

*City of*  
*Cambridge*  
*Economic Development* Life is good!

# *2017 Annual Report*

*Cambridge Economic Development Board*

*Cambridge, Nebraska*

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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TOM SHOEMAKER

## A Year of Change and Growth

**T**he Cambridge Economic Development Board had a busy year in 2017, and we have set our sights high to promote economic strength and growth for our community as we head into 2018 and beyond.

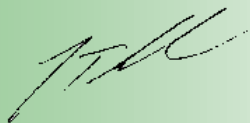
**As you peruse this report, you'll get a sense of the types of projects that this Board is accomplishing toward our 2020 Vision to "attain a population, which supports a sustainable community with diverse businesses, growing tax and economic base, affordable living rates, maintained infrastructure, and exceptional public facilities."**

The last year was a rebuilding one, of sorts, as we filled our full-time staff executive-director position March 1 and were able to step up our efforts. During the year, our main focus was on finding ways to increase the supply of affordable (*not income-restricted*) housing for Cambridge families. Currently, that centers on our Harvest Meadows subdivision on the east end of town. In 2017, we laid the groundwork for more home construction in the subdivision, including offering cash incentives to builders – a project that was touted at the state level as a leader in Nebraska, with a number of other communities since adopting similar free-lot & builder-incentive programs.

Our financial statement is located on page 11. This Annual Report will also give you results from programs including down-payment assistance, revolving business loans, internship grants, development of a new citywide website, marketing and advertising about Cambridge statewide, regionally and nationally, social-media business promotions, and communicating with and supporting existing businesses, to name a few. These all aim toward the Cambridge Economic Development Board's mission "to focus our efforts on attracting new families to Cambridge by promoting our school, career opportunities, health care, affordable housing, and recreation."

If you ever have any questions about economic development efforts in Cambridge, don't hesitate to contact our executive director at 308-697-3711 or [edcity@swnebr.net](mailto:edcity@swnebr.net) — or any one of the nine Economic Development Board members listed on the facing page.

Sincerely,



**TOM SHOEMAKER, President**

*Cambridge Economic Development Board*



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

## MEET THE BOARD



**Tom Shoemaker, President**



**Darcy Johnson, V. President**



**Jan tenBensel, Treasurer**

## LEADERSHIP

**M**embers of the Cambridge Economic Development (CED) Board are appointed by the mayor, with final approval coming from the Cambridge City Council. Members represent various sectors of business in the community and volunteer extensive service for terms of three years but may serve consecutive terms.

**T**he CED Board meets monthly but directs and oversees all economic development activities year-round. The vast majority of money invested in projects approved by this Board (*and featured in this report*) are paid with tax dollars collected through the Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (known as LB840), but some of them are funded with public and private grants for which this Board applies.



**Leah tenBensel, Secretary**



**Jarod Albers, Member**



**Logan Baker, Member**



**Dave Custer, Member**



**Randy Heitmann, Member**

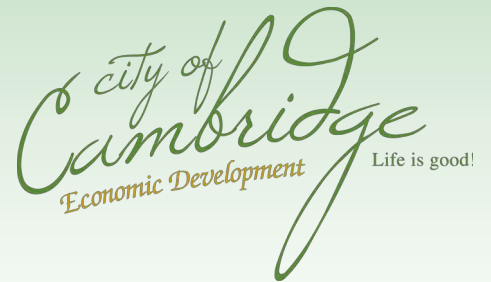


**Judy Jackson, Member**

# WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

## IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY!

**A**fter decades of efforts to sustain and grow our small community, Cambridge Economic Development (CED) has proven that success starts at the grassroots level. It started when nine visionary local volunteer leaders recognized that embracing a new generation of pioneering entrepreneurs was essential. Currently, CED is boosting its efforts to attract new families and keep existing families in Cambridge by offering them things like a free residential lot at Harvest Meadows and down-payment assistance to buy a home.



We also believe strongly in supporting our existing local businesses, which are the very heartbeat of our community and a critical portion of our economy. We offer loan, grant and support programs to help their owners keep them running strong, and we meet with them regularly to identify more ways we can support them. **As you read this report, we think you'll agree that Cambridge Economic Development is making a difference for this community's business and people.**

### 2020 Vision

To attain a population that supports a sustainable community with diverse businesses, growing tax and economic base, affordable living rates, maintained infrastructure, and exceptional public facilities.

