



Calhoun County REC closes on first industrial park

After years of in-depth research and careful planning, Calhoun County finally has a business park.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative partnered with Calhoun County Rural Electric Cooperative, Calhoun County Board of Supervisors and Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation to get the project located at the intersection of Highway 20 and Highway 4 off the ground.

“We have worked for years to make this a reality,” said Jim Vermeer, vice president, business development, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. “With the absence of a business park, the county is losing opportunities to attract and retain business to Calhoun County. This is something that’s really been an issue for more than a decade. People in positions at organizations change. County boards turnover. Priorities shift over time. One thing that hasn’t changed is Corn Belt Power’s unwavering support for a Calhoun County business park.”

Phase One amounts to 21.72 acres near Sparky’s One Stop at the intersection of Highways 20 and 4. With help from the partnership, infrastructure buildout is set to begin in the near future.

“This would not have happened without all of our partners, especially the Calhoun

County Board of Supervisors and Corn Belt Power,” said Keaton Hildreth, chief executive officer, Calhoun County REC.

Why a business park? In short, it will help build Calhoun County’s rural economy. However, it’s more than that says Hildreth.

retaining good-paying jobs to our area.”

Studies show that the area is primed to attract warehousing and distribution businesses. Those businesses will support travelers and logistic support in the region. Vermeer, who has been developing business

and industrial parks in the Corn Belt Power system for more than two decades, says industrial parks are critical to a county’s success.

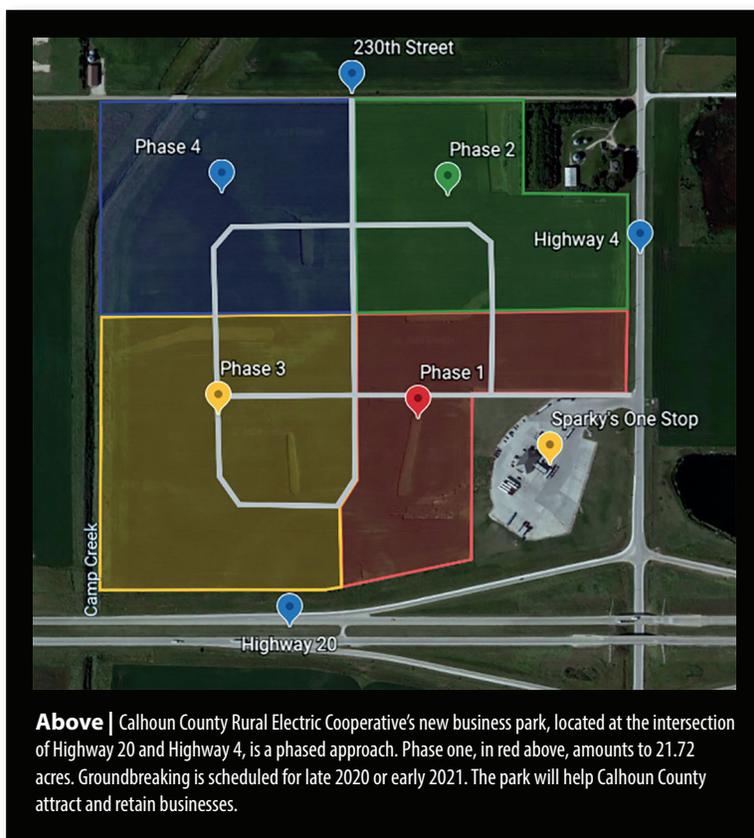
“Having a business park will foster a stronger economic base,” Vermeer said. “This partnership has been great. It was a team effort to bring this project to the finish line. At the end of the day, our goal is to create jobs and wealth. If we can do that, we know we’re on the way to enhancing the quality of life to those we serve.”

Hildreth says the investment in a business park will help stabilize rates for electric cooperative member-owners in the future.

“Increasing business activity at the intersection of Highway 20 and 4, will increase energy sales,” he said. “By increasing energy sales, Calhoun County REC

will be able to spread fixed cost over more kilowatt hour sales.”

