



## GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Working Together to  
Grow a Vibrant Phelps  
County Economy



Cobblestone Hotel

## Plans Move Forward For Holdrege Hotel

Construction could begin as early as this fall on a new Cobblestone Hotel in Holdrege.

The Holdrege City Council and the Holdrege Community Redevelopment Authority approved TIF funding for the project on June 5, and now the developer is finalizing the investor group and beginning predevelopment planning.

The hotel will be built on the site of the former Washington School on Burlington Street just west of the new Washington Square apartments. The 45-room two-story hotel will include a lobby, meeting room, exercise room and breakfast area.

## MANUFACTURING NEWS

# GROWING OPPORTUNITIES IN AG

## New Hawkins Owner Seeks Global Market

For 37 years, Hawkins Manufacturing has designed and produced machinery for farmers in the Midwest.

Now, a new owner plans to expand upon Hawkins' success with innovative new products to reach new markets around the nation and world.

Rod Haarberg purchased Hawkins in August 2017, just one month after launching AGROdeviate, a company that fuses the latest technology trends with farm-equipment design and manufacturing.

Rod's career experience in ag manufacturing and technology spans more than 25 years, including 14 years at Orthman Manufacturing in Lexington and 10 years with ag technology companies, Trimble Navigation (best known for its GPS technology) and Topcon Positioning (a global leader in GPS and precision agriculture). His career took him to places like Italy, Russia and Australia, for test-plot work and to learn about global farming methods and needs.

Prior to that, his ag roots extend even deeper. Rod grew up on a farm near Imperial and graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in bio-systems engineering.

Rod worked for the family-owned Orthman Manufacturing Co. in Lexington for the first 10 years of his career before traveling the world with Trimble and Topcon. He returned to Orthman from 2014-2017



Rod Haarberg, right, owns AGROdeviate, which purchased Hawkins Manufacturing. James Marshall, left, is the new operations manager.

as senior vice president. He left in July 2017 to launch AGROdeviate, based in Kearney. His business model will emphasize factory-to-farm relationships to deliver regional solutions worldwide.

Hawkins is AGROdeviate's first manufacturing facility. He purchased the business from the Hock family. Harlan Hock started Hawkins in 1981 after purchasing the business from a company in Colorado and moving the production of the row-crop ditcher to its Phelps County location at 2120 Fourth Ave. It also has produced the Corn Reel, the Sub Soiler and other successful farm machinery.

Rod had been in discussion with the Hock family when he started AGROdeviate. He had a small team of engineers with his company and at some point, they would need to manufacture their designs.

"Hawkins was the perfect fit," Rod said. "It's in a small town. It has a good culture and good people. It really had a great name. What we had to offer from AGROdeviate was a perfect complement to Hawkins. The global experience, the understanding of distribution and the engineering background."

AGROdeviate plans to keep the Hawkins brand name, build on its successes and expand its reach from the region to the world.

AGROdeviate took another step in expanding its presence in late May when it acquired a second small manufacturing firm that is similar to Hawkins – W & A Manufacturing Co. in Pine Bluff, Ark.

"W & A has a great product name, strong brand name with regional acceptance," Rod said.

continued on page 2

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# MEMORIALS HONOR TIM ANDERSON

PCDC has honored former long-time board member Tim Anderson by contributing toward a tree at Johnson Lake's hiking trail and a flowering Japanese Lilac tree in Holdrege's North Park.

Tim, who died in October 2017, loved nature and cherished his time at Johnson Lake and Plum Creek Canyon. He was also known for giving flowers to PCDC staff on their birthdays and other special occasions, and he always made sure every female senator in the Nebraska Legislature had flowers on opening day.

"We just wanted to continue Tim's tradition of always providing beautiful flowers," said Carley Bruning, PCDC's Director of Business Services.

Tim had served on the PCDC board since 2008.



LEFT: A flowering Japanese Lilac tree was planted in Holdrege North Park in honor of Tim Anderson. RIGHT: Tim's family stands near another tree planted at Johnson Lake in his honor.

# AGRODEViate PURCHASES HAWKINS .....

continued from page 1

AGROdeviate will continue to produce and update W & A products, just as it is doing with the best-selling Hawkins products. Rod envisions that some of the products manufactured in Pine Bluff may be produced in Holdrege and vice versa.

He said the company's short-term goal is to reach some of the larger farm markets in the United States, in places like Georgia, Texas and Florida, and long-term goals include global expansion.

