

# 2017

▶ Annual Report



**NGage**  
OPPORTUNITY GROWS HERE

Exploration is  
the engine that  
drives innovation.  
Innovation drives  
economic growth.  
**So let's all  
go exploring.**

Edith Widder

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[NGageGroup.org](http://NGageGroup.org)  
[Facebook.com/NGageNE](https://www.facebook.com/NGageNE)

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**NGage** helps facilitate and grow economic opportunities throughout Gage County, working with key players in our area and globally to form partnerships and drive development.

**NGage**  
OPPORTUNITY GROWS HERE

Dear Friends,

It's nice to take a moment to reflect on the success of 2017. It was a year in which Gage County was fortunate to see growth in a multitude of ways. Companies chose to locate here, existing companies expanded, young families moved home, and visitors ventured in to partake in a once in a lifetime event. In every instance, I'm proud of how the growth is welcomed, and I enjoy the positive comments I continue to hear.

As an advocate for rural Nebraska, I seek to make the work we do at NGage to be a model that other communities can follow as they attempt to grow their industry and population. The way we are attempting to grow Gage County can and should be replicated around our state and we will continue to forge a path in rural Nebraska for growth and development.

As we embark on 2018, let's appreciate what we have and look forward to what is coming. Our leadership on all levels is progressive and aggressive. At NGage, we have set a three point approach for the year: focus on quality of life, construct new buildings and identify sites, and focus our recruitment efforts. With the vast number of things going on in our county, we have something to point to that will guide our efforts.

The 2017 highlights detailed in this report are impressive for a county of our size, but by no means is our work here done. Together, let's build on this progress and set an example for others to aspire to and learn from.

Respectfully,



Walker Zulkoski  
Executive Director

# Board of Directors

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**Andrea Schafer**

President  
City Representative

**Patrick Ratigan**

Vice President  
City Representative

**Darin Baehr**

Treasurer  
City Representative

**Karen Stohs**

Secretary  
County Representative

**Erich Tiemann**

Representative  
Gage County Board

**Bob Morgan**

Representative  
Beatrice City Council

**Steve Hovendick**

Board Member  
County Representative

**James Lenners**

Board Member  
County Representative

**Dennis Rosene**

Board Member  
County Representative

**Pat Nauroth**

Board Member  
City Representative

**Andy Carothers**

NGage Attorney

# Member Investors

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## **LEADER \***

City of Beatrice  
Gage County  
Beatrice Community Hospital

## **CHAMPION \***

Black Hills Energy  
First National Bank  
Pinnacle Bank  
Security First Bank

## **CATALYST \***

Caspers Construction  
Diode Communications  
Exmark Manufacturing Co.  
First State Bank  
Flint Hills Resources  
Neapco Components  
Precise Fabrication Inc.  
Ratigan-Schottler Manufacturing  
Unite Private Networks

## **CATALYST/MUNICIPAL \***

Village of Adams  
Village of Cortland

## **ADVOCATE**

American Family Insurance /  
Cheryl Wirth  
Clabaugh Pharmacy Inc.  
Edward Jones / Steve Hovendick  
Echo Electric Supply  
Home Instead Senior Care  
Homestead Land Company  
Midwest Livestock Systems Inc.  
Nebraska Public Power District  
Smith, Schafer, Davis, Gaertig, LLC  
T & T Seed Express, Inc.  
Worldlawn Power Equipment

## **ASSOCIATE**

Beatrice Area Chamber of Commerce  
Carriage Motors  
Deines Pharmacy Inc.  
MembersOwn Credit Union  
Meyer & Associates, PC  
Nebraska Department of Labor  
Pickrell Lumber & Hardware, Inc.  
Schulz & Associates, P.C.  
Schuster's Outdoor & RV Inc.  
State Farm Insurance / Ed Easley  
RL Tiemann Construction Inc.  
Landmark Snacks, LLC  
Woods Bros Realty  
Jones Insurance Agency  
Willet & Carothers

**\*Indicates Voting Members**

**Southeast Nebraska  
Community of the Year**

**Presented To  
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA**

For an outstanding and highly successful economic development program. The leadership and collaborative spirit of its people and organizations have guaranteed a solid and healthy economic base that will endure for years to come.

November 2, 2017



NEBRASKA DEVELOPMENT, INC.



## Gage County takes two of four awards at Annual Southeast Regional Economic Development celebration

Beatrice, Nebraska was named Southeast Nebraska Community of the Year by the Nebraska Diplomats. Mayor Stan Wirth said that “Beatrice has made deliberate investments in the community, its people and its infrastructure.” These investments have led

“Beatrice has made deliberate investments in the community, its people and its infrastructure.”

to business and community growth and this recognition verifies we are on a path to success.” Beatrice was chosen because it leads by example – projects like Landmark Snacks, Rare Earth Salts, Duonix Biodiesel, Hybrid Turkeys, and Worldlawn Power Equipment helped secure the award. Other factors included playground equipment, skate park renovation, trail system improvements, and over 40 new housing permits.



