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FCDC NEWS

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Fortigen Geneva LLC Starts Production in January



According to plant manager Chris Hayhurst, full production at the Fortigen Geneva anhydrous ammonia plant will begin in January. At the end of December the storage tank was partially full of anhydrous ammonia and functioning perfectly. Citizens may have noticed what looks like flames, which is the process of venting the equipment that takes longer when plants first start operating.

Hwy 41 Express Stop Benefits Fillmore County Citizens & Travelers

Kenny Harre, one of the owners of Hwy 41 Express Stop, Inc, said the business is going good since opening last July. The start was a little slow, but then during harvest business picked up. They are continually working on selecting items for the Express Stop that their patrons want.



Customers like the pizza and chicken and they have now added a special each day and have a variety of snacks and beverages. Since there are not many places to stop along Highway 41 many of their customers are travelers from outside the area.

Harre said the business has 6-7 full-time employees and some part-time employees. Having five owners with different strengths and good communications skills makes the business successful.

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FCDC Vision

The FCDC pursues all avenues of growth for new and existing business towards the goal of maximizing employment opportunities, the tax base, and the quality of life.

Fairmont a Great Location for Midwest Mobile Tech, Inc



Mark Jarocz was excited when he saw the old lumber yard in Fairmont for sale. He thought it might be a great place to grow his business, Midwest Mobile Tech, Inc. Midwest Mobile Tech fixes locomotives. The company also repairs rail car movers and does routine structured 92 days maintenance schedules. In addition Mark Jarocz can sell you a locomotive and a rail car mover. Mr. Jarocz had worked for other companies that did locomotive repair and that is where he started learning his trade. About eight years ago he was encouraged to start his own business and got some training from others in the trade. He does most of his service work in the Midwest so it made sense for him to locate in a place where U.S. Highway 81 and U.S. Highway 6 meet. He added another building by the old lumber yard buildings and brought in an office trailer. Since then he has bought the old motel and the old Stockman's restaurant which he plans to demolish to build a new office building and have more room for his equipment. Other bigger companies do the same type of repair work he does but Mark works for smaller companies like grain elevators, ethanol plants, concrete plants, etc. that have their own locomotives to move cars around. Midwest Mobile Tech is probably the last family-owned business that repairs locomotives according to Jarocz. He has a crew of five which includes himself and his son. The day I talked with Mark Jarocz he and his crew were called by Cargill in Carleton at 2:30 in the morning to fix their locomotive. They were back to Fairmont by noon and headed out to Colorado by 3:00 p.m.

Beavers Dairy Uses the Latest Technology When Milking Cows

Beavers Dairy located near Shickley is now using robots to help operate their dairy. The operation started in May of 2017.

Each cow wears a transponder on her neck that tells the robot which cow she is and how much milk she should produce. The cow likes to step on the milking platform because she gets special pellets to eat. While the cow is eating the robotic arm uses lasers to help attach the teat cups to the cow for milking. Once the milking is done the cups come off automatically and the machine records how much milk she gave. "There are other advantages for the cows to be milked by a milking robot", according to Brett Beavers. "The transponders that the cows wear monitor their activity. That helps producers know if a cow needs help or is not feeling well. It is a much quicker way to pick up any illnesses." The robotic dairy also makes life better for the cows. They are able to roam around and do what they want. They can even get milked up to six times a day to relieve pressure in their bags. The feed ration can be programmed better for the cows too. View the Beavers Dairy operation on Pure Nebraska <http://www.1011now.com/content/news/Local-Dairy-Uses-Milking-Robot-430359993.html>



FCDC WILL HOLD THEIR ANNUAL MEETING ON FEB 8TH in MILLIGAN

The Fillmore County Development Corporation announced that their 2018 annual meeting will be held on February 8th beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Charlie's Pub in Milligan. Those planning to attend should RSVP to Patt at 402-759-4910 or email lentfer.fcfc@genevemail.com.