"The new products we will develop have a much larger scope of application," Rod said. "In the plan, we should address 15-20 foreign countries. Just understanding the markets around the world – the needs, the crops, the conditions. We've been in most of these countries and have sold there before. That's the grander scheme."

Rod said locally, the company employs about 15 staff members. He hired James Marshall of Elm Creek as the new Hawkins operations manager. James is a professional mechanical engineer who previously

owned his own company for 14 years. Staff also includes a sales manager in Minneapolis; a production agronomist based in Kirksville, Mo.; and three engineers who have already designed new machinery that is being tested in the fields. The new products are focused on seed and fertilizer placement and harvest.

"We are really focused on how to place fertilizer and do that with the combination of technology, agronomics and the best we have in mechanics," Rod said. "Part of the appeal of Hawkins was they had some really strong foundations in the folding toolbar and their fertilizer placement products, like the planter 'NForcer, and those are just good platforms to build from."

Rod said his team is building momentum for new products and preparing for an improvement in the farm economy, and the future looks bright.

"I'm excited to think what we can do from this facility in Holdrege and the growth opportunities that we have," Rod said. "I think it will be good for AGROdeviate and good for the City of Holdrege. It will just take a while."



# WASHINGTON SQUARE APARTMENTS OPEN

Less than a year ago, the site of the former Washington School was an empty lot. Today, 18 new rental homes sit on the southeast portion of the property.

Flat River Enterprises purchased the property from PCDC in 2017 and completed the estimated \$2.25 million project in June. The apartment town homes were ready to lease on July 1.

Each unit is 1,025 square feet and has two bedrooms and two bathrooms. A refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, microwave and stackable washer and dryer are included in each unit.

The town homes are part of a PCDC initiative to create more workforce housing.

For more information and pricing, contact property manager Jennifer Yendra at (308) 224-4228. Leases are for one year.



Construction is complete on the new Washington Square town-home apartments, and the new units are ready to welcome renters.

# PCDC GO! HOME PROGRAMS SPARK HOUSING SOLUTIONS

PCDC's GO! Home housing incentives have sparked the construction of three new spec homes in Loomis and have encouraged local developers to fix up dilapidated homes.

The GO! Home programs are part of an overall effort to increase the availability of workforce housing in the county. The incentives include sales tax rebates, grants or loans to develop empty properties or raze dilapidated homes to create lots for new construction, and employer-matching down-payment assistance for new residents. Many of the programs can be combined for greater impact. All homes remodeled or built under these programs must not exceed a final sale price of \$225,000.

## NEW LOOMIS HOMES:

Janet Boehler, PCDC board member and Legacy Purpose Homes Manager, said Loomis has had empty home lots for years, so this seemed like the perfect opportunity to step up and make something happen.

Champion Homes, a modular home builder in York, built three new homes in Loomis that are nearing completion. The final home prices will range from \$185,000-\$225,000. Big Prairie Homes of Kearney was the general contractor.

The developer for the Loomis project is Legacy Purpose Homes, which is part of Legacy



This new home at 199 Bryan Street in Loomis was built with GO! Home incentives.

Purpose LLC, a local business led by Roger Allmand. Janet is the business manager for the company.

"We aren't looking to get into the developer business," Roger said. "But, if we can help the community, that's our goal."

## RAZED HOMES:

Through the GO! Home program, PCDC purchased dilapidated homes on lots at 304 Keopple in Bertrand and at 11th and Logan streets in Holdrege. PCDC paid for the demolition of the homes and is in the process of selling the lots to developers or potential home owners who will build homes on the properties.

## RENOVATING HOMES:

The Phoenix program has spurred several local residents or contractors to purchase and renovate existing homes in need of repair to later resell to residents seeking homes.

Local residents Chris and Heather McQuillan had consistently heard about the shortage of homes between \$100,00 and \$200,000 in the area. Chris is agricultural and commercial loan officer at Bruning State Bank.

"We decided with the PCDC programs, we could help the problem," Chris said. "We are just trying to put more nice properties on the market and keep people in town."

They applied for a \$5,000 grant through the Phoenix program to refurbish and sell a home. They also applied for another \$5,000 opportunity through the GO! Home sales tax rebate incentive. With the help of local contractor Joe Ridder and his subcontractor connections, the McQuillans set a budget and are hoping to complete the renovation of a home at 1219 10th Ave. by July.

