

Blue Heron fuel pump project is a story of success

I have recently developed a better understanding of the efforts of the GIC. I had the opportunity to work on a project like the ones GIC has been doing over the years. It has been an economic victory for not only for the Blue Heron Fueling Station, but also for our town and drivers who stop to buy higher blends of ethanol. Without exception there are people who are working behind the scenes to make good things happen here in Gothenburg!

The Blue Heron camp ground and fuel station is owned and operated by Barry and Gwen McDiarmid who have operated the facility for the past 23 years. The facility was in need of new pumps and other equipment, but the cost was incredibly high. Knowing that the improvements were essential I began to investigate what could be done to help. The new blender pumps were first considered after I became aware of the opportunities to help get these high tech blender pumps placed across America.

The process began when I asked Barry if he would consider some new fuel blender pumps. He told me, "I just as well be talking to the Queen Mother"...not being British I was not sure what that meant...then he said, "she's over there" and pointed towards Gwen. After Gwen gave her blessing the process began and a lot of people got involved and soon we were in meetings exploring the possibilities.

The adventure began on December 15th 2016 and with it came; several calls, applications, meetings, emails, text messages, estimates, approvals, construction, and pump installations, and the grand opening took place on September 28th. Now over 35% of the fuel sold by the Blue Heron Flex Fuel Plaza is Ethanol.

Barry and Gwen have been generous are a great for providing their gas station for the new blender pumps and taking a chance on offering more fuel choices not only to the Gothenburg community, but also the 15,265 drivers that come up and down Interstate 80 each day, and the 2460 drivers a day that go north or south by here each day.



Benefits of blender pumps

The result of the new blender pumps is that motorists have the option of higher blends of corn-based ethanol, which supports our agriculture industry ... affecting every Nebraskan.

Also, ethanol is important for our health and air quality. The oxygenating qualities provided by E10 reduces tailpipe emissions by one-third. Ethanol replaces the aromatics found in crude oil which are known to cause cancer.

Scott McPheeters
GIC Stockholder

The Gothenburg Improvement Company would like to thank Scott McPheeters for all of time and work he put into improving a Gothenburg business.

Community comes together to make a dream YMCA facility come true

The Gothenburg YMCA is a bright shining star for our community. It seems like yesterday when the vision of opening a YMCA was being constructed into a plan and that plan surged forward with momentum.

The Gothenburg Improvement Company teamed up with the city, the school, the hospital and the community to make the facility a reality. It took a lot of work and a lot of fundraising, and by doing it the "Gothenburg Way," we are now the smallest community to have a YMCA in the entire nation. It truly is a great accomplishment for Gothenburg.

So now that the doors are open, what are people saying about the Gothenburg YMCA? We sat down with Julie Czochara, the manager of the YMCA, to get an inside look.

Julie said she is very happy the YMCA is now open. It was a long road to get here, but with the doors now open, her favorite thing is the kids who are utilizing the facility.

"Right when the doors were opened, there was a large amount of kids that started coming to the gym after school. I love to see the kids coming to the YMCA and interacting with each other," Julie said. "It is a great feeling knowing they now have a safe place to come to hang out and have fun while building relationships with other."

Julie talked about all the different programs that are being offered at the YMCA and how there are activities for all ages. The Gothenburg YMCA has a phone app that Julie said offers a great way to keep you connected.

"The app on your phone can be used to check you in, it gives you the schedule for all the activities, it shows all the programs that are available and even provides up-to-the-minute notifications of any changes, like if the pool will need to be closed temporarily for maintenance. The app is a great way to stay connected to your YMCA," she said.

One of the kids frequently taking advantage of all the YMCA has to offer is Ashlyn Richeson. Ashlyn is the daughter of Joe and Angie Richeson. She is 12 years old and has an extreme passion for all sports, but primarily basketball.

"I come to the YMCA four or five days a week, and I really like the gym the most, as I love having a great place to

practice basketball and get my shots in," Ashlyn said.

