

# Phelps County Business Journal

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PHELPS COUNTY, NEBRASKA



## PCDC Launches New GO! Home Incentives

PCDC launched the GO! Home programs in June to create affordable housing options for working families in all of the county's communities.

### Sales Tax Rebates:

This program encourages contractors or developers to create new workforce housing by returning a portion of sales taxes paid (up to \$5,000) on building materials for new homes.

### Down Payment Help:

PCDC is encouraging local employers to provide down payment assistance that would be matched by PCDC up to \$2,500 for commuters who want to purchase homes.

### Phoenix Program:

This program targets existing neighborhoods with problem properties by encouraging the renovation of dilapidated, vacant, abandoned and overgrown properties.

Visit the PCDC website for full program details.

## MAKING ROOM FOR GROWTH

# Housing Planned For School Ground

## Developer Will Build Apartment Townhomes at Washington Square

Construction will begin soon on 18 new apartment townhomes on the former Washington school property in Holdrege. The project is expected to meet the need for more rental homes for the local workforce.

The project, called Washington Square Apartments in honor of the property's heritage, is the first phase of three developments planned for the property. The apartments will be constructed on the east side of the property, which will face existing homes on Morton Street.

The Phelps County Development Corporation, who purchased the property from the City of Holdrege in February, sold the property to Flat River Enterprises, who will build the \$2.25 million residential development as the first phase of the property development.

The sale came after 10 months of pre-development recruitment efforts by PCDC. Flat River Enterprises is an investment group based in Kearney that also owns the Holdrege VA Clinic and has invested in office buildings, residential units and other projects in south-central Nebraska.

PCDC is providing assistance to the project through LB840 sales-tax funds as it meets the objective of creating workforce housing to help area employers find and retain employees.

### Project Facts:

**Apartment Description:** The



### Housing Solutions

The property where students once attended elementary school will be soon be the site of new apartment townhomes that will provide much-needed rental units for Phelps County's workforce.

units will be built as single-story triplexes. Each single-story unit will be approximately 1,100 square feet with two bedrooms and two bathrooms. The units will be equipped with washers and dryers and kitchen appliances. Off-street parking will be created.

**Zoning:** The property is zoned R-2 for multi-family development, so a zoning change is not needed.

**Rent:** The townhome apartments will be available to rent from the developer or its representative. The rent price has yet to be established but will likely fall in the \$900 a month range.

### Local Contractors Involved:

Local contractors who are part of PCDC's Builder's Bureau will have the opportunity to submit bids as the developer has promised to open bidding to local providers. This project is not a subsidized housing project. It is being built within the free enterprise

system, so contractors, sub-contractors and vendors will vie for the lowest bid.

### Benefit to Local Economy:

During construction, the project will create local jobs. Once the project is complete, jobs may be created as upkeep and maintenance will be required. It will add value to the tax rolls and add new residents to the community, creating new vitality.

**Cost:** Total cost of the Washington Square Apartments is estimated at \$2.25 million, which shows investor confidence in the local market. Tax increment financing will not be used on this project.

**The Need:** A recent study indicated that of the 4,590 jobs in Phelps County, nearly half (or 2,177 jobs) are filled by workers who live outside of the county. The apartments may be attractive to commuters who want to live in Holdrege but can't find housing.



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Carley Bruning

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# PCDC Hires Carley Bruning as Director of Business Services

Carley Bruning has been living and working in Phelps County for three years and has liked what she has experienced. Now, she is part of the PCDC team that is helping to grow Phelps County.

"PCDC has a lot to offer, and I feel privileged to be a part of its legacy," Carley said. "My goal is to continue with traditional values while contributing fresh new ideas to an already terrific team. I can't wait to share my enthusiasm with people and why I choose Phelps County to live and work. I feel honored to be a part of PCDC's effort to enhance our great county."