Local contractors Joe Ridder and three others have also applied for and received grants to refurbish and sell or live in homes through the GO! Home Phoenix program.

For more information or to apply for home grants, visit [www.phelpscountyne.com/phelps/relocate/go!-home-programs](http://www.phelpscountyne.com/phelps/relocate/go!-home-programs).

# PCDC SCHOLARSHIPS BRING STUDENTS HOME

## Nine New Students Receive High-Demand Jobs Incentive

A fifth round of high-demand jobs scholarships have been awarded to students studying for careers that will bring them back to Phelps County. And, several former scholarship winners have recently returned to the area and are working in high-demand jobs.

The scholarships are a PCDC initiative designed to encourage students to consider studying for careers that are in high demand in Phelps County. In the five years that the scholarships have been offered, \$124,000 has been awarded to 49 students.

Nolan Breece, a 2014 graduate of Holdrege High School, earned a degree in agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in May. He is working as a crop scout for South Platte Crop Consulting, which is owned by Dave Nelson. Nolan received high-demand jobs scholarships in 2015 and 2016.

Nolan started working at Sunny View Farms as a sophomore in high school, and through that experience he “fell in love” with agriculture. Nolan said he always planned to return to Phelps County to work someday.

“It’s not too big. It’s not too small. It’s got all the amenities I need. I’m happy here,” Nolan said.

Former scholarship winner Ethan Johnson also graduated from UNL in May with a bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics. He has returned to work on his family farm, Bunker Hill Farms.

“I wanted to help dad on the farm and get back and carry on the tradition of farming,” Ethan said.

He is thankful for his degree from UNL, which taught him the basics of operating a business and how to market farm commodities. And, he is thankful for the scholarship.

“It helped me out quite a bit with tuition,” Ethan said. “It had a pretty big impact financially.”

Blake Johnston, a 2016 Holdrege High School graduate and former scholarship winner, has also returned to Phelps County to work. He graduated from Hastings Central Community College in May with an associate’s degree in agricultural sciences along with a diploma in precision agriculture and certificates in crop production, precision



Several former high-demand jobs scholarship winners have graduated from college and are now employed in Phelps County. Recent returnees and their places of employment are from left, Blake Johnston (Rusty’s Fertilizer), Ethan Johnson (Bunker Hill Farms), Nolan Breece (South Platte Crop Consulting) and Lex Swanson (Titan Machinery).

application and precision mapping. He is currently working at Rusty’s Fertilizer.

“I always wanted to come back to Phelps County, but the scholarship did help in my decision,” Blake said. “This is where a lot of my family lives and all of my friends and also where I grew up, so it’s always been home.”

Lex Swanson is also a 2016 graduate of Holdrege High School. He graduated from Southeast Community College Milford in December and now works at Titan Machinery as a

service technician.

“I have family around here and know the area and enjoyed it when I was growing up here,” Lex said.

Levi Woodring, a 2016 graduate of Holdrege High School, also studied diesel technology and is now employed at Titan Machinery.

The scholarships are funded through LB840 sales tax funds, private donors and a matching grant from the Phelps County Community Foundation.

## 2018 Scholarship Winners

The 2018 high-demand jobs scholarship winners are **Hunter Brenn**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying agriculture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; **Christina Butler**, Loomis High School graduate, studying nursing at Grand Island Central Community College (3rd year recipient); **Preston Garringer**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying business at Central Community College-Hastings; **Mackenzie Koch**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying nursing at BryanLGH; **Sarah Pelton**, Bertrand High School graduate, studying nursing at BryanLGH; **Kamryn Smith** (2nd year recipient), Holdrege High School graduate studying nursing at the University of Nebraska at Kearney; **Emily Torres**, Loomis High School graduate, studying nursing at Central Community College-Hastings; **Blade Wagener**, Holdrege High School graduate, studying tool and die at Central Community College-Hastings; **Wyatt Wilken**, Bertrand High School graduate, studying diesel technology at Central Community College-Hastings.



# SCOOTER'S COFFEE OPENING IN HOLDREGE

## Omaha-Based Company Likes Crossroads Market in Holdrege

One of Holdrege's busiest intersections will soon become home to a new Nebraska-based drive-thru coffee business.

Josi Orsi, Senior Marketing Manager for Scooter's, said the company plans to build a Scooter's Drive-Thru at the intersection of Burlington Street and Fourth Avenues in Holdrege. They are hoping to open sometime between October and December 2018.

