

OUR TOWNS Hartington

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Hartington Wins Development Designation

Town Now At 'Forefront' For Neb. Economic Prospects

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON
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HARTINGTON, Neb. — The possibilities of economic development have opened up for Hartington, Neb., as the city has been designated a Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community.

"It means now that we'll be on the forefront if the Department of Economic Development in Nebraska receives interests of a company coming in," said Carla Becker, Hartington's economic development coordinator. "Our name is up there along with the other communities that are certified, saying that we are economic development-ready."

"It just gives us an upper hand on other communities our size when somebody's coming in, looking for the possible expansion of a business or starting a new business," added Chris Miller, president of Hartington's Economic Development Board of Directors.

The certification program is sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and is one of the few national programs that recognize communities' economic development preparedness.

"Our communities continue to step up to the plate in terms of how serious and committed they are to building a solid foundation and footings to ensuring bright and prosperous economic and community development for their citizens," Nebraska Diplomats President Dan Koch said in a press release. "We applaud Hartington for its concerted efforts."

Those efforts involved a three- to four-year application process administered by the Department of Economic Development.

"You have to do a lot of things before you can even fill out an application," Becker said. "We don't have quite as many resources as the larger communities, so it's just taken us longer to do it."

Hartington is one of the two smallest communities in the state to receive certification, she added.

Each applicant community is judged against program

standards of organization, infrastructure, local industry target identification and workforce issues, local financing and business assistance, and building and site availability.

Hartington officials have spearheaded a number of projects with an eye toward these areas during the past few years.

In 2004, the city completed a \$1.6 million outdoor Community Complex used by two school systems, as well as area residents. One year later, a new airplane taxiway was completed at Hartington Municipal Airport's Bud Becker Field.

Additionally, Hartington passed a local municipal options sales tax in 2007, which earmarked 1 percent revenue for economic development projects; in 2009, \$5.6 million of a Rural Utilities Service loan was invested to link each

Hartington home and business with fiber optic cable. Certification could mean Hartington will see more of such expansions in the future.

"You have to be certified in order to tap into certain grants, and there's a lot of things our community is looking at doing," Becker said.

Officials say it's a relief to be finished with the initial certification process, and they're excited to see how their community will benefit.

"We're very happy that we've got it accomplished," Miller said.

"I think it's a big step, because we've worked hard to get certification done here," said Bill Dendinger, a member of the economic development board, as well as Nebraska Diplomats. "We're a growing community, and it should be a big plus to be on the certification list."

"We look forward to the opportunities it's going to bring to us," Becker said. "We just hope it opens some doors for us to keep our community moving along."

For more information about the Economic Development Certified Community program and a list of certified communities, visit <http://www.neded.org/content/view/380/669/>.

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CARLA BECKER



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D

Carla Becker, Hartington's economic development coordinator, and Bill Dendinger, economic development board member, say the city's recent designation as an Economic Development Certified Community will give them a leg up in possible expansion.

Great Neb. Trash-Off April 17-24

LINCOLN, Neb. — Adopt-a-Highway volunteers are gearing up for the 20th annual Great Nebraska Trash-Off April 17-24. Sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Adopt-a-Highway program and the volunteers who participate send a message to Nebraskans everywhere, even small efforts make a big difference.

Through the statewide program, 990 local organizations and

civic groups join forces in this marathon of removing litter and debris from more than 3,800 miles of the state's highway system. Approximately 4,000 volunteers are expected to participate in the effort.

Denise Wallman, NDOR Operations Division, is the state coordinator for the Adopt-a-Highway program.

Genealogy Conference Set For Norfolk

NORFOLK, Neb. — The Nebraska State Genealogical Society Genealogy Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Express in Norfolk, Neb., April 23-24.

Paula Stuart-Warren and others will present sessions on helping

you find your ancestors. Jeff Kappeler will speak from the Nebraska Humanities Council.

For more information, contact Phyllis Masek at 402-850-7118, e-mail pmasek@cox.net or visit www.nesgs.org.

EMS Workshop Slated For Wayne

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Emergency Medical Services Program of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will offer a workshop on "Street and Recreational Drugs" for emergency medical technicians and first responders. The workshop will be held at Providence

Medical Center on Tuesday, April 20, running from 7-10 p.m.

The workshop is worth three continuing education hours. For more information, contact Carrie Crawford, Northeast Nebraska Emergency Medical Specialist, at 1-877-277-3609.

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