The Edison native started work at PCDC on July 5 and will work to administer the new GO! programs, build relationships with local and regional educators and guidance counselors; administer the high-demand jobs scholarship program; engage with employers to develop programs to recruit, develop and retain talent; assist and encourage local entrepreneurs; and collaborate with other organizations to encourage a vibrant downtown.

The job was previously called Project Coordinator and was vacated when Alli Donohue resigned in May to relocate closer to family.

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said Carley was chosen from a field of 22 applicants.

"We selected Carley based on her professionalism and ability to step into a role that requires broad familiarity with business leaders and decision makers in Phelps County," Tillery said. "She possesses the necessary communication skills to develop and nurture strong relationships with both existing and prospective businesses as demonstrated by her leadership of Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors."

Carley currently volunteers as secretary of the

Ambassadors and as a CASA volunteer and said she is looking forward to helping Phelps County grow in her new position at PCDC.

Carley married Adam Bruning in August 2016, and they have enjoyed traveling across the globe, doing DIY projects together and getting to know the Holdrege community.

"Our work brought us to Holdrege, but the community and organizations led us to plant our roots here: from the school system to recreational amenities, the chamber, the local stores and restaurants," Carley said. "Phelps County has so many unique stores, businesses and places to eat. I am a firm believer in shopping local and supporting the farmers and livestock producers. I was raised by a small business owner and married into a business-owning family. It's a strong part of my values."

Carley has been working as an escrow closing agent at Phelps County Title Co. for the past three years. Her previous experience includes work as a signing paraprofessional and junior high volleyball and basketball coach in Arapahoe, clubhouse manager at the Arapahoe Municipal Golf Course and assistant women's college basketball coach at McPherson College in Kansas.

Carley graduated from Arapahoe Public Schools and earned a bachelor's of science degree in sports management with an emphasis in mass communication from Central Christian College, McPherson, Kan. She played both volleyball and basketball in college. In college, Carley earned a spot on the honor roll all four years and was an NAIA scholar athlete. She was selected as the Sports Health and Science Outstanding Student of the Year in 2008.

After college, Carley coached a variety of sports ranging from basketball, volleyball and track at the junior high, high school and college levels.

When Carley is not working, volunteering or traveling, she enjoys playing recreational volleyball and basketball, running, crafts and cooking.



**Carley Bruning**

# Future Looks Bright for Allmand Bros.

## Local Manufacturer Hires Operations Manager, Produces New Towables

With the added product line of towable generators and air compressors and a more optimistic outlook for the oil and gas industry, the future is looking brighter for Allmand Bros. in Holdrege.



**Jim Kaplinski**

New Operations Manager Jim Kaplinski started work at the plant in May and is prioritizing staffing, quality and safety in his first months on the job and is hopeful about the future for the industry.

Briggs & Stratton purchased Allmand Bros. in 2014, just before the downturn in the oil and gas industry, which is a major purchaser of Allmand products.

Local engineers, with assistance from the Briggs & Stratton team, have now designed new products to expand the company's reach in the construction business, in both the retail and rental markets.

In February, the Holdrege plant began manufacturing the Maxi-Air™ Portable Air Compressor and a full line of Maxi-Power™ Mobile Generators. This is in addition to its other product

lines, including towable light towers, industrial heaters and solar LED arrow boards.

And, now the outlook has improved in the oil and gas industry.

"Our sales team is optimistic," Kaplinski said. "The forecast was surprisingly optimistic (in the oil and gas industry)," Kaplinski said "We are hopeful this comes true."

Allmand's HR Manager Andrea Malleck said the plant currently maintains between 90-100 staff members, which includes about 10 temporary employees. They are currently seeking candidates for an IT position, Quality Manager, and two sales managers (one international and one domestically), hourly staff in shipping and receiving and some temporary assemblers.

"We are looking for very good professional people to surround ourselves with in the office, and we are looking for really good people out on the shop floor," Kaplinski said.

Prior to joining Briggs & Stratton, Kaplinski worked at Actuant/Milwaukee Cylinder, where he was responsible for managing assembly, paint, safety, quality, delivery, manufacturing, engineering, purchasing, maintenance and scheduling.