"We really enjoy small Midwestern markets, especially cross-roads markets like Holdrege where you have the convergence of multiple highways creating traffic counts that far exceed the actual population of the market," Josi said. "Additionally, we look for great hard-corner locations that are easy to get to and extremely visible, just like what you have at Fourth and Burlington."

Don and Linda Eckles founded Scooter's Coffee in 1998 in Bellevue. The company is now headquartered in Omaha, where they roast the "finest coffee beans in the world."

The Scooter's Brand Promise is "Amazing People, Amazing Drinks ... Amazingly Fast!"® The coffee shop specializes in hand-tamped espresso drinks, baked-from-scratch pastries and it's signature drink, the Caramelicious®, an espresso drink that can be ordered hot, iced or



The Scooter's Coffee company will build a new drive-thru location at one of Holdrege's busiest intersections, Fourth and Burlington. It is expected to open in late 2018.

blended. It is fused with rich, velvety caramel sauce and hot, texturized milk and topped with fluffy whipped cream and drizzled with caramel sauce. Smoothies, teas and other drinks will also be available.

Although some Scooter's locations offer dine-in options, the Holdrege location will be a drive-thru location only. In addition to drinks, the Holdrege Scooter's will also have food options, such as pastries, breakfast burritos and breakfast

sandwiches. Hours vary by location and have not been confirmed for this store yet, but typical hours are 6 a.m.-9 p.m.

Orsi said they expect to hire 8-10 employees.

Although Scooter's does offer franchise options, the Holdrege store is being built as a Scooter's Coffee Corporate location. According to the company website, Scooter's has 185 locations across the United States and commitments to build 153 new locations.

# COMPANIES SEEK FRANCHISEES FOR PHELPS COUNTY

National franchise opportunities exist for Phelps County, and PCDC wants to assist anyone interested in exploring this opportunity.

The interest in Phelps County was welcome news for PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery, who attended the RECon trade show in Las Vegas to promote Phelps County as a place to do business. The show attracted real estate developers and owners of major retailers from around the globe.

"One of the things we learned in Las Vegas is there are companies out there who are interested in our market and will come here if we can identify qualified franchise owners," Tillery said.

**"There are national chains interested in our market if they can find partners who are willing to invest and grow with national brands."**

— Ron Tillery, PCDC Executive Director

Potential franchise owners should have at least \$100,000 in liquid assets, a \$250,000-\$300,000 net worth and business experience.

Many of the national brands interested in Phelps County are restaurant chains, however Tillery said some are retail stores. One restaurant franchise has contacted Tillery three times since

Las Vegas seeking information about potential franchise owners.

Advantages of franchise ownership include brand familiarity with customers and learning and mentorship opportunities.

"It allows for people to make investments into proven business models and utilize the expertise that comes from having more operations around the country," he said.

PCDC is willing to help anyone interested in purchasing and operating a franchise.

For information about franchise opportunities, contact Tillery at [ron@phelpscountyne.com](mailto:ron@phelpscountyne.com) or call PCDC at (308) 995-4148.

## PCDC's Bruning Selected For Leadership Nebraska Class

PCDC's Director of Business Services Carley Bruning has been selected to participate in the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2018 Leadership Nebraska Class.

Leadership Nebraska was founded in 2006



**Carley Bruning**

to identify current and emerging leaders throughout the state, enhance their leadership skills and deepen their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing Nebraska. Participants have been selected from different regions of the state and possess

varied backgrounds and diverse talents. All candidates have demonstrated an abiding interest in Nebraska and its future.

The program consists of six sessions covering a broad range of key Nebraska issues including economic development, health care, education, agriculture, government and policy development. The class began with an orientation in June and will conclude in February 2019 with a commencement in Lincoln.

Bruning, an Edison native, began work at PCDC one year ago.

## Photographers Group Elects Killough To Leadership Roles

Mysti Killough, owner of Mystic Images Photography in Holdrege, was recently elected



**Mysti Killough**

Focus Workshop Director and Print Competition Co-chair of the Professional Photographers of Nebraska (PPN).

PPN was established in 1964 to promote the common business interest of those engaged in photography as a profession, facilitate

the continued education of its members in new photographic advancements, and to maintain ethical standards for the guidance of its members and the public. PPN is the official state affiliate

organization of the Professional Photographers of America.

Killough is one of more than 136 photographers in Nebraska who are active PPN members. Professionals interested in joining PPN should visit [www.PPofN.com](http://www.PPofN.com).