Fillmore County Similar to Other Rural Counties and Needs More Housing

Fillmore County is currently experiencing a housing crisis according to the FCDC Housing Committee and Director Patt Lentfer. Many families are looking to rent, purchase or build homes in our county. Unfortunately, they are met with a lack of options. The Housing Study completed in July 2016 estimated that the housing target demand was 54 owner housing units and 36 rental units needed by 2021. Even though some housing units have been added in the past year, it has not reached the level that is needed. This housing shortage is not limited to Fillmore County but spreads across the state. In fact the State Legislature recognized the need and established a Rural Workforce Housing Fund (WHF) to provide matching grants to non-profit development organizations to reduce the cost of workforce housing.



FCDC is encouraging owners with empty houses or lots to consider the impact of renting or selling. Having more housing could help our communities thrive. There are several companies who are expanding which means added workforce. Added workforce means there is a need for more housing units, both rental and owner owned.



LINDA CARROLL AWARDED CLERK of the YEAR
Fairmont Village Clerk, Linda Carroll, was named the Clerk of the Year by the USDA Rural Development in Nebraska. The award was presented by Karl Elms-haeuser, the recently appointed Nebraska State Director. Linda as the village clerk has worked tirelessly to grow her community and is a great asset to the Village Board and the citizens of Fairmont.



Bluestem Energy Solutions and Perennial Public Power Hold Groundbreaking This Fall

The groundbreaking for a 6.9 MW wind farm just west of Fairmont along U.S. Highway 6 was held November 3rd and is the county's first wind farm. Blue Stem Solutions will build the three wind towers and Perennial Public Power will be purchasing all of the energy from the facility, according to Jamey Pankoke, Perennial general manager. This will allow Perennial to offer their customers rates and products with low carbon characteristics. Their customers can value these products right at the point of consumption through Bluestem's distribution connected generation project.

GENEVA BUILDING SUPPLY TO OPEN

A new lumberyard, Geneva Building Supply, has started construction. Dale Erdkamp, who owns Exeter Lumber in Exeter, decided to expand and is doing it in Geneva. The south building is 48' x 94' and the north building is 70' x 130' with the store at the north end. Erdkamp said the store will carry a full-line of building supplies. The additional store will allow him to expand his customer base and provide great service throughout Fillmore County.



**FILLMORE COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

1032 G ST
Geneva, NE 68361

Phone: 402-759-4910

Fax: 402-759-4455

Email: lentfer.fcdc@genevemail.com

FB Fillmore County Development Corporation



Address Label

County News Bits

- Progress continues on the expansion at Flint Hills Resources. The high protein feed called NexPro is expected to start being produced later in 2018.
- Charlie's Pub opened in Milligan in December. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 5:00 pm to close. Several local people bought the former Evening with Friends building for the new Pub.
- A hotel feasibility study was completed by Core Distinction Group and found that Geneva could support a hotel. Now a group of investors needs to form and get the project done.
- FCDC and Fillmore County businesses hosted the Career Industry Day for Fillmore County junior students in October.
- Halbur Electric and Rizzo Electric merged and formed a new company, 34 Electric to meet the needs of their customers both big and small.
- A 6,272 Sq. Ft. dual building on main street in Exeter is for sale. A 54,200 Sq. Ft. industrial building is available in Geneva.
- New Village Clerks in the County are Jen Griffith in Shickley, Vicky Thompson in Milligan and Suzanne Keenan in Grafton.

Notes from the FCDC Director

January is a busy month with closing out 2017 and starting the new year with new plans and continuing projects. It doesn't always give time for much reflection.

Planning for the 2018 FCDC Annual meeting does make me stop and look back at what has happened in 2017, however. It also makes me thankful for the investor members of the FCDC that show Fillmore County citizens and businesses are not content to stay at the status quo, but want growth and to create new opportunities.

The FCDC Board is in the midst of their membership campaign and invite you to be a supporter of the FCDC. The basic investment level starts at \$75. Having more people involved at every level gives more input into what direction the Board should take and how to get it done. Let's keep growing Fillmore County together.

www.fillmorecountydevelopment.org/fcdc-membership

Patt Lentfer