen.

"I like the floral business because it's something new every day," Lori said. "And, it gives me a chance to be creative."

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Boehler Elected to PCDC Board

Janet Boehler has spent her entire life in Phelps County, growing up in Loomis and now living and working in Holdrege. That's plenty of time to realize one of Phelps's County's greatest assets – its people.

"We have a lot of commitment and loyalty in this community," she said. "I think everybody in this community wants to help."

Janet is one of those people who loves to serve and will now be sharing her time and talents as a member of the Phelps County Development Corporation's board of directors. She was elected to the position at the February annual meeting.



Janet Boehler

"This is a great community," Janet said. "To continue to keep it great and continue to improve and create value, it takes people to commit to help reach that goal. If I can contribute in some way that can make a positive difference, I'm willing to do my part."

Janet said one of current challenges facing the county is the poor commodity prices in the agricultural sector, which is a large part of the county's economy.

"It puts a little hindrance on things short term," she said.

Job creation is another challenge.

In addition to the generous and caring people, Janet said Phelps County has all the right infrastructure - great schools, a great hospital and great facilities, like the YMCA.

"Now, we just need to get the jobs to get people here," she said.

Janet is looking forward to getting started and helping where she can.

"I just hope to encourage others and to help us work together to make Phelps County a better place," she said.

Janet's work experience includes more than 20 years in human resources, working at Artistic Woven Labels (now closed) and Allmand Bros. She now works with Roger Allmand at Legacy Purpose as the business manager.

Janet is married to John Boehler, Branch President at Bruning State Bank. Together they have five children and 12 grandchildren ranging in age from 8 months to 14 years.

Janet has many years of experience as a community volunteer, including serving on the Trinity Church Trustee Board, volunteering to deliver Meals on Wheels meals, serving as a past Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce Board Member and Ambassador and as a member of the Loomis School Board and the Loomis E-Free Church Board.

Holdrege Floral Expressions ...

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Lori especially enjoys wedding floral arrangements and stayed up for 34 hours straight last summer to arrange 100 centerpieces for a 900-guest wedding. She plans to turn the brick building connected to the south side of the floral shop into her wedding and prom display area to showcase backdrops, centerpieces, chandeliers and other wedding rentals.

Just as Holdrege Floral was a family affair for the Rupes, it will be the same for the Hunts and Dahls. In addition to her parents and husband, Lori said her three children, Ethan, 15; Olivia, 13; and Reece, 9; will be helping in the summer and on weekends. Three other full-time and several

part-time employees also work at Holdrege Floral Expressions, including some of the Rupe family.

John looks forward to helping Lori during busy times.

"It's been very emotional on my part because I love it," John said of his decision to retire. "I love the business. I love the shop. I love being a part of Holdrege and all the surrounding communities. I made a tremendous amount of friends through the years, through my business, and I loved every moment of that. I enjoyed doing business with the businesses here in town. The banks have been good to me. And, the funeral home has been wonderful to work with. It's been a very, very rewarding time in my life."

Study Focuses on County Workforce Housing

The Phelps County Development Corporation will be studying workforce housing in 2017 with the help of a countywide housing study.

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said a recent study indicated that nearly half of the workers in Phelps County are commuters.

Tillery said that creating affordable workforce housing is one of the county's top challenges. Creating a mix of rentals and owner-occupied homes may help convert commuters into new residents and give a boost to local contractors and suppliers as well.

"Housing is economic development, and PCDC wants to match housing opportunities with those of business recruitment and expansion," Tillery said. "Once completed, the study should attract a host of both public and private entities to facilitate and implement new housing and improve and preserve the existing housing stock throughout Phelps County. The housing study will address the housing needs and wants of the citizens of the county and each community, including all age and income household sectors."

The workforce housing study is a joint effort between PCDC, the Holdrege Housing Authority and the City of Holdrege. The entities received a grant through the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority to help pay for a portion of the study, which is being conducted by Hanna:Keelan Associates of Lincoln.

The study will also gather important population, income and economic data, a housing stock analysis, strategies for affordable housing development, a five-year housing action plan and funding options for future owner and rental housing developments and housing rehabilitation projects in each community and throughout the county.

Results should be available in June and will serve as a guide for housing development in the next five years.



Give Us Your Housing Opinions!

The Phelps County Development Corporation is asking for your help in determining housing needs throughout the entire county for the next five years. Scan the QR code to the right with your smart-phone to be connected to a survey prepared by Hanna:Keelan Associates about Phelps County housing needs.



You may also access the survey on the PCDC website at www.phelpscountyne.com or email alli@phelpscountyne.com to have a survey emailed to you.

Holdrege Memorial Homes Seeks Elderly Housing Input

Study To Guide Decision On School Property Plans

Holdrege Memorial Homes is seeking community input to determine future housing needs for the elderly.