Mysti's portrait studio, Mystic Images Photography, is located at 816 Fourth Ave. in Holdrege. Killough specializes in family, children, senior and pet portraiture.

## Kroll Partners With Law Firm; Offers Mental Health Services

Faithe Kroll has partnered with DeWald Deaver Law Firm to offer mental health counseling services to Holdrege and the surrounding communities.



**Faithe Kroll**

her hometown. Nate DeWald saw a natural fit at the law firm.

"Tom Brady was put on this earth to throw a football, and Faithe was meant to be a counselor," DeWald said. "We are leveraging our business processes to bring Faithe's clients an unparalleled level of customer service while allowing her to do what she does best."

Kroll hopes to dispel the stigma surrounding mental health services.

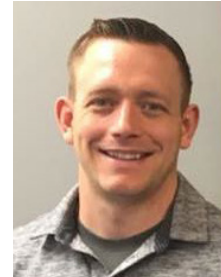
"I want people to understand that they do not need to struggle alone, and that I can assist in unpacking and working through those issues," she said.

Kroll is a graduate of the University of Nebraska at Kearney Clinical Mental Health program. She provides individual and family therapy as well as substance abuse evaluations and mental health counseling.

Appointments can be made with Faithe Kroll at (308) 995-6548 or at [faithe@holdregecounseling.com](mailto:faithe@holdregecounseling.com). The website for Kroll Counseling is [www.holdregecounseling.com](http://www.holdregecounseling.com).

## Weston Gustafson Joins Bilka Chiropractic

Dr. Weston Gustafson has joined the team at Bilka Chiropractic in downtown Holdrege.



**Weston Gustafson**

Gustafson grew up on a farm outside of Funk and graduated from Axtell High School. He attended and played football at Doane College and earned a degree in biochemistry.

In December of 2017, he received his doctorate of chiropractic degree and a master's degree

in sports medicine from the University of Western States in Portland, Ore. He interned with Dr. Bilka and joined the practice after graduation.

He and his wife, Allie, live in Holdrege and recently welcomed a baby girl, Blakely. Gustafson will also work as an assistant football coach for Holdrege High School starting this fall.

To schedule an appointment, call (308) 995-2355 or stop by the office at 412 West Ave.

## Pampered Soles Adds Oxford Native to Staff

Oxford native Casey Karash recently started work at Pampered Soles Tanning and Spa in downtown Holdrege. She specializes in customized facials and also offers manicures,



**Casey Karash**

pedicures, shellac, chemical peels and all other esthetic services.

She was born in Kearney and moved a lot during her childhood with her military family. She has lived in Utah, Arizona, Missouri and Guam. She graduated from high school in

Warrensburg, Mo., and then graduated in 2017 from the Academy of Salon Professionals in Sedalia, Mo.

Casey worked in a salon and spa in Missouri before recently moving to Oxford to be closer to family. Casey and her twin sister and mom all work in the esthetics field.

Pampered Soles, 609 Fourth Ave. in Holdrege, is owned and operated by Kris Shaver. Call (308) 991-8001 to make an appointment.



# Remodeled McDonald's Focuses on Customers With Technology Updates

The Holdrege McDonald's restaurant has a new owner and a new look that also includes the addition of futuristic technology that focuses on customer convenience and personal tastes.

Greg Hall of Columbus said he and his brother, Cody purchased the Holdrege McDonald's as part of a package of 10 McDonald's restaurants in April 2017. They now own 13 McDonald's restaurants.

The McDonald's franchise Vision 2020 plan includes modernizing all McDonald's locations in the next few years. The updates include self-ordering kiosks and other digital elements "because our customers want more customization with their food," Hall said.

In addition to the new modern look inside and outside, the Holdrege location now includes the option of digital kiosks so customers can order their food without talking to a staff person if they choose. Customers may also order from home on the McDonald's mobile app. Mobile orders hang "in the cloud" until the phone moves to within 100 yards of the restaurant. At that time,



the order shows up in the kitchen to be made fresh for the customer. Curb-side pickup is available.

Another update that is unique to the Holdrege location is an automated beverage dispenser in the drive-thru. The dispenser is connected with the register, and as soon as the order is totaled it automatically grabs a cup and fills the drinks

to free up employees to concentrate on the rest of the order and on the customer. The Holdrege location also features digital indoor and outdoor menu boards that change options based on what the customer orders.