There is an option to purchase 96.08 acres in the future, provided Phase One is successful. In total, the project could be as large as 116 acres. ■



Above | Calhoun County Rural Electric Cooperative’s new business park, located at the intersection of Highway 20 and Highway 4, is a phased approach. Phase one, in red above, amounts to 21.72 acres. Groundbreaking is scheduled for late 2020 or early 2021. The park will help Calhoun County attract and retain businesses.

“As an electric cooperative, one of our main goals is to enhance the quality of life in the area we serve,” he said. “Enhancing quality of life means more than just providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. It also means attracting and

Graduate Spotlight!



Matt Donald

Electrical maintenance foreman,
Corn Belt Power Cooperative

School: Bismark State College
Degree and subject: Bachelor
of Arts and Sciences, Energy
Management **Community**

Activities: Deacon at First Grace
Baptist Church in Sheffield,
Iowa **Hobbies:** Fishing,
hunting and woodworking
Family Members: Wife, Kayla;
Kids, Harper, three, and
Harrison, one and a half

Andrew Arndorfer

School: Bishop Garrigan High School **Academic**
awards: Academic Achievement



Scholarship; Golf
scholarship **Activities:**
Multi-year lettering athlete
in golf, basketball and
baseball **Hobbies:** Fishing
Community Activities:
Member of St. Joseph Church,
Bode and Leadership Algona
Class **Future plans:** Attend Briar
Cliff University, majoring in
Sports Management and member
of the Charger golf team **Parents:**
Mike and Jennifer Arndorfer,
human resource specialist

Mackenzie Connor

School: Western Iowa Tech Community College **Degree**
and subject: Physical Therapist Assistant

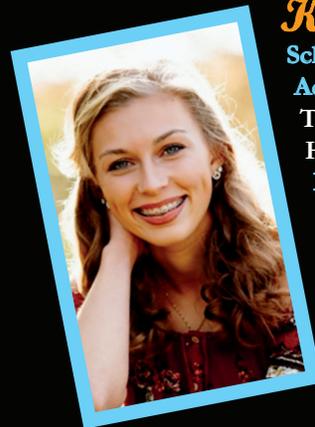
Academic awards: Presidential
Scholarship **Activities:** American
Physical Therapy Association

Community Activities: Member
of Hope Reformed Church,
Spencer **Hobbies:** Walking, golfing
and spending time with friends
and family **Future plans:** Earn
Physical Therapist Assistant license
in July; look for job **Parents:** Kristy
and Patrick Connor, plant manager,
Wisdom Station



Kristen Cowell

School: Sioux Central High School
Activities: Cross Country, Softball,
Track and Choir **Hobbies:**
Horseback riding and kayaking
Future plans: Attend Iowa
Central Community College to
study nursing **Parents:** Judy and
Michael Cowell, shift operator,
Wisdom Station



Lauren Erickson

School: Humboldt High School **Academic awards:** Valedictorian; FFA Iowa degree award; Rotary student
of the month; "A" Honor Roll; P.E.O STAR Scholarship, Iowa State Association of Counties President
Scholarship, Basin Electric Power Scholarship; and Bank Iowa Spirit of Chandy Scholarship. **Activities:**
Cross country; Track and Field; Spanish Club; Interact Club; FFA; Friends club; National Honor Society;
TAG; Speech, group and individual; Student Senate; Yearbook; and Spring play **Hobbies:** Raising
and showing cattle **Community Activities:** 4-H, church volunteer activities **Future plans:** Attend
Iowa State University, majoring in Animal Science with a Pre-Veterinary focus; minor in Agricultural
Communications **Parents:** Kathy and Corie Erickson, assistant right-of-way and land supervisor





Addison Gilderhus

School: Spencer High School
Activities: Fall musical; National Honor Society
Community activities: Member of Hope Reformed Church; Hope Youth
Hobbies: Fishing, drinking coffee and spending time with friends
Future plans: Attend University of South Dakota to study criminal justice and psychology
Parents: Tami and Scott Gilderhus, mechanic, Wisdom Station



Thad Mertz

School: Humboldt High School
Activities: Cross Country, Track
Hobbies: Shooting Sports, Running, Mechanical work
Future plans: Attend Northwest Iowa Community College in 2021, majoring in Powerline
Parents: Kerri, executive assistant and Jim Mertz, foreman electrical maintenance

