



Economic Development

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Thanks for Buying in Burwell

If you appreciate having retail businesses that are conveniently located in our community, then it is important to support those retailers with your business as much as possible. Many small communities have lost most of their retail businesses. However, with your help, Burwell retail can remain vibrant – keeping jobs and dollars in our local economy. Can't find what you want – just ask! Most of our retailers will order and stock whatever you need. Please buy in Burwell.

Recap of Last Year's Economic Development/Chamber/Tourism Activities

- New Burwell Economic Development and Chamber websites • Rodeo Theatre fundraising activities (opened in Feb.) •
- Burwell promotional exhibits at Council Bluffs show, Omaha show, Grand Island show, Aurora Show and State Fair •
- New home project funding/development, construction contract award, project oversight, completion/sale/grant program •
- Burwell Rescue Squad donation • Avenue of Flags building fundraiser promotion • SBA Alfalfa plant sale proposals •
 - New web site search engine indexing • Community Redevelopment Authority re-establishment •
 - Tax Increment Financing project creation in conjunction with local developer for new housing complex •
 - New housing area development infrastructure proposal • City clean-up day • Business-after-hours events •
- Facade grant projects at Verda's Cafe, Husker Marine, Burwell Floral, Don's Auto Parts, Gumb Auction/Realty, Dukeman Family Foods •
- TeamMates Restaurant Day promotion • New Burwell tourism brochure • Easter event • Carnival event • City garage sales •
 - Ag Appreciation event • Ag scholarship program • Prairie Chicken Festival promotion • Workforce coalition project •
- Creighton/UNL law student event to introduce employment/practice opportunities in central NE • High school rodeo parking •
 - Iron Man Disc Golf Tournament • Rodeo parking/signage • Rodeo Parade • Rodeo History Exhibit •
 - Social Media Workshop • Business ribbon-cutting/open house events • Building Stronger Towns Workshop support •
 - Cabela's KingKat Classic at Calamus Tournament and Kids Fishing Rodeo sponsorship • Kids Halloween Parade •
- Community Visioning/Planning Workshop support • Economic Development program updates to Citizen Review Committee •
 - Chamber Bucks buy local program • Rodeo event transportation plan • Annual Chili Cook-off event •
- Burwell High School ReVision local businesses workshop • Thanksgiving and Christmas business promotion activities •
- UNK nursing school program to support local employment needs • Grant applications for new tourism attraction activities •
 - Economic Development program updates at monthly City Council meetings •

COMMUNITY
 ECONOMIC
 DEVELOPMENT
 UPDATE

Burwell Business

SPRING
 2014



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2013 REVIEW

The Burwell community was blessed with another good business year in 2013. Two key measures of business growth include the city's sales tax for economic development activities and the county's lodging tax for tourism promotion activities.

INCREASED RETAIL SALES

As measured by local sales tax records, Burwell retail sales were up again in 2013 about 5% over the previous year. Annual retail sales have consistently increased in Burwell for the last seven years.

INCREASED TOURISM

Visitors to the Burwell area were also up again last year, contributing to our local economy. As measured by 2013 lodging tax reports, the use of area lodging facilities showed an increase of 6% over the previous year.

Facade Improvement Grants Helping Businesses

A number of businesses in the Burwell area have recently taken advantage of Burwell Economic Development's Business Facade Improvement Grant Program to improve their curbside appeal. Burwell Economic Development recently introduced the program to encourage existing businesses to upgrade, repair or enhance the exterior frontage (facade) of their businesses. The grants support the development of each business and help to enhance the overall business attractiveness of the Burwell area. Business property owners may apply for a grant to receive funding for half of the cost of a qualified project up to \$10,000 (\$5,000 grant, \$5,000 matched by business).