## 8 Key Components to Economic Development Strategy

**T**he following policies have been adopted by the CED Board and the Cambridge City Council as the tasks that make up the city's economic-development programming:

1. Business development/entrepreneur support
2. Retail business initiatives
3. Technology business initiatives
4. Community marketing/promotion
5. Youth community engagement
6. Community philanthropy
7. Leadership development
8. Housing program development



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## BUILDING THE SUPPLY

**G**iven results of a housing study, direct research, and discussions with local business owners, residents and city, regional and state officials, the Economic Development Board identified a shortage of workforce housing as the most pressing obstacle to current economic growth in Cambridge.

**It's difficult to market the city to new businesses, for example, when there isn't enough room for existing employees of local businesses to live here.**

Fortunately, in 2016 and 2017, the Nebraska Legislature responded to what is a statewide shortage of affordable housing in small villages and cities by passing legislation to allow use of LB-840 tax dollars for **creation of "workforce housing," which means housing that is not income-restricted like government housing, but affordable to the average working family in Cambridge.**

**T**he Cambridge Economic Development Board responded quickly to the legislation, working throughout summer 2017 to draft amendments to our city ordinance and the Cambridge 2020 Vision to allow LB-840 funds to be used for workforce housing—and to make homebuilders eligible applicants for **building incentives. By summer's end, the amendments were approved by the CED Board and City Council, and passed through required public readings. The Board also put in place a system for cash incentives — \$20,000 for a single-family home and \$30,000 for a two-unit home — for builders who build on four particular lots in Harvest Meadows. The incentive aims to reduce builders' risks in constructing on speculative bases. CED staff talked to local builders and traveled**

to state meetings to share information about the incentive program with other cities and to talk to builders in Cambridge and around the state about taking advantage of the incentives and getting some homes built.

*The Cambridge incentive program quickly served as a leader to other communities in Nebraska.*

The Cambridge program quickly became a leader for other communities in the state. So far, at least two other communities have picked up the program concept to adapt for their cities, and several others have called to learn more.

**R**esponse to the incentives has been extremely positive out of the gate, with one builder already in place to build on an incentivized lot, and three others looking to secure a lot in 2018, as building season resumes. Two families also are planning to build in Harvest Meadows in 2018, after working on plans with the Board and staff in fiscal 2017.



The goal is to build out the Harvest Meadows subdivision, offering housing for existing and new residents alike, at the same time opening in-town housing for others—or for CED rehab to further increase the workforce-housing stock. There are scads of steps from A to Z, but CED is making things happen.

Stay tuned for more in 2018!

# DOWN-PAYMENT & BUSINESS LOANS

## HELPING DREAMS COME TRUE

In Fiscal 2017, the Cambridge Economic Development Board used privately raised funding to provide a total of nearly \$75,000 in 0% down-payment-assistance loans to seven families and individuals in Cambridge, helping them realize their dreams of home ownership or upgrading to larger homes for their families.

Down-payment assistance is not a program that LB-840 tax dollars can be used for, but recognizing its importance to prospective homebuyers, the Economic Development Board applies for grants to help Cambridge residents bridge that gap to buying a new

home. The Board shares information back and forth with applicants' lenders so they don't have to prepare all of their financial documents twice. Loan payments do not begin until six months after closing on their home, so that new homeowners have time to get what they need to settle in before adding the payment.

*"The down-payment assistance helped me get a place bought in the town I want to be part of," said Logan Baker, pictured above, center, at his new home, with the president of the Economic Development Board and his banker. "Being single and young, I wasn't able to do it by myself," he continued, "but the program helped me get the starter home I wanted. The program really demonstrates that the town of Cambridge wants to invest in its people and growth."*

Residents may borrow up to \$15,000 for a down payment on an existing home, with no interest, and may borrow up to \$30,000 toward building a new home — at 0% up to \$15,000 and just 2.75% for the remainder. The ED Board has a goal of providing 10 more down-payment loans in 2018. If you're interested in applying for a down-payment assistance loan, contact the economic-development director at 308-697-3711 or [edcity@swnebr.net](mailto:edcity@swnebr.net). You may also download a copy of the loan guidelines and an application from [www.cambridgene.org](http://www.cambridgene.org). Just select "Housing" from the "Economic Development" dropdown menu.