Kaplinski said one of his focuses during his first months on the job is to study the local staffing situation and determine if more staff is needed. Currently, some staff are working 12-hour shifts, and Kaplinski is evaluating what would make the plant most productive.

He's also focusing on product quality, which

is one reason why he made the decision to hire a Quality Manager.

"We are changing the way that we test our products so that we end up with a first-pass yield of 98 percent or higher," Kaplinski said. "That's why we've decided to hire a quality manager – to help with that process."

He's also taking a close look at safety.

"Safety to me is most important," Kaplinski said. "Our safety record is pretty good here. But, one accident is too many. We are striving to be accident free."

Kaplinski said Briggs & Stratton is committed to the success of the Holdrege Allmand Bros. location as demonstrated by its support of the plant during the economic downturn.

Kaplinski said his experience so far with Briggs & Stratton and with the local Allmand plant has been positive.

"The thing I have really liked is the people," Kaplinski said. "Everyone has been really receptive to me. They are welcoming the change. It's just fun to come to work. This group works very well together, and it makes it easier for me."

Both Malleck and Kaplinski touted the above-average benefits package offered by Briggs & Stratton, including tuition assistance, medical and dental insurance, generous vacation policies and opportunities to move up in the global company.

For more information on Allmand or Allmand products or careers, visit [www.allmand.com](http://www.allmand.com).



**Maxi -Air™ Portable Air Compressor**



**Maxi -Power™ Mobile Generator**



# BD Honored With Community Impact Award

## County's Largest Employer Begins Construction On \$100 Million Project

Holdrege's BD plant has been recognized by a national trade publication for its \$100 million investment into the local operation.

Each year, "Trade & Industry Development" magazine celebrates companies that make their communities a better place and who invest in their communities with its CiCi (Corporate Investment and Community Impact) Awards.

"From revitalizing the local environment to bringing hope by providing much-needed jobs, these companies are beacons of light," the magazine states.



This year, the list of 15 companies recognized in the Community Impact category includes General Motors, Amazon, Microsoft, and right among them is Holdrege's Becton Dickinson and Company (BD).

"It is a prestigious list," said BD Plant Manager Chuck Mix. "And BD Holdrege is proud to receive this award on behalf of our great team here and our business who supports and funds our plant here in Holdrege."

The company is being recognized for its \$100 million investment into the Holdrege plant, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in the community last fall.

"Each Community Impact story came to fruition through the tireless efforts of community leaders, local economic development authorities and state officials, along with the decisive leadership at each company that took a chance in its location decision," the magazine states. "To their cities



Construction work is evident outside of BD as the plant continues a \$100 million expansion. Much of the investment will go toward replacing older manufacturing lines with new equipment.

**"To their cities and towns, these companies are enough to spur revitalization and provide momentum to encourage other businesses to join them."**

— "Trade & Industry Development"

and towns, these companies are enough to spur revitalization and provide momentum to encourage other businesses to join them."

Construction on the \$100 million expansion has begun and will continue for three years. Evidence of the investment can already be seen with an updated exterior being installed. Much of the investment will go toward replacing older manufacturing lines with new equipment, which will help the plant increase its output of syringes by about 20 percent. BD already produces more than 2 billion syringes each year, which averages close to 300,000 syringes per hour.

Mix said the building expansion is progressing well, with just a few weeks of

weather delay.

"The equipment purchases are all under way, and we will be working on bringing in new lines through 2019," Mix said.

The story of BD and its local investment was featured in the March/April 2017 issue of "Trade & Industry Development."

BD's investment helped secure 650 jobs in the community and will create new jobs in the future.

PCDC Economic Development Director Ron Tillery said, "PCDC is honored to share a CiCi Award with BD, the City of Holdrege and the state of Nebraska. Together, we're building a vibrant local economy."