Ashley Onken

School: Carroll High School
Academic awards: National Honor Society Member; High Honor Roll all four years; Academic Letter Winner; DMACC President's List; Basketball



Academic All-Conference; Track and Field Academic All-Conference; Carroll High School 2020 Scholar Athlete; Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship, Carroll Education Association Scholarship, Carroll County Agri-Business Scholarship, Signet Lodge #264 Scholarship, Kadya Sporrer Memorial Scholarship, Carroll High School Memorial Scholarship, United Bank of Iowa Scholarship, Carroll High School Student Senate Scholarship, and Carroll Tiger Booster Club Scholarship

Activities: Basketball, Track and field, Softball, Large group speech, Fall Play, Student Senate, KINS (Kids Into Not Smoking), and mentoring
Community activities: Silver Cord Member volunteering program more than 100 volunteer hours throughout four years of high school
Hobbies: Spending time with family and friends, playing and watching sports, bicycle riding and walks
Future plans: Attend Iowa State University to pursue a business degree
Parents: Betty and Dave Onken, director



Kelsey Poppe

School: Simpson College
Degree and subject: Bachelor of Arts and Sciences, Business Management and Psychology; minor in Human Resources
Academic awards: Graduated Summa Cum Laude
Activities: Women's Golf Team; Culver Fellow; Simpson Society for Human Resource Management; Pre-Law Society; Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society
Community activities: Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Hobbies: Reading, golfing and yoga
Future plans: Attend University of Minnesota to pursue a Masters of Human Resources and Industrial Relations
Parents: Rhonda and Gary Poppe, director



Molly Wittrock

School: Humboldt High School
Academic awards: Honor Band; Silver Cord Award; "A" Honor Roll all four years; Band Leadership position; Photography First Place at the 2020 Triton Prairie Lakes Invitational Art Show; Division I and II Flute Solo; VFW patriotic art contest winner; Placed in "Top 20" of graduating class; Marine Corps Scholarship
Activities: Band; Play; School Musical; National Honor Society; National Council on Youth Leadership; and Solo Small Ensemble
Hobbies: Drawing, pottery and culinary arts
Community Activities: St. Mary's Catholic Church, St. Mary's Youth Group, 4-H, Air National Guard, VFW Auxiliary; more than 400 hours of volunteer service in the community through Noon Kiwanis, Humboldt Area Arts Council and St. Mary's as a faith formation teacher and many more
Future plans: Attend Iowa Central Community College for Medical Laboratory Technician program; Air National Guard
Parents: Ann and Matt Wittrock, journeyman field technician



June Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Dave Keninger, director, Franklin REC, donated his \$100 prize drawing to the Ackley-Geneva-Wellsburg-Steamboat Rock Future Farmers of America.

Give back to your community, enter Volunteer Challenge hours for a chance to win

You probably notice the blue bar directly above this space each month. It always contains the name of a drawing winner from either a member-cooperative or Corn Belt Power. Your name could also be there! Submit your volunteer hours online for a chance to win.

Enter your volunteer hours online:
bit.ly/TSEChallenge2020

Each month Corn Belt Power draws one random winner for a \$100 prize gifted to the charity or organization of the winner's choice. Each submission is also entered into an end-of-year grand prize drawing for \$500. For more information, please contact Marena Fritzier or Ryan Cornelius at 515-332-2571. ■

Prairie Energy hosts annual meeting

Prairie Energy Cooperative held its annual meeting on Wednesday, June 3 inside its warehouse building.

Due to Covid-19, only board members, a few staff, the cooperative's attorney and several ballot counters were on hand.

A video recording of the meeting is available on Prairie Energy's Facebook page. During the meeting, Tim Marienau, CEO and general manager, gave his manager's report. Denny Puckett, the cooperative's attorney conducted the election. Marion Denger, board president, gave a few brief remarks.

During the meeting, Marion Denger was reelected to another three-year term in district five. Ryan Eekhoff ran unopposed in district two to fill the seat formerly held by Jim Wellik. Wellik retired after serving 23 years on Prairie Energy's board. ■

Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Watts Watt

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- Marena V. Fritzier, Marketing Director; CCC

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