### Innovator of the Year

Rare Earth Salts (RES) is a leading materials technology company and producer of rare earth oxides, and the inaugural recipient of the Southeast Nebraska Diplomats' Innovator of the Year Award. The award celebrates pioneers who bring new ideas, methods, or products to Southeast Nebraska. "We are honored to receive this award and are grateful to the Nebraska Diplomats," Cameron Davies, CEO of RES, said. "It is a testament to the passion and commitment that our founder, Dr. Joseph Brewer, and his team have shown in development and commercializing our disruptive rare earth separation technology."





“We are honored to receive this award and are grateful to the Nebraska Diplomats,”

-Cameron Davies,  
CEO of Rare Earth Salts

## Duonix Biodiesel

Duonix, a joint venture between Flint Hills Resources (a subsidiary of Koch Industries) and Benefuel Inc., celebrated their first full year of operation in June 2017. On hand for celebrations were company officials and Governor Pete Ricketts, who said that “this [plant] represents value-added agriculture...taking commodities that we produce, processing them, turning them into something more valuable and then helping grow the economy by doing that.” Duonix is the only biodiesel plant in Nebraska and contributes to the state’s \$5 billion renewable fuel industry.



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# Hendrix Genetics & Turkey Run Farms

Hybrid Turkeys, a division of Hendrix Genetics, began operations in their Industrial Park location in December 2017. A partner contractor, Turkey Run Farms, opened the same month in their high-tech facility. These two projects alone generated over \$10MM in Gage County investments.



# Worldlawn Power Equipment

Worldlawn Power Equipment celebrated the opening of their new facility in June 2017, with Governor Pete Ricketts, Beatrice Mayor Stan Wirth, and Worldlawn President Hardy Shao on hand for the event. Governor Ricketts noted that the expansion is “a great example of how international engagement helps bring investment and jobs to our state and shows the world that Nebraska is open for business”.

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## Nebraska Governor's Pheasant Hunt 2017

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Main Street Beatrice hosted teams of hunters in its annual Governor's Pheasant Hunt this past November. Despite his busy schedule and another weekend commitment, Governor Pete Ricketts was in attendance, hunting with Walker on the NGage team, and ultimately helping lead the team to victory.

Rick Clabaugh, local business owner and lead event organizer, said that "since Governor Ricketts has been governor he's been here every year".

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Ricketts said the event "helps promote the legacy of hunting in our state". Hunting also has a significant impact on the Nebraska economy. Boasting over 800 jobs with \$848 million in economic impact.

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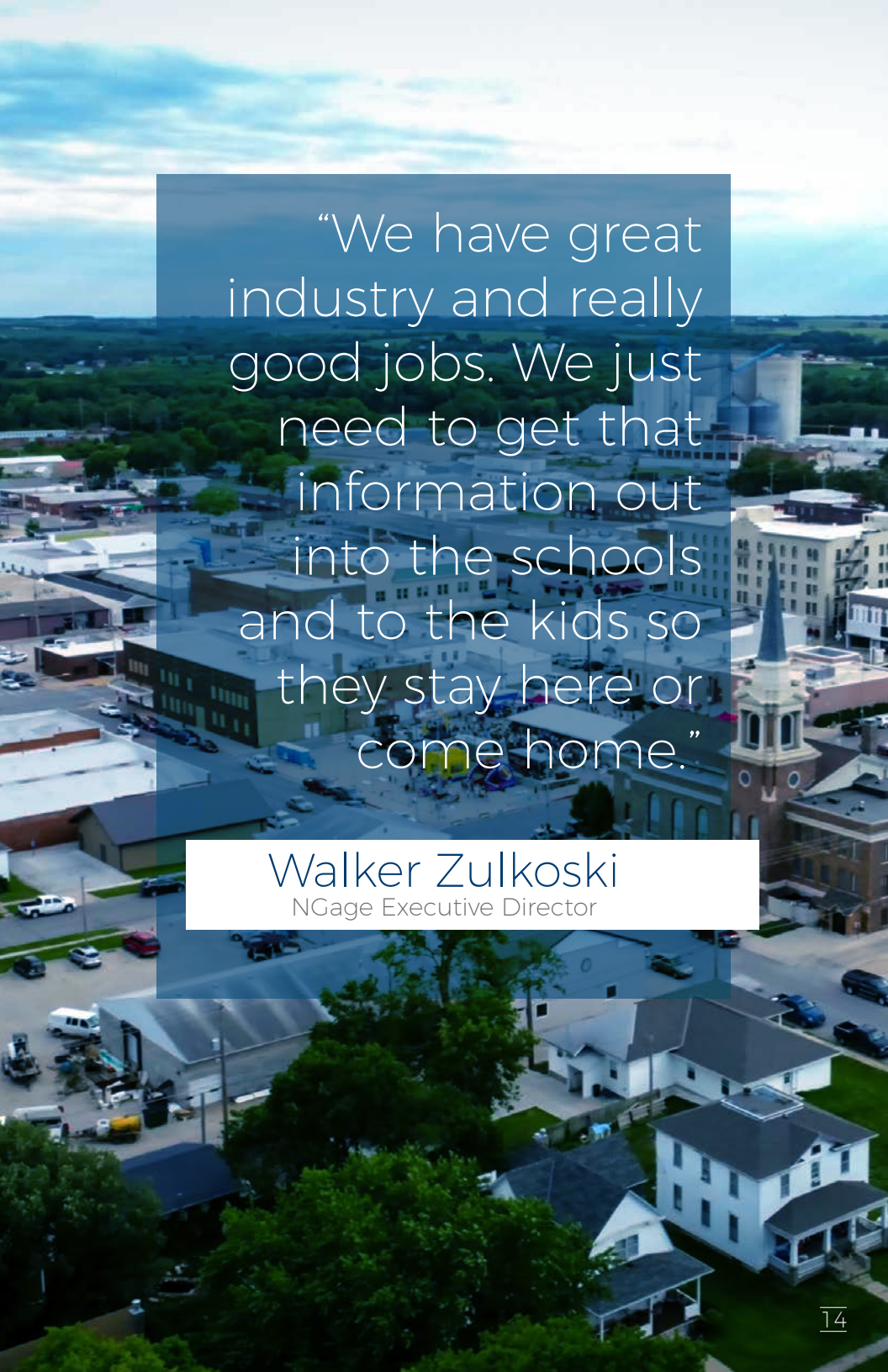