# PCDC Scholarships Bring Students Home

## Seven Students Earn Scholarships in 2017 for High-Demand Jobs

A fourth round of high-demand jobs scholarships have been awarded to students studying for careers that will bring them back to Phelps County. And, local employers are starting to see the benefits as several previous scholarship winners have returned home to work.

Jamie Bialas, a 2014 graduate of Holdrege High School was among the first group of students to receive this scholarship in 2014. He graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this spring (in just three years!) with a degree in agricultural economics and is now working at Bialas Farms.

Jamie said he finished school in three years by earning 19 college credits while in high school and taking extra classes at Central Community College online and at Southeast Community College while attending UNL.

"I wanted to get back and start farming," Jamie said. "It was always my dream to come back and farm. It's a different occupation than everyone else has."

Jamie likes to dispel myths that some city friends have about farming and explains the high-tech demands of producing food for the world. And, he's always enjoyed his small-town roots.

"I just like the small atmosphere," he said. "Even when I go to Kearney, it seems like people are always hurrying around. In a small



Levi Woodring and Jamie Bialas are just two of many Phelps County graduates who have received high-demand jobs scholarships. Levi will graduate in 2018 and work at Titan Machinery. Jamie graduated from UNL in three years and is now working at Bialas Farms.

town, people wave at you all the time, and you know who most of them are. And, there's more that feel of community than there is in the big cities."

Other previous scholarship winners who have returned home to Phelps County jobs are Andrew Daily (Southern Public Power District), Evan Dow (K & D Motor & Electric), Kelly Thorell (KST Farms), Jill Gabriel (PMHC), Alex Hamling (CHS Agri), Colter Edgren (Dannull Engine) and Boe Barnett (Skiles Construction).

The 2017 scholarships mark the fourth year of this program. The scholarships are intended to encourage graduating seniors and non-traditional students to pursue work in

high-demand fields, such as nursing, agribusiness and technology, diesel mechanics, engineer technologists, mechatronics engineers, injection mold technicians, electro-mechanical technologists, machinists, tool and die makers, construction trades, welders and commercial truck drivers.

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 a matching grant from the Phelps County Community Foundation.

This year, \$19,500 in scholarships were awarded ranging from \$1,000-\$3,500 each.

## 2017 Scholarship Winners

The 2017 high-demand scholarship winners are: **Levi Woodring**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying diesel technology at Hastings Central Community College (2nd year winner); **Christina Butler**, Loomis High School graduate, studying nursing at Grand Island Central Community College (2nd year winner); **Blake Johnston**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying agriculture at Hastings Central Community College (2nd year winner); **Cale**

**Abramson**, Loomis High School graduate, studying agriculture at Hastings Central Community College; **Brennan Williams**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying business at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; **Kamryn Smith**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying nursing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; **Trevor Smith**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying agriculture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2nd year winner).



## Dexter Joins Phelps County Extension

Paige Dexter joined the team at the Phelps County Extension office as a summer intern and will begin work there full-time as an Extension Assistant for Phelps and Gosper counties after she graduates from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December 2017.



**Paige Dexter**

Paige is originally from Chambers and interned at the Phelps County Development Corporation during the summer of 2016.

Her responsibilities at the Extension office will involve 4-H and youth development, including

livestock projects, 4-H Shooting Sports, 4-H school enrichment and educational day camps and summer camps.

Paige will student teach at Southwest High School in Bartley this fall and plans to graduate in December with a bachelor's of science degree in agricultural education and cooperative education.

Paige grew up in the southwest corner of Holt County on the farm that her great-grandfather homesteaded more than 100 years ago. Her family has a cow-calf operation and "puts up" each summer. She has two older brothers and recently became an aunt.

Outside of work, Paige enjoys making rustic, farmhouse and country-inspired crafts and jewelry. She also enjoys being outside, fishing, camping, gardening and helping with the farm and ranch tasks. She enjoys being involved in her church, helping out with events and teaching Bible school.

## Rehnberg Transitions to Edward Jones

Kayla Rehnberg has joined Edward Jones as a Financial Advisor.