The organization purchased the former Franklin school property in January 2016 and has formed a Franklin Development Committee to determine potential uses for the property, which is just one block west of its facility.

Lori Reiner, HMH Foundation and Public Relations Director, said the committee hired Hanna:Keelan Associates of Lincoln to conduct a study about elderly housing needs



Lori Reiner

in the community. Some possibilities for the site include adult day care or more assisted-living housing units.

"Before we launch into something, we wanted to be certain that we were meeting the needs of Holdrege and the surrounding area," Reiner

said. "It's good stewardship to make sure you are meeting the needs of the community."

Community members were invited to participate in the survey during January and February 2017.

Although 141 survey responses were collected, Reiner said they would still like to receive more input. The survey can be accessed on the Holdrege Memorial Homes website (under the news tab), the Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce website and the Holdrege Housing Authority website. Hard copies of the surveys are available at HMH.

A community meeting to gather more input and discuss results of the survey has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 6, in the Holdrege Memorial Homes Chapel Community Room.

Holdrege Memorial Homes is a long-term assisted living and skilled nursing facility that employs 150 people and houses 122 residents.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- ☀ Completed a successful \$1 million **Prosperity Project II** fund-raising campaign to support PCDC's work for the next five years.
- ☀ Created the new **GO! Tools** program to support small businesses, train a quality workforce, develop workforce housing, continue downtown improvements and partner with area developers.
- ☀ Completed a **Targeted Industry Study** to help focus future recruitment efforts.
- ☀ Successfully transitioned and welcomed a **new PCDC Executive Director**.



TARGETED RECRUITMENT

- ☀ Completed road and utility infrastructure reviews for **Iron Horse Business & Industry Park**.
- ☀ Joined **Bio Nebraska**, attended the **FABTECH conference**, sent brochures to the **World Dairy Expo** and continued a partnership with the **Community Venture Network** to foster future economic development opportunities in Phelps County.
- ☀ Continued a process of aggressive **outreach to regional businesses**.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

- ☀ Awarded 11 **high-demand jobs scholarships** totaling \$22,000 and renewed a partnership with the PCCF to continue offering scholarships for another 3 years.
- ☀ Hired an intern who worked with local companies to help them start **internship programs**.
- ☀ Began the process of purchasing and developing the former **Washington School** property for future rental homes and businesses.
- ☀ Created a **Business Start-Up Guide** and continued to guide aspiring local business owners.



COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS & QUALITY OF LIFE

- ☀ Began the **Go! Downtown Group** to encourage downtown growth, development and shopping.
- ☀ Initiated a county-wide **housing study** with the City of Holdrege and the Holdrege Housing Authority.
- ☀ Continued monthly **Business in Motion** education and support meetings for small business owners.
- ☀ Began preliminary work on constructing a new **ballfield complex**.
- ☀ Recruited a leadership team and prepared to launch the new **Holdrege Young Professionals Group**.

BRANDING, MARKETING & COMMUNITY CONSENSUS

- ☀ Partnered with Phelps Memorial Health Center and UNL Extension to offer a **Connecting the Dots** career day for high-school freshmen.
- ☀ Informed community members, investors and partners of **local economic development news** and opportunities through the www.phelpscountyne.com website, monthly e-newsletters and the quarterly Phelps County Business Journal.

Lost Way Finds Home in Downtown Holdrege

PCDC Loan Gives Boost To New Brewery Project

Jason and Kimberly Hines and Jessica and Mark Kraus have lived in Holdrege for less than three years. And, already, they feel like they've finally found their home.

Kimberly and Mark (who are siblings) and Jason all grew up in Michigan. Jessica is originally from New Mexico.

The couples found their way to Holdrege through Jason and Mark's employment at BD.

"It's really about being lost and finding your way and being in a place you want to be at the end of the day," Mark said.

That's how they decided upon a name for their new business, Lost Way Brewery, that they plan to open in downtown Holdrege.

The two couples have purchased a building at 614 Third Ave. and are renovating the 4,000-square-foot former Sunglow Dairy into a brewery and tasting room that has the potential to attract craft beer lovers from around the world.

"We moved here to be part of a small town, and we want to be able to contribute to that and to help the town to grow and be a place that people want to come to," Mark said.

Jason and Kimberly moved to Holdrege three years ago for his job as a Quality Engineer at BD. He encouraged his brother-in-law Mark, a former Marine officer, to also move to Nebraska. Mark found a job as a Team Leader at BD and moved here with Jessica 2½ years ago.

Both families fell in love with the community (also encouraging Mark and Kimberly's parents and another sister to move to the area) and hope their dream of opening a brewery will spark other new entertainment options and businesses in downtown Holdrege.

"Holdrege is great, but there's not a whole lot going on downtown," Jason said. "We are hoping to jump start that."