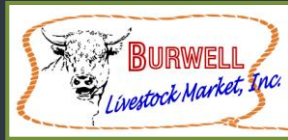
Some of the local businesses that have received help for their improvement projects thus far include *Burwell Shurfine Food Center, Burwell Floral & Bridal Loft, Verda's Cafe, Don's Auto Parts, Husker Marine, Gumb Auction & Realty, Dukeman Family Foods and Crandall Law Office.*

Business property owners interested in the Business Facade Improvement Grant Program can contact the Burwell Economic Development office (346-5210) for an application.

Rodeo Theatre an Important Attraction

At the beginning of last year, if you wanted to see a movie in a theatre, you would have to drive more than 50 miles. However, because of the large fund-raising effort in our community, the Rodeo Theatre re-opened last year and has since been attracting local and out-of-town folks to downtown Burwell every weekend. If you have not seen a movie at the theatre since the installation of the new digital system – be sure to check it out!





Livestock Market Continues to Positively Impact Area Business

Now in their 79th year as one of the largest livestock markets in central Nebraska, the Burwell Livestock Market continues to attract cattlemen from across the region into the Burwell community.

In addition to being a major local employer, the market also has a dramatic impact on the local economy by virtue of the hundreds of visitors that come into town each week for the auctions. For example, co-owners of Dry Creek Western Wear, Jodee Bolli and Karen Spanel, have said that their store is always busier when the livestock market is holding a sale.

We are fortunate to have such a vibrant livestock market in our community, and we salute Gene and Terry Cone, and all those that work with them, for making this such an important economic contributor for so many years.

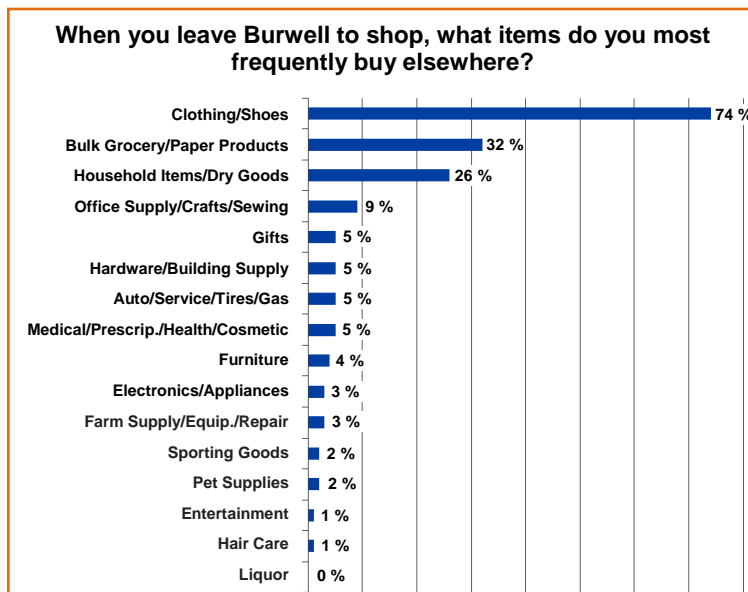


Burwell Market Survey Highlights Community Needs

We asked about buying habits and needs – and here's what you said!

Last year Burwell Economic Development mailed a survey about area business needs to every residence in Garfield County. More than 300 surveys were returned, representing an impressive 41% response rate.

Residents were asked questions about their shopping habits and opinions regarding existing local retail offerings. When asked about what they purchased when leaving Burwell to shop, the top answers were clothing, grocery/paper products, and household items. The chart below shows all of the shopping categories and the percentage of survey respondents that stated that they shop outside of Burwell for those items.



When residents were asked about what type of retail they would like to see in Burwell, the overwhelming top answer was a general or variety store. The second most requested business was a car wash.

Regarding what existing businesses could do better to meet shopper needs, the number one request was a greater assortment of merchandise, followed by a request for longer hours and lower prices.

Regarding the question about the need for a community or conference center

in Burwell, 51% indicated that they thought it was a great idea, with another 30% saying that the concept should be explored. For the question about whether a cooperatively owned variety store should be pursued, 69% stated that it was a great idea, while an additional 25% indicated that they thought the idea should be explored further.