**Kayla Rehnberg**

In her new role, she will help clients plan for and reach their long-term financial goals, including retirement planning, college savings or even saving for a dream, such as a lake house.

"I work with clients to understand what's important to them and work through our established process to build personalized strategies to help

achieve their financial goals," she said.

Kayla is currently working out of Steve Allen's Edward Jones office at 416 West Ave. and will move to a new Holdrege location in 2018. At that time, she will also hire a Branch Office Associate to help run her new office.

Kayla is originally from western Kansas and graduated high school in Gering, Neb. She has a bachelor's degree in science with an emphasis in accounting from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and a Master's of Business Administration also from UNK. She has lived in Holdrege since 2006.

Prior to becoming an advisor with Edward Jones, Kayla worked as an accountant for Dana F. Cole & Company in Minden for 10 years. She began that job as an intern in college and started full-time after graduation.

Kayla and her husband, Jonathan, have two daughters: Addison, 9; and Kennedy, 2.

When Kayla is not working, she enjoys playing golf and spending time at Johnson Lake. She is involved in the Rotary and the Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors.

## Kaplinski New Leader at Allmand

Jim Kaplinski has been hired as the Operations Manager for Allmand Bros./Briggs & Stratton.



**Jim Kaplinski**

Jim, who has more than 15 years of operational leadership experience in manufacturing, began work in Holdrege in mid-May.

Jim has worked for the past 15 years at Actuant/Milwaukee Cylinder, where he was responsible

for managing assembly, paint, safety, quality, delivery, manufacturing, engineering, purchasing, maintenance and scheduling. Prior to his role at Actuant, Jim was the director of operations at Revtek Inc. and D & S Machine Products, where he was responsible for coordinating and directing the day-to-day activities for all aspects of the business from operations management to sales, personnel staffing, engineering and P & L responsibilities.

Jim has a bachelor's degree in manufacturing engineering from Western Michigan University.

Jim and his wife, Dianna, have three adult sons.

## PMHC Hires New VP of Human Resources

Daniel Wojtalewicz began work as Phelps Memorial Health Center's Senior Vice President of Human Resources on May 30.



**Daniel Wojtalewicz**

Daniel is originally from St. Paul and earned a bachelor's of science degree with a concentration in finance from Wayne State College. He received his MBA with a concentration in human resource management

from Bellevue University and is currently pursuing a doctorate in business administration with a concentration in human resources.

Prior to joining PMHC, Daniel worked in Omaha for the past 16 years at U.S. Bank and as director of human resources for Dermatology Specialists of Omaha.

When Daniel is not working, he enjoys traveling, golfing and bowling. He also is excited to start his membership at the Don Sjogren Community YMCA to enjoy exercising.

## New Quality Leader Begins at PMHC

Tesha Broadfoot has been hired as the new Quality Leader at Phelps Memorial Health Center. In her new position, Tesha will focus on quality, patient satisfaction and DNV readiness.



**Tesha Broadfoot**

Tesha is originally from Kearney and still lives there today with her husband, Ryan, and their two sons, Jacob, 12, and Trevor, 9.

Tesha earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and a master's degree in nursing leadership from Walden University.

Prior to joining PMHC, Tesha worked at CHI Health Good Samaritan for 17 years, starting as a bedside nurse and ending as the Director of Progressive Care and Centralized Telemetry.

When she's not working, Tesha enjoys watching her sons play hockey and show steers at the fair. She also likes to garden and scrapbook.

# MMI, Jaylor Merger Brings Opportunity to County

Two international agricultural manufacturers have merged, which could have a positive impact on jobs and manufacturing in Phelps County.

Jaylor, a Canadian-based producer of cattle feed mixers has merged with MMI, which also manufactures feed mixers as well as delivery boxes and manure spreaders for the feedlot industry. MMI is headquartered in Brush, Colo., but has a satellite location for sales, parts and service in Holdrege, which opened in 2010 after local resident Dan Powers purchased the company. Powers now serves at the general manager of U.S. operations for the merged company.