The Economic Development Board also maintains a revolving-loan fund, which helps local businesses that need an infusion of capital for improvements, operating expenses, remodeling, and the like ... and for new-business development in Cambridge. Businesses can borrow up to \$20,000, with an injection of at least 10% of an equity injection. The interest rate on revolving business loans is 0.5 percent below the prime rate, with terms varying from 1 to 15 years.



# MARKETING & ADVERTISING

## SHOWCASING CAMBRIDGE

### “We Have Just What You’re Looking For!”

It's not difficult to find things to promote about a community like Cambridge, with its small-town atmosphere, great outdoor activities, wonderful selection of retail shops & restaurants, and our tight community. But marketing is an important element of any economic-development strategy because its goal is to help draw more visitors, potential residents, and unique businesses to our community. It's like raising our hand and yelling, “Come here! We have just what you're looking for!”

But marketing and promotion come in countless forms. Advertising in publications seen by target audiences is one key component of the Cambridge Economic Development Board's marketing plan — like the color ad on page 3 of the new *Nebraska Traveler* ad (featured on facing page of this report), which is augmented by a full page story about Cambridge in the same issue.

Nearly 200,000 copies of this magazine are expected to be distributed to an audience of Nebraska enthusiasts, the leisure-tourism market, sports-tourism market, and business travelers.



The 2017 Cambridge plan also included regular advertisements in local and regional newspapers and in *Nebraska Life*, as well attending meetings to feature Cambridge housing and loan programs to builders and other economic developers and associations.

Additional Economic Development investments paid for Facebook ads that extended the reach to outlying areas and target audiences from the Cambridge Economic Development

Facebook page, which also boosted posts of local businesses, increasing their impressions by nearly 117,000 between April and December 2017. Finally, a new website developed in 2017 will be the hub for extensive & inexpensive marketing in 2018 and beyond.

# Play. Shop. Dine. Stay.

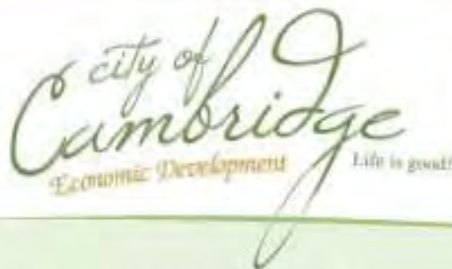
# CAMBRIDGE



Art & Sculptures • Outdoor Adventure • Bed & Breakfast • Restaurants

Explore the outdoors with ample opportunities to hunt, fish, camp, swim, golf, hike and so much more. Stop into Cambridge's eateries and let your taste buds enjoy local favorites. While downtown, take a stroll and experience our array of shopping opportunities. Need to extend your stay? Feel free to give us a call and we will find a place to lay your head.

[cambridgene.org](http://cambridgene.org) • 308-697-3711



See *Nebraska Traveler's* Central section, pg. 67, for more on Cambridge.



# SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES

## HELPING CAMBRIDGE COMPANIES GROW

# We're Here to Help YOU!

**I**ndeed, part of the job of an economic-development program is to attract new businesses and residents to a community. But the Cambridge Economic Development Board believes that supporting existing businesses is equally **as important!** That's why the Board offers program like façade grants, internship grants, revolving business loans (see page 6), and promotional assistance to Cambridge business owners and operators.

In 2017, for example, the Board approved six \$1,000 matching internship grants for Cambridge businesses, four of which were completed to fruition. In addition, it supported four matching grants for façade improvements, one of which is still underway, for a combined payment to local businesses of nearly \$15,000 when complete.

**T**he Board also invested in extensive promotion of local events and topics in the *Cambridge Clarion* and the *McCook Gazette* to help increase community and regional draw to local events, shops and restaurants; worked with a host of journalists to help raise the visibility of Cambridge and its businesses in the state and region; funded joint advertising opportunities for local businesses; developed and led a Community Development Week focused on local businesses; worked with individual businesses on marketing themselves; paid for Facebook "boost" ads to extend the reach of posts from nearly 60 local businesses and groups; worked

with the Chamber of Commerce to support Medicine Creek Days and other Chamber events; featured Cambridge businesses in state and regional tourism ads; developed working relationships with businesses; and much more!