Mark, 33, has had an interest in craft beer since graduating from college and began learning to brew about 5 ½ years ago and loved it.

"When we came to Holdrege, one of the first things we did was drive around and figure out where we wanted to put a brewery," Mark said. "What we envisioned was a family-friendly



Jason and Kimberly Hines (left) and Jessica and Mark Kraus purchased the building at 617 Third Ave. and plan to open Lost Way Brewery at the location. They are hoping the brewery will bring new life to downtown Holdrege and spark other new entertainment businesses.

gathering place where we could teach people about brewing and teach people about the different styles of beer."

Jason, who is also 33, said the brewery will have couches and board games and be a relaxing and family-friendly atmosphere.

"It's more of an experience than just going to the bar and having a beer," he said.

PCDC is helping Lost Way Brewery by providing a gap-financing loan through its new Business Improvement Loan program.

Both Jason and Mark are grateful for the loan and other help they received through PCDC.

"Working in Holdrege, Nebraska, on a brewery, there's not a whole lot of experience in the banking area with that," Mark said. "There's risk that they don't totally understand. Being able to get that loan just shores up their confidence because we've got someone else on the hook as well that's willing to be a partner."

Mark and Jason said PCDC also helped the Lost Way couples find a building for their brewery and has been a valuable resource for the start-up company.

"They are one of the most important contacts we've had," Mark said of PCDC.

"If people are doing a project and they aren't going in there (to PCDC) for assistance, they are

GO! BUSINESS

The Building Improvement Loan is one tool available in the Go! Business Program. The loan provides applicants with a low-interest loan (half the market rate with a minimum of 2 percent) for up to 10 years to help local entrepreneurs who want to make improvements on buildings they own. Improvements may include renovations, replacing windows or sidewalks, upgrading parking or other exterior enhancements.

doing something wrong," Jason said.

It will likely be the winter of 2017-18 before the brewery can open while they wait for federal and state licensing approval and the renovations.

"Be patient with us," Jason said. "It's a long process, but we are going to try to do it as quickly as we can, and we are going to try to keep everyone involved."

To stay up to date on Lost Way's progress, follow them on Facebook or Instagram.

For more information about PCDC's Building Improvement Loan, contact Alli at 995-4148 or alli@helpscountyne.com.

Sports Collectors Store Opening

Dave and Erin Wise of Holdrege have opened Generations Sports Cards & Memorabilia in downtown Holdrege in the lower level of the building at 401 West Ave.

The Wises will buy, sell and trade sports collector items at the new shop.



Dave Wise

The store features sports trading cards and autographed sports memorabilia, including helmets and jerseys and other items. Husker

jerseys signed by Mike Rozier and Johnny Rodgers are two of the featured items.

Collecting sports memorabilia has been a lifelong passion for Dave, and he said that he and others interested in this hobby currently have to travel to Grand Island for the nearest collectors store.

Store hours are 5:45- 9:30 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m.- 9 p.m. Saturdays and 1-6 p.m. Sundays. For more information, including special "trading" nights, follow Generations on Facebook.

Pampered Soles Relocates to Downtown Holdrege

Kris Shaver has moved her business, Pampered Soles Tanning & Spa, from Atlanta to 609 4th Ave. in the downtown Holdrege area.



Kris Shaver

Kris has been in the nail and pampering business since 2003 when she opened up shop in Oxford. She moved to Atlanta in 2007 and relocated to Holdrege at the end of February. PCDC helped in finding a location.

Kris became a licensed nail tech prior to opening her businesses and obtained her esthetic's license in 2013 to add more services. She is currently the only licensed esthetician in Phelps County.

Pampered Soles offers chemical peels, body waxing, ear piercings, body wraps, microdermabrasion, body waxing, facials, make-up lessons, acne treatments and anti-aging treatments for sun damage and wrinkles.

The new location also has a UV sauna.



Kris also continues to offer manicures and pedicures and tanning (UV and spray).

She is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. for tanning with longer hours during the busy prom seasons. Other services are by appointment only by calling (308) 991-8011.

Kris hopes to add another esthetician and nail techs in the future to work at her safe, secure and licensed business.

For more information, visit Pampered Soles on Facebook or the website at www.pamperedsolesonline.com.

YMCA Hires New Child Care Director

Shannon Reicheneker of Kearney has been hired as the new Child Care Director at the YMCA at R7 Early Learning Center.



Shannon Reicheneker

Shannon is glad to have a new opportunity with kids in the Holdrege area.

"I have always wanted to be part of a center as it was being built from the ground up," Shannon said. Since the Y's facility just opened in September 2016, she

is starting near the beginning and has grand visions for the day care's future, including adding a second infant room and a 5-day-a-week preschool program.

Fifty kids are enrolled at the center, but it is licensed for 100, giving it plenty of room to grow.