Powers said he worked with Jaylor for the past two years on structuring the merger, and he is excited for the potential it may bring locally.

"Between us and Jaylor, our products complement each other very well," Powers said. "They were looking to expand into the Midwest for manufacturing opportunities and to grow their product offering with the horizontal quad auger feed mixer and manure spreaders."

Jaylor is a leading producer of vertical feed mixers for the feedlot and dairy industries, while MMI is a leading manufacturer of horizontal feed mixers and truck-mount manure spreaders.

"For decades, we've been die-hard proponents of the vertical auger, and on most operations it is the best solution," said Jake Tamminga, president



**Dan Powers visits with a Jaylor employee. Dan's company, MMI International, recently merged with agricultural manufacturer, Jaylor. (Courtesy Photo)**

of Jaylor, in the press release announcing the merger earlier this spring. "But there are some commercial applications where the horizontal mixer has proven to be a better fit. The proprietary quad auger design that Dan Powers and his team at MMI developed takes advantage of the modern hydrostatic smart controls while still being functionally simple and reliable."

The merger has made new products and local service available to feedlot, cow calf, dairy and manure-spreading operations in Phelps County. MMI serves as the Jaylor product representative for all areas of the United States west of the Missouri river. MMI's dealer network covers the Midwest and is expanding to better service the

western United States producers.

"A complete lineup of feeding and spreading equipment and new modern technologies – GPS, remote monitoring, viable rate and auto tracking -- are some of the available product offerings that come along with the Jaylor product line," Powers said

And, the merger means new jobs. Powers has already hired one sales position and is currently seeking more workers in the shop and parts departments in the Holdrege location.

Powers said the merged company is also developing new products, which could also open up manufacturing opportunities in Phelps County.

## New Gutterz Owners Looking Forward to Adventure

Brent & Rogene (Pouk) Hinrichs of Hildreth have purchased the Gutterz Fun Center from Dan and Kimberly Powers and took over operations on June 20.

"We've enjoyed working with them through the transition and will continue to support and look forward to seeing the bowling alley grow to new levels and bring great things to the community," Dan Powers said.

Rogene, who is originally from Holdrege, said they are looking at this purchase as a fun, new adventure and a way to engage more kids in staying active through bowling. Rogene recalls bowling at the center, which was then called Hasty Lanes, as a child and teen. The Powers purchased the center in September



**Rogene & Brent Hinrichs**

2013 and renamed it Gutterz Fun Center.

Rogene is a full-time bookkeeper for Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools. Brent is a farmer and

sells crop insurance. He recently retired from coaching boys' varsity basketball in Axtell and Wilcox-Hildreth for 12 years. They are "empty-nesters" as two of their children are in college and one has graduated from college and is teaching at Bertrand Public Schools.

Most of the current 12-14 staff members will stay on at Gutterz, including cook Gabe Zeller, who will also serve as the general manager. The Hinrichs aren't planning on any major changes to the facility at this point, except for maybe a few minor tweaks in the menu.

In addition to bowling, Gutterz offers sand volleyball leagues and houses the Aviator Lounge. The center hosts events throughout the year, including bands, reunions & birthdays.

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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!**

The Holdrege Young Professionals group has been active this spring and summer. They sponsored a coloring contest during Swedish Days and celebrated Cinco de Mayo with downtown buildings tours followed by a social at a downtown residence.

Upcoming activities include:

**Social:** A cookout/potluck dinner at the North Park at 5:30 p.m. Monday, July 17. September Social, date TBD.

**Education:** In September, the group will hear from a local city councilwoman about opportunities available for civic offices. For more information, email HYP president Tana Fye at [tanafye@gmail.com](mailto:tanafye@gmail.com) or join the Holdrege Young Professionals Facebook group.



**Mary McDermott (left) & Kate Lade-Markley volunteered at the Swedish Days Coloring Contest.**