

Auburn Earns Nebraska Economic Development Recertification

(LINCOLN, NEB.)—Auburn, Neb. (pop. 3,385), has earned its recertification in the Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community Program. The city was originally certified in May 2006 and recertified in December 2009.

The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED). Designation as a Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community indicates that Auburn is prepared for business growth and ready to meet the needs of companies seeking new business and industrial locations.

“Auburn continues to amass an impressive list of community and economic development achievements, comparable to cities two-, three- and even four-times its size,” said Nebraska Diplomats President Annette Wiles. “It will be interesting to revisit Auburn’s list of achievements in the next five years as it continues to forge a strong future.”

“We are very pleased that DED and the Nebraska Diplomats have approved our application to renew our designation as an Economic Development Certified Community,” said Mayor Scott Kudrna. “In the past four years, the Auburn Development Council and City of Auburn have implemented many programs and projects to enhance its economic development efforts.”

During the last five years the City has supported community growth by welcoming 29 small businesses that created 86 new jobs throughout the county and assisted with existing business expansions that created 114 jobs in the community.

Other notable accomplishments for the community include:

In 2010, the City of Auburn was awarded \$250,000 in CDBG funding from DED to rehabilitate ten homes in Auburn and Nemaha County for homeowners earning at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). The City received another \$224,868 CDBG award in 2012 to rehabilitate an additional seven owner-occupied homes in Auburn for people earning at or below 80 percent AMI.

In 2011, Auburn redesigned its community website to serve as the first impression and first source of information for prospective businesses and professionals looking to relocate.

Also in 2011, the City of Auburn was awarded \$350,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from DED for downtown revitalization projects that included updating city building code plans and rehabilitating building facades in the commercial district.

The City has collaborated with area manufacturers and the Auburn Public Schools to add a Vocational Agriculture program and expand the welding curriculum to increase high school students’ technical skills.

In 2012, the City of Auburn was named the Second Safest Community in Nebraska by the Safewise Report.

The Auburn Development Council sold the first lot at Skagg’s Industrial Park to Black Hills Energy, which constructed a new building on the site.

Major upgrades to Farington Field Municipal Airport in Auburn included construction of a new 8,000-sq.-ft community hangar. A financial award from the Federal Aviation Administration will allow Auburn to continue making improvements at the airport, including paving a 3,400-ft. concrete

runway/taxiway, and installing lighting along the runway/taxiway, a GPS approach, new segmented circle, and new beacon.

In 2013, the Auburn Development Council started the Nemaha County Leadership Class to develop strong up and coming community leaders. Young professionals participate in a nine-month curriculum that explores Auburn's education system, energy resources, business and industry, health care, and government. Program graduates undertake class projects to better the community. Past projects have included construction of a nine-hole disc golf course at Irvin Park and two sand volleyball courts at the Auburn Recreation Complex, as well as projects at Auburn High School and Nemaha County Hospital.

In July 2014, the Auburn Historic District was officially added to the National Register of Historic Places. The area includes the Sheridan Business District at the crossroads of Highway 75 and Highway 136, and the Courthouse Square Calvert Business District. Designation on the National Register of Historic Places affords property owners the opportunity to apply for tax credits when making building improvements. Also in 2014, the City of Auburn and Nebraska Public Power District partnered to update the Auburn Community Guide that features its economic development efforts, labor, market access, infrastructure, and communications system information.

In 2015, the City of Auburn and Ariens Company cut the ribbon on a new 7,000-sq.-ft. interactive educational and recreational learning garden for pre-school and elementary school children. The Ariens Company Nature Explore Classroom is divided into a designated learning center that includes a rain garden, nature art area, building area, and climbing and crawling area.

DED Director Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, CECD, recognized the City of Auburn on their recertification during a special presentation at City Hall on Monday morning. Joining her were the Mayor, Auburn Development Council members, City of Auburn employees, and other members of the community.

Many Signals Communications