Manufacturing Day is a nationally-celebrated day meant to inspire the next generation of manufacturers. Beatrice area businesses participated this year, hosting students from both Beatrice and Southern High Schools for tours of their facilities. Students were exposed to manufacturing in a way that provided some “light bulb” moments. Partnering with schools is becoming increasingly important for the manufacturing industry as they look ahead to workforce needs and talent retention of the future.





An aerial photograph of a town, likely in the Midwest, showing a mix of industrial and residential areas. In the foreground, there are several large, light-colored industrial buildings with flat roofs. To the right, a prominent church with a tall, dark steeple stands out. The background shows more industrial structures, including large silos, and a line of trees under a cloudy sky. The overall scene depicts a community with a strong industrial base.

“We have great industry and really good jobs. We just need to get that information out into the schools and to the kids so they stay here or come home.”

Walker Zulkoski  
NGage Executive Director

## **Excel Development**

In December, Excel Development (and their subsidiary companies, Midwest Housing Initiative and Porter Housing LLC) closed on property in Beatrice, including vacant lots and the site of the former Beatrice Community Hospital. Excel is a development, property, asset management, and consulting firm. Plans for the property include 16 senior and workforce housing units, funded in part by grant, NIFA, and LB840 funding. Demolition work and asbestos abatement are scheduled for Q1 2018, with project completion set for Q2 2019.



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## Downtown Beatrice/Façade Improvement

Downtown Beatrice has made great strides in the last twelve months. From façade improvements to interior remodels, there have been hundreds of thousands of dollars in new investments downtown - \$1,849,815 to be exact. That number does not include private investments nearing \$1.5 million that are in the works.



One of the projects includes funds from the Façade Improvement Program to Todd and Soni Hydo for their building at 301 Court Street. Their beautiful 21,000 square foot building is expected to open in 2018.

Another recipient of Façade Improvement funds are John and Colleen Schoneweis. They purchased a building downtown with plans to convert it from its previous use as a retail space to an event center and new home for Colleen's Catering.



## **Community Development Block Grants**

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) awarded \$12 million in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to 47 communities in 2017.

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Two of those grants, totaling \$502,000 were awarded to Wymore, Nebraska for Housing Rehab and Public Works

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The Housing Rehab project will provide 8 new housing units in Wymore, while the Public Works funds will be combined with an additional \$276,000 to improve streets within the community.



# NBDC PROJECT

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## **NBDC Intensive Business Training**

The Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), with funding from the Small Business Administration (SBA) chose Beatrice, Nebraska and Gage County as the ideal location for an Intensive Business Development Project in the Fall of 2017. For this project, NBDC provided a team of consultants, free of charge, to twelve local businesses to give intensive reviews of business planning, process improvement, marketing, financial operations, government contracting, merchandising, and more.