“We would shop more in Burwell if we had a general/ variety store, or if existing retailers offered a greater assortment.”

The survey results also provided information that can be utilized by Burwell retailers to enhance their product offering (what products could be offered that are now being provided elsewhere), and to better understand their current market share. Additionally, the Economic Development office is utilizing the survey data to develop market potential estimates to support the feasibility for potential new businesses in specific business categories.

Businesses and investors can contact the Burwell Economic Development office for a complete copy of the market survey results at 346-5210.



Butter Factory Redevelopment Project Underway

Last year the Burwell Investment Club submitted an application to Burwell Economic Development for help to redevelop the property on the corner of North 8th Avenue and F Street – previously known as the Butter Factory property. Unoccupied for years due to challenges associated with needed updates required by all potential business uses, the redevelopment application proposed to remove the old building and replace it with an eight unit housing facility – which addresses the community need for additional rental housing.

The financial tool the city can utilize to help with qualified redevelopment projects is called Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The TIF program process is governed by Nebraska state statutes, and provides communities with the ability to capture the difference between current annual taxes generated by an under-utilized

property and the higher level of taxes that will be generated after the property is improved to pay for needed improvements (without raising taxes) to make a redevelopment project feasible.

Once the improvements are paid for with the increased annual taxes that are generated, the entire higher level of generated taxes will start to flow to the various taxing entities, such as the school, county, etc. In the mean time, all that receive property taxes today will continue to receive tax distributions from the property at current levels.

Without the help via TIF, the property would likely continue as is, not being used, and only generating about \$900 a year in property taxes. After the investment of approximately \$128,000 to acquire the site and prepare it for the new construction, the property is projected to generate about \$13,000 annually in taxes, which will

ultimately benefit the entire community by increasing the tax base, and therefore decreasing the tax burden for individual property owners.

Through a series of public meetings and hearings over a period of six months with the Burwell Community Redevelopment Authority, the Burwell Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Burwell City Council, the redevelopment plan was approved in December and work started on the project last month (January). Project completion is expected by the end of 2014, and those interested in the reserving one of the two or three bedroom units should contact Terry DeGroff at 346-4508.

Additional redevelopment plans are currently being considered. Anyone interested in learning more about how TIF can be utilized for redevelopment projects can contact David Sawyer at Burwell Economic Development.

New Burwell Home Built by Economic Development

Next new home project to start soon

One objective of Burwell Economic Development is to enhance quality housing options in the community – helping to accommodate further business development. In 2012, Burwell Economic Development secured funding to build a new home via a grant from the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, along with some local support.

Gaukel Construction in Burwell was awarded the contract to build the home early in 2013. Local subcontractors utilized to build the home included Jeffres Excavation, Bolli Construction, Petersen Lumber, Spelts

Lumber, Ottens Electric, Dunne-Rite Plumbing, Dobbins Service Center, Miska Drywall/Texturing, Valley Gutters-R-Seamless, Colliers Landscaping, and Carpets Unlimited.

The new home was completed and sold to a family last fall. Burwell Economic Development expects to start a new home project in the near future.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAM

Sustaining – Growing

The Burwell Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund Program was made possible via the approval of the local option sales tax in 2005. Since that time, the program has provided low interest loans and loan guarantees to local existing and new businesses.

For more information about the business loan program, contact David Sawyer at 346-5210. All discussions and application information are kept confidential.



ReVision Business & Schools

Burwell High School has started the process of enhancing aspects of their curriculum in order to better prepare students for their upcoming career choices, particularly related to job clusters in our local community. In conjunction with Burwell Economic Development, local businesses were recently invited to meet with school leaders and provided input regarding the education and skills that will be needed for their future employees. More information about the ReVision program is available by calling Burwell Schools superintendent, Dan Bird, at 346-4150.