

Business & Industry



The Scottsbluff/Gering area serves as an economic hub for Western Nebraska and agriculture is the driving force of the economy, supplemented by retail and trade

services, tourism and health care. Scotts Bluff County is enjoying gradual population and housing growth, diversified employment opportunities and measured business growth. Building activity, retail sales and production in the area have remained solid over the past few years.

RETAIL facilities are plentiful in both cities. Many inviting shopping districts are located in neighborhoods throughout the communities, showcasing unique downtown venues and mall shopping experiences. All of your shopping needs can be met. Be sure to visit the heart of our communities in downtown Scottsbluff and Gering. Downtown Scottsbluff and Gering have active merchants association and have been renovated to exhibit small specialty shops, restaurants and gathering plazas. **The West Nebraska Arts Center** is a must see when visiting downtown Scottsbluff showcasing local talent in their 100+ year old building. **The Historic Midwest Theater**, built in 1946 was designed in by Charles D. Strong and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Gering's downtown district features shopping opportunities, service businesses, a convention center and more great dining experiences.

There are abundant businesses and a variety of eating establishments in convenient locations throughout the area including "restaurant row" in the 27th Street District. Other retail shopping districts include Beltline Highway, Scottsbluff/Gering Highway, Terrytown, East Overland Drive and the Highway 26 corridor where **Uptown Scottsbluff** is located. The Mall was built in 1986 and attracts thousands of shoppers each year. **Uptown Scottsbluff** features specialty shops, national retailers, and a six-plex movie theater.

Quality **TRANSPORTATION** is a primary consideration with Scottsbluff/Gering serving as an economic hub for the Panhandle. The John McLellan Jr. Expressway is part of the Great Plains Trade Corridor, a major international trade corridor stretching from Mexico to Canada. The Expressway opened in 2005, and the connection via Kimball to Interstate 80 is completed. The Donald E. Overman Terminal at **Western Nebraska Regional Airport** was a \$4.3 million improvement project. It provides cutting edge technology and passenger convenience. In



addition, there is are two flexible bus routes with the Tri-City Roadrunner Transportation System.

Education, healthcare, financial institutions and agricultural producers are all **MAJOR EMPLOYERS**. Scottsbluff and Gering public schools offer students a unique experience by offering Career Academies, focusing on professions needed in the community and help to offer local businesses a trained workforce.

Bellevue University, Chadron State College, Western Nebraska Community College, University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center and UNMC College of Nursing all require and promote an educated labor force. **Regional West Health Services and Physicians Clinic** is the core of the region's largest medical services facility. This hospital, along with numerous complimentary businesses, provides the goods and services expected in a comprehensive source of quality health care. Many employers are locally-owned companies.

Western Sugar, WESTCO and Panhandle Coop Systems are cooperatives employing more than 500 full and part-time people. The various agri-chemical, equipment, livestock and other production companies that serve the area combine with medical, professional and financial businesses to provide comprehensive services for agriculture, businesses and the individual citizen.

The **ECONOMIC OUTLOOK** in the Panhandle is positive. Scottsbluff, Gering and the surrounding communities continue to grow and prosper driven by the hard work and commitment of

our citizens. Western Nebraska's primary trade area, which includes 75,000 potential shoppers, has historically shown stable economic activity and spending patterns. Much of that spending takes place in the Scottsbluff/Gering area, leading to steady growth. This pattern of growth has allowed the area's infrastructure, amenities and quality of life to keep pace, providing residents with opportunities not normally associated with a rural community.

A region's future success can be predicted by the attitudes of its residents. There is a strong desire to enhance job opportunities and business development. Residents want to improve marketing assistance and work toward developing value-added agricultural products. Attracting youth with better paying jobs and providing new business opportunities were also high on the list of priorities. Environmental quality, beautification, education, transportation and affordable housing were also on their list.

This attitude of looking ahead, investing in the future, and preserving what is good in the community will serve its citizens well in the years ahead. While an emphasis is placed on improving what is already here, others are finding advantage in relocating from areas that have not taken a wise approach to growth and development. Whether it's an attraction to our quality of life or business opportunity, all are welcome and invited to share in the quality and prosperity that the Scottsbluff and Gering area has to offer.