Ashlyn and I began our interview at the YMCA by playing a game of P-I-G (a shooting game where you match the shots the other person makes). Ashlyn was right when she said it was fun to play basketball at the gym.

I could tell by talking to Ashlyn that she already has a lot of pride in her YMCA. It was also fun to see all the other kids saying hello to her as we conducted our interview. It was kind of like she was the mayor of the YMCA kids.



Ashlyn Richeson, 12, is a regular user of the Gothenburg YMCA gymnasium, pool and workout equipment.

When I asked Ashlyn what her second favorite thing is at the YMCA, she said it's the pool. She said sometimes her friends will get a group chat going on their phones and they will all plan a time to meet at the YMCA. Ashlyn said when the crew is all there, the best thing to do is play games in the pool. They have a tag game that sounds like a lot of fun, but she also said she likes that the pool is large, and the salt water system makes it easier to float and swim. She really likes the new equipment in the workout area, and her favorite workout machines are the leg press and the stair stepper.

"I like working out and getting stronger, and I really like that there are other things to work out on other than just treadmills and ellipticals," she said.

It was easy to see when talking to Ashlyn that she truly loves having the YMCA.

While talking to Ashlyn, I remembered my own childhood and how her dad (my longtime Gothenburg classmate and friend, Joe Richeson) worked to get a group of kids together to play. It was always a lot of work and took hours of pedaling around town to find some other kids. We always had fun when we too got the crew together, but it was nothing like what we have now.

I think now in a time of excessive social media and video games, having a place like our community YMCA to interact and grow relationships is vital to a vibrant community.

As we all know, building the new YMCA came with a large price tag, and we could not have completed the YMCA

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fund drive nearly as fast if it weren't for the many community entities that pulled together to make it happen. Becky Jobman, director for the Gothenburg Health Foundation, played a significant role in coordinating the fundraising efforts. Becky had a huge job to do. With the YMCA vision coming together there needed to be a special person to lead the charge on the fundraising.

Becky said the process of fundraising was kind of like being on a roller coaster — some weeks would go very well and then some would go poorly. Some of the grant applications were approved while many were not. There were a lot of ups and downs.

"We were overwhelmed by the generosity of local donors and foundations supporting our cause through grants, but we were still coming up short, so we had to shift our fundraising focus to incorporate a mass public campaign," Becky said.

The change to the fundraising approach made everyone in the community responsible for the success of the YMCA. Community businesses began fundraising campaigns, individuals in the community started to donate money, the annual hospital gala became a huge fundraising event, and many businesses were writing checks.

"It was truly amazing to see the whole community step up to make the fundraising campaign a success," Becky said.

When asked what her proudest moment was during the entire fundraising campaign, she said, "My proudest moment would have to be when we raised the final \$75,000 at the 2018 gala. The auction items were all selling very well, some up to \$7,000, and it made the gala very successful!"

The great thing about the Gothenburg YMCA is that our community was able to come together and do something wonderful, not only for our generation, but for generations to come. I am also happy to report that the YMCA is above the recommended projection for total members. They were hoping to have at least 1,505 members after a year of operations in the new building, and they currently have 1,527.

It's just one more way our community has come through to be successful. If you are not a YMCA member, I would highly recommend considering it. Like Ashlyn Richeson said, "The YMCA is fun!"

Luke Rickertsen
GIC Board Member
assisted by Rylee Naprstek

GIC: Early learning vital to community's future

Five years ago, the GIC Way of Life Committee identified a need with regard to early childhood learning. GIC understood that improving this facet of our community would assist not only with the development of our youth but also with recruitment of businesses and employees. Since that time, the Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition (GECLC) has been established.

The GECLC believes that every child (with a focus on birth to age 5) deserves early childhood learning opportunities supporting the growth and development needed for kindergarten. Through this coalition, Gothenburg has formed a partnership with The Communities for Kids initiative to address shortages of high quality early care and education programs. To identify specific areas of need in Gothenburg, a community survey was developed and distributed, then completed by over 300 residents. The data was collected and is being analyzed for



a comprehensive early childhood plan for Gothenburg, including the addition of a coordinator position and ultimately an Early Childhood Learning Center.