A collage of promotional posters for local businesses and events in Cambridge. The posters include: "Help SPRUCE UP Cambridge + Support our LOCAL BUSINESSES!" with a list of participating businesses; "The CAMBRIDGE GENERAL STORE"; "Hair Company"; "Tri Valley Treasures Gift Shop"; "CORNER CAFE"; "CAMBRIDGE Super Market"; "COBBLESTONE INN &amp; SUITES"; and "AMATEUR'S BAR 'N' GRILL". The posters are colorful and feature various images and text.

# EDUCATION

## SHARING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

Of course, no program is worth much if nobody knows about it, right?

That's why Cambridge Economic Development (CED) regularly communicates with members of the community and others interested in Cambridge.

On a daily basis, CED communicates via Facebook and on its website, [cambridgene.org](http://cambridgene.org), to help folks learn more about local businesses and people, area activities, city government, and about ways that Economic Development tax dollars from the community are being invested. In fact, this annual report itself is one of those education tools, aimed at helping you understand the purpose of economic development — and the results.

Economic Development staff also visit local business owners as much as possible, and is always available to answer any questions or concerns. It also participated in the Career Fair at Cambridge High School this year, answering students' questions about economic development and encouraging



them to be active members of their community during, in addition to their school, during and after graduation.

Several months in 2017 were spent creating a new website for the Cambridge Economic Development Board and the City of Cambridge. If you haven't had a

chance to visit the site yet, take a few minutes at [cambridgene.org](http://cambridgene.org) and see what it has to offer. You'll find everything from City Council and Board listings, to housing information and CED grant and loan programs for businesses and residents, to a photo gallery of local places, activities and people.

The Economic Development Board provides flyers and brochures with information about assistance programs and also sponsored a Community Development Week in April 2017, which included activities and group advertising for businesses, and an Open House with ED Board members available to answer questions. Education happens on a daily basis, so let us know if you need information!



# FISCAL 2017 REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

**BEGINNING BALANCE**

**\$291,146.83**

### REVENUES

Sales Tax Income	\$85,259.51
Interest Income	128.72
Down Payment Assistance Loan Payments	37,154.33
Miscellaneous Income	457.67
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$123,000.23</b>

### EXPENSES

Administrative Expenses	\$44,667.04
Youth Internships	\$3,000
Housing Development Down- Payment Assistance	14,250.00
Promotions/ Advertising and Marketing	14,452.03
Façade Grants	7,687.30
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$84,056.37</b>

**ENDING BALANCE**

**\$330,090.69**

Numbers in the charts to the left are Economic Development revenues and expenses for fiscal 2017, which extended from Oct. 1, 2016—Sept. 30, 2017. This information represents LB-840 revenue and investments only, and does not include money that the CED Board raised through private grants and donations.

In fiscal 2017, the Economic Development Board undertook months-long efforts to structure a new incentive program for builders to add workforce housing in Harvest Meadows. The costs of setting up the program were minimal, but the Board has budgeted \$150,000 toward that project in 2018, so you can see how much that will change the account balance in 2018.

As noted on page 6 of this report, the Board also invested nearly \$75,000 of private grant money to provide down-payment assistance (DPA) loans to seven local families and individuals. The DPA references on this chart represent payments back to the LB-840 account for loans made prior to private-donation funding of down-payment assistance.

By the end of the calendar year, the ED Board had also invested another \$1,500 into façade grants for local businesses; an additional \$1,000 was paid out for a summer 2017 internship matching grant; and another \$4,000 went into advertising and marketing.

If you have questions about the budget or financials, don't hesitate to call City Clerk Kandra Kinne at 308-697-3711.

## 2020 VISION STATEMENT

*T*o attain a population, which supports a sustainable community with diverse businesses, growing tax and economic base, affordable living rates, maintained infrastructure, and exceptional public facilities.



## MISSION STATEMENT

*T*o focus our efforts on attracting new families to Cambridge by promoting our school, career opportunities, health care, affordable housing, and recreation.

City of Cambridge Economic Development  
722 Patterson St. / Cambridge, NE 69022 / Phone: 308-697-3711  
Email: [edcity@swnebr.net](mailto:edcity@swnebr.net) / Website: [www.cambridgene.org](http://www.cambridgene.org)