

Peru State President Speaks at EDGE Banquet

(KTNC) -- Peru State College President, Dr. Dan Hanson, was the keynote speaker at Wednesday's Falls City EDGE banquet.

Dr. Hanson gave an update on the college and its economic and educational impact on southeast Nebraska.

Economically, Dr. Hanson said the college has a \$40 million to \$50 million annual economic impact in southeast Nebraska. It is one of the larger employers in southeast Nebraska, with 169 full-time employees, 55 adjunct employees, and 29 part-time employees.

The educational impact includes opportunities for area students to participate in various activities, including business contests, Math Day, History Day, and Dr. Seuss Day.

Dr. Hanson also highlighted the \$60 million that has been invested in campus building upgrades in the last few years. An ongoing project is renovation of the Oak Bowl. Dr. Hanson says that should be finished this spring and will be ready for the first football game of the 2014 season against Midland University on September 6.

Other recent building improvements include renovations to the Al Wheeler Activity Center, the Jindra Fine Arts Building, Hoyt Science Building, and Morgan Hall, along with a redesigned library and a new fitness center.

Another project involves improvements to Park Avenue, which is the road leading to the college. Dr. Hanson says that involves installing curbs and gutters, walkways, lighting, landscaping and benches along the street from the Little Red Schoolhouse to Casey's. The City of Peru, Nemaha County, and the Peru State College Foundation are involved with the upgrades.

The most important thing Peru State does, Hanson said, is to educate students and he mentioned several students who have been recognized recently for their work in the classroom, including some who have won national awards.

Peru State has recently started an Institute for Community Engagement, which supports faculty and students who work on projects that better the community. He said that's a part of the college's focus on "engaged learning."

Dr. Hanson told EDGE investors that the college enjoys support from Richardson County and Falls City. He said more than 900 Richardson County residents had taken at least one class at Peru State College over the last 10 years.

More than 1,000 students were enrolled at Peru State College at the beginning of the fall semester, which Dr. Hanson says approaches the record enrollment of nearly 1,100 students in the 1960s.

Many Signals Communication