One of the developments through GECLC has been the initiation of a school-based preschool program to provide early learning opportunities to children who otherwise would not have access to preschool. Swede Preschool Academy began in 2016 and was located in an upstairs classroom of the Methodist church. Initially a three-hour, four-day-a-week program, the preschool was extended in the second semester to include lunch, as the student need became evident. The following year, Swede Preschool Academy was granted space in one of

the available classrooms at the elementary school and became a full day, six-hour program. Within the initial two years of the program, state ratings reached the exemplary level — the quickest of any program in the state to go from start-up to the highest level.

GECLC's focus is far broader than a school-based preschool. The focus of the group is to provide community-based options to early childhood learning. GECLC a collaboration with all early childhood programs in the community, working toward a common purpose with local entities, such as Gothenburg Health, Gothenburg Public Schools and the City to serve the community's families and youth. GIC remains an active part of this collaboration and looks forward to assisting with the continued success of GECLC.

Colten Venteicher
GIC vice president

The Maschhoffs feed mill planning expansion project

It may be easy for the average citizen to overlook the economic impact of The Maschhoffs feed mill in Gothenburg. Located in the southwest part of town, you rarely drive by it save for the occasional trip to the grass dump. The next time you dump your clippings, consider this: at any one time, the mill is producing feed for approximately 100,000 head of pigs. The majority of them are slaughtered in Crete, Nebraska, and the boxed frozen pork is exported to China.

The Maschhoffs purchase approximately 2.5 million bushels of corn locally. The mill employs 11 people while two trucking companies employ six more people to haul raw commodities and deliver feed.

The Gothenburg feed mill was recently awarded the top safety award in the Maschhoff system that includes locations in nine states. It is quite an accomplishment considering The Maschhoffs company is North America's largest family-owned pork producer.



The Maschhoffs mill in Gothenburg produces enough feed every day to feed approximately 100,000 pigs.

Gothenburg plant manager Bob Jorgenson said the mill in Gothenburg has gone more than 2½ years without an OSHA reportable injury. In addition to recognition for safety, the mill was a 2017 semi-finalist for the American Feed Industry Association's Mill of The Year Award. According to Jorgenson, the mill didn't make the final cut due to lack of recent capital improvements. Perhaps the AFIA will think a little more highly of them in 2018.

The Maschhoffs plan to spend nearly \$1.5 million on the mill this year. They have upgraded the motor control center, which will run a new grinder and pellet mill and pellet mill cooler. The grinder should be installed by the end of the July and the pellet mill upgrade will be completed four weeks after the grinder installation is finished. The improvements will increase feed making capacity from 20 tons per hour to 55 tons per hour. Along with these upgrades, corn storage will increase from 7,900 bushels to

16,000 bushels. They would like to place two farrowing houses near the mill after these upgrades are completed.

The Maschhoffs purchased the Gothenburg mill from Land O' Lakes in July 2014. What few people know is that the purchase was not a certainty. The Gothenburg Improvement Company hosted decision makers from The Maschhoffs in March 2014. They were seriously considering building a state-of-the-art mill in the Cambridge, Nebraska, area. That location would have saved them a substantial amount of money in freight over the mill's useful life. However, after hearing the Gothenburg story, getting to visit with some Gothenburg High School's FFA officers and receiving a commitment from GIC to help them grow in Gothenburg, they signed on the dotted line.

Aaron Coleman
GIC vice president/treasurer

2018 ASSESSMENTS

Many thanks to stockholders who have paid their 2018 annual assessments. It is with your continued financial support that we can put our best effort into recruiting and retaining viable businesses and industry in this community.

If you have not yet sent payment for 2018, we encourage you to do so to remain an active part of Gothenburg Improvement Company.

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