

Falls City EDGE receives state certification

(KLZA)-- For the third time in 10 years, the Nebraska Diplomats and the Department of Economic Development have recognized Falls City as an Economic Development Certified Community.

DED Business Development Consultant Deb Eggleston honored members of Falls City's Economic Development and Growth Enterprise board during the organization's monthly meeting on Thursday, June 20.

Falls City is one of 40 communities to earn EDCC certification in the program, sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and administered by DED. State officials established the program in 2005 to recognize communities for preparedness to attract new industries and grow existing businesses. The community received its original EDCC certification in 2009 and earned recertification in 2014 and 2019.

The EDGE team's focus on workforce development has grown significantly since 2014. EDGE's partnership with Southeast Community College resulted in the recruitment and location of a new SCC Learning Center in 2016. A current, industry-specific construction project will provide additional tools for skills training in healthcare and manufacturing. EDGE and SCC partners anticipate completion of the new 10,000 square foot facility in late 2019 or early 2020.

As workforce opportunities at the collegiate level continue to grow, EDGE officials have also prioritized partnerships between industry leaders and Richardson County schools. Falls City EDGE actively works to establish relationships with manufacturing businesses through participation in National and Nebraska Manufacturing Day. The program encourages the promotion of Falls City's manufacturing industry by providing educators with industry knowledge to share with high school students.

Recent business expansions also support opportunities for growth in the community's workforce. The completion of Kearney Welding's 6,000 square foot manufacturing facility included the addition of five new employees. The company's \$300,000 investment included new equipment for regional outsourcing services in welding and fabrication. In addition, Falls City Foods' site selection process led them to invest \$3 million in the community, resulting in a new facility that now employs 19 people.

Armbruster Motor Company's recent expansion included updates to the business' auto body retail, maintenance and repair shop. The project is Falls City's fourth Tax Increment Financing project, which included assistance for site preparation, paving and utility upgrades.

EDGE's recent option to purchase a 1,000-acre, Union Pacific Railroad served speculative megasite was approved by the U.P. in January was also noted during the presentation.

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