Shannon, who is originally from Litchfield, worked as the Child Care Manager at Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney for four years before accepting the job at the Y in February. Her experience prior to that was at KinderCare centers and a church day care in Colorado.

Shannon earned degree in early children education early childhood education administration.

She lives in Kearney with her three sons, Conor, 16; Colin, 14; and Colton, 12.

ruralMED Hires Wellness Coach

Marlene Williams has joined the team at ruralMED as the wellness coach and volunteer coordinator.

Marlene will be providing ongoing support to dieters with ruralMED Health and Wellness. She will also work with hospice volunteers and in the ruralMED Home Care Resources branch.

Prior to joining ruralMED, Marlene was the

Hospice Volunteer Coordinator with Aseracare. She also worked as the Dietary Supervisor at Loomis Public Schools and is well known

for her work with the Cozad Volunteer Fire Department.



Marlene Williams

Marlene graduated from Callaway High School and studied agribusiness at the National College of Business in Rapid City, SD.

She lives in Cozad with and her husband, Tim. They have three sons, a dog and one grandson.

When she is not at work, Marlene loves to get her hands dirty in the kitchen and is famous for her homemade "Runzas" and monster cookies. She also enjoys spending time outside gardening, hunting and occasionally ice fishing.

Newspaper Celebrates Unique Milestones

It's a bit of a luxury to have a daily newspaper in a town the size of Holdrege. In fact, Holdrege is the smallest town in Nebraska to still boast a daily newspaper.

While many newspapers have cut back their publication to once, twice or three times a week, the Holdrege Daily Citizen has continued providing daily weekday coverage for 80 years, a milestone celebrated in 2016.

The Nebraska Press Association reports just 17 daily newspapers in Nebraska, and the Editor and Publisher Newspaper Data Book reported 1,331 daily newspapers in the U.S.

The Citizen will celebrate another milestone in 2017 that makes it even more unique – 60 years of ownership by one family. Dwight and Ruth King purchased the newspaper in 1957. Today, their son, Bob, continues the tradition.

The Citizen is one of only two daily newspapers in the state that are family owned. The other is the Norfolk Daily News.

Bob began his career at The Citizen in 1973 after earning a degree in news-editorial journalism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Later that year, Tunney Price joined The Citizen and became the editor a few months later. He has served as editor since 1974.

Together, Bob and Tunney have covered life in Phelps County for more than 40 years, along with other staff throughout the years. Long-time



Holdrege Daily Citizen staff, from front left: Ian Winkleman, Blanca Cummins, Bob King, Linda Bowers. Back row from left, Dan Jordan, Linda Boyll, Bonnie Ruybalid, Dee Swanson and Tunney Price. Not pictured are Dave Vaughan, Russ Wright and Gary Talbert. (photo by Dan Christensen)

Citizen press operator Dan Jordan has worked right along with them as his career at The Citizen spans almost 50 years.

"I think the most rewarding part has been being able to participate in people's lives," Bob said. "To see what they've achieved and finding out about their interests and talents."

Bob said he is "retirement age," but he's not

ready to put away his pen and notebook quite yet. His future plans for The Citizen are not certain, but for today, the newspaper will keep providing local news to area residents.

"We are just glad to be part of the Holdrege community, and we hope we can continue putting out a daily newspaper to the community, the county and the area," Bob said.

Holdrege Memorial Homes Completes Entry Renovation



The new Holdrege Memorial Homes entrance is now safer for pedestrians and drivers. The project was completed in the last half of 2016.

A new grand entrance with a canopy and heated sidewalks now greets visitors and residents of Holdrege Memorial Homes.

Lori Reiner, HMH Foundation and Public Relations Director, said the new entrance beautifies the entrance and improves safety. The new entrance design makes it easier for vehicles to see clearly when entering and exiting the driveway. New heated sidewalks and lighting make it safer for pedestrians.

The \$1 million project was completed during the last half of 2016 and was funded through grants from the Phelps County Community Foundation, the Roy & Mary L. Pearson Fund, the Holdrege Memorial Homes Foundation and private gifts. The overhang canopy was donated by Don Sjogren in memory of his parents, Ernest and Ellen Sjogren.

A Coffee Connection is planned at 10 a.m. Monday, May 15, to celebrate and recognize donors and to kick off National Nursing Home Week. The public is invited to attend.

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Phelps County **Business Journal**

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CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Join Holdrege Young Professionals!

Make Social & Professional Connections
Gain Leadership Skills | Learn About Your Community
Have Fun | Meet New Friends | Everyone Welcome!

Social and educational events planned monthly. For more information, e-mail HYP president Tana Fye at tanafye@gmail.com or Alli Donohue at alli@phelpscountyne.com, or join the Holdrege Young Professionals Facebook group to learn about upcoming events and to RSVP. There is no cost.