## **Erin Chadwick joins NGage**

Erin is a Kansas transplant who has been living the Good Life in Nebraska since 2010. She and her husband own Brown's Shoe Fit in the heart of downtown Beatrice, and they are both heavily involved in the community through various organizations. Erin serves on these boards and committees: Beatrice Plus Advisory Board, YP3 - Gage County Young Professionals, Beatrice Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, Night of the Great Pumpkin Event Committee, and Kiwanis International. She is also a graduate of Leadership Beatrice, and former committee chair of the Leadership Beatrice Advisory Committee.

Erin was the inaugural recipient of the Young Professional of the Year award given by the Beatrice Chamber each year. Her involvement in and passion for the community has made her position as Marketing Coordinator for NGage a perfect fit.

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## **Online Presence**

A focused effort was made in 2017 to be more active online, and it paid off. Our website was overhauled with a more personal touch to include business success stories, a "meet the locals" section, news updates from local sources and partners in the community, and a calendar of events that we attend and our followers may be interested in attending to.



**NGage** | OPPORTUNITY GROWS HERE

ABOUT US - BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES - LIVING - COMMUNITIES - SITE SELECTION

# BEATRICE, NE: 2018 COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR

SHARE US!      

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US

 HOUSING STUDY

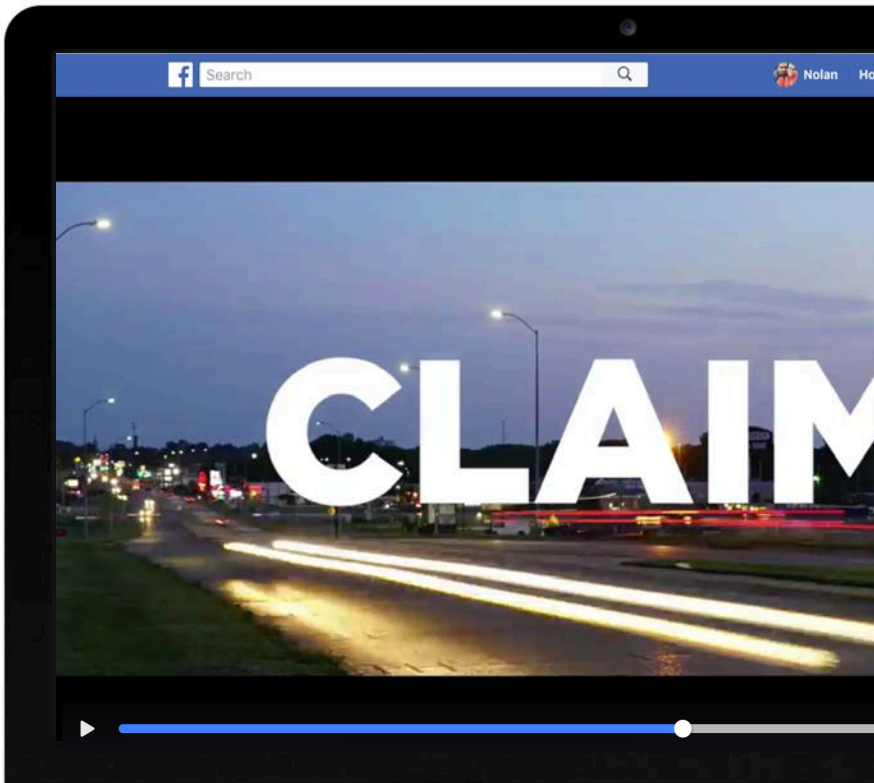
 LATEST NEWSLETTER

 AVAILABLE PROPERTIES



## Digital Sky Video Production

NGage invited Digital Sky, a media firm out of Lincoln, Nebraska, to record what life looks like in Beatrice. From the daily drive to images of a once-in-a-lifetime event, they beautifully captured the community and its people. A series of four teaser videos were created to build anticipation for the final video, which will be released at the NGage Annual Meeting and Banquet in February 2018. The full video is a perfect snapshot for prospective businesses, clients, or employees looking to move to the area.





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## County Photos

Photographer Jeremy Buss came to Gage County to snap some photos depicting everyday life in our communities. He ended up taking nearly 5,000 photos of industry, landscape, people, events, and more over several visits to the area. These photos will be used in a promotional capacity not only for NGage, but for area employers looking to attract new employees.

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Workshops hosted by NGage.



Business received FREE business training.



Communities in Gage County



NGage Employees



# 29,788

Miles traveled for business recruitment/expansion

Visitors to NGage website

Q3 '16



897



Q3 '17



1328


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**\$ 27.5** Project improvement  
dollars spent

**MILLION**

A silhouette of a construction site in orange, featuring an excavator, a crane, a building under construction, a truck, and another excavator.

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 **4,830**  
E-Mails sent



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 **48**  
Business expansion  
& retention visits



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**2**  
Business studies completed  
(Retail & Hotel)





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