Hall said the updates did not decrease the number of employees needed as greeters are still staffed to help customers with kiosk orders if needed. Customers who dine in at McDonald's will also now have their meals delivered to their tables. Customers are given a digital tent card that matches up with a map in the kitchen so staff know where to deliver the food.

Hall said the Holdrege McDonald's employs 51 staff members with about 20 of those being full time. He expects that number to grow as sales have already increased since the remodel was complete in May.

The renovation also included adding a new frappe/smoothie machine that can brew cold coffee drinks, and the restaurant will be serving fresh never-frozen beef for all of its quarter-pounder burgers.

## Speakeasy to be Featured on Travel Channel Program

The Speakeasy restaurant in rural Phelps County will be featured in an upcoming episode of the Travel Channel show "Most Terrifying Places in America!"

A film crew visited the restaurant on May 23 to interview and film owner Ryan Puls and some of his staff. The story will feature the legend of the Speakeasy's Faceless Fred.

The Travel Channel show takes viewers on a tour across the United States to visit mysterious and spooky paranormal hot spots. Locations vary from world-famous businesses to humble homes, each with its share of ghost sightings and unexplainable phenomena. Notable sites profiled in the series include the Liar's Club in Chicago, the Shanghai Tunnels below Portland, Ore., and the Stanley Hotel in Colorado.

Puls said he received an email inquiring about the filming opportunity, and he agreed. He said he's not sure when the show will air but it will likely be about six months or more.

## Principal Financial Purchases Central Benefits Group

Principal Financial Group in Holdrege has announced the purchase of Central Benefits Group, which has been owned and operated by Angie Envick and Jeanne Steinbrink for 13 years.

Envick, who has 27 years of experience in the financial services industry, will join the team at Principal. She brings a vast knowledge of health insurance and employer benefits.

With this addition, Principal Financial Group will now offer the following services: life insurance, disability income insurance, long-term care insurance, investments, education planning, retirement planning, estate planning, business solutions, individual and group health insurance and Medicare supplements.

In addition to Envick, the local Principal team also includes David Hunt, Grant Ericksen and Joshua Murdoch. They are located at 415 East Ave. and can be reached at (308) 995-4423 Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Lost Way Brewery Owners Featured in Nebraska 'Good Life' Video

The owners of Holdrege's Lost Way Brewery are featured in a new Nebraska Good Life video series, a state recruitment initiative by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

In the video, Jessica Kraus shares the story of how she and her family found their way to Holdrege three years ago. She and her husband, Mark, and brother and sister-in-law, Jason and Kimberly Hines, moved to Holdrege and have opened the new Lost Way Brewery. Jessica grew up in New Mexico, and Mark, Kimberly and Jason grew up in Michigan.

"I would definitely recommend moving to Nebraska, or specifically to Holdrege," Jessica shares in the video. "If you want that small town pride, if you want to know your neighbors, if you want that small-town community. Honestly, if you have a dream, this is the place to make it happen."

To see the video, visit the Phelps County Development Corporation Facebook page or [www.phelpscoutyne.com/news/video](http://www.phelpscoutyne.com/news/video) gallery, where you will also find other videos about Phelps County.

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**TAKE A LOOK  
INSIDE**

- 1 HAWKINS**
- 2 ANDERSON MEMORIAL**
- 3 HOUSING UPDATE**
- 4 JOBS SCHOLARSHIPS**
- 5 SCOOTERS OPENING**
- 6 BUSINESS PEOPLE**
- 7 BUSINESS UPDATES**

## PCDC LEADS EVENT CENTER DEVELOPMENT

A study has determined that an event center is needed in Phelps County, and a steering committee will soon be formed to explore strategies to make it happen.

The event center study conducted by Core Distinction Group this spring concluded that a convention/conference center/meeting facility is needed in Holdrege. PCDC commissioned the study after community leaders and business owners expressed a need for an event center and offered funds to assist in a study.

PCDC Executive Director Ron Tillery said business owners and others had attended corporate meetings in towns similar in size to Holdrege that had modern convention facilities and reported that Holdrege was at a disadvantage by not having such facilities.

Core Distinction interviewed several business and organizational leaders about the need for an event/meeting center. Most of those interviewed cited a need for meeting space for events such as Christmas parties, fund-raising banquets, large business meetings, wedding and graduation receptions and other events. Many also recommended the need for on-site food and other services.

Tillery said PCDC will be presenting the study's findings to the other three entities that helped fund the study and then will form a steering committee to plan the next steps.

