

## Optimistic New Year

• By Russ Joyce



Seems like years fly by. 2012 was somewhat of an exception. Ten months of political rhetoric without a lot of substance and a whole lot of candidate and policy bashing. Candidate popularity rating going up and down practically on a daily basis depending on a single word or how the candidate looked the night before. Media hype on the "Fiscal Cliff" has given attorneys a rash of last minute business to fix what might happen. We're past that, but I'm already hearing echoes from the canyon

below about the upcoming need to raise the debt ceiling. Hopefully the ninety new House members, and the twenty new Senators can see the need to "do the right thing" with a little less drama.

We also survived the "end of the world," maybe twice this year. That was somewhat synonymous with the "fiscal cliff," just that an attorney couldn't fix that. We also survived the 2012 drought. Nearly every farmer was amazed the crop yields came in as good as they did, with good prices to make up any yield loss.

Looks like a lot of room for optimism for the upcoming year. A tax analyst for the state legislature reported over a nine percent increase in state revenues for 2012, reflecting a significant economic increase. Iowa's unemployment rate is less than five percent, and Cass County is slightly less than that. It's not because unemployment benefits have run out and not reported, people are working here. School enrollment is up state wide with

AHS seeing a good twenty five percent increase for the next few years.

I hear media folks saying we're seeing economic growth nationwide but growing too slowly. I am thinking that could be a good thing. After all, the last boom time was mainly due to relaxed lending regulations and too much consumer debt. I heard for several years the average household was spending something like six percent more than what they earned. Credit card and home financing fueling that what eventually became a bust. Now, the trend, hopefully, is to pay down as much debt as possible, get your credit rating in order, and get a nearly record low home loan rate. People will see discretionary spending money that'll keep the economy sustainable.

Cass County's current challenge is the need for more housing both for sale and rental units. With banks wanting higher credit scores and a bigger down payment, people need a decent place to live until they can own a home. Or, until they find a home they want to own. It's problem, but a better problem than most. Hopefully local government can help ease the need.

All in all, we've seen a number of small business startups in the county. Many of the manufacturers are looking for addition help. Steel building construction is on an upswing. The Agricultural sector is doing great. Local Option Tax continues to rise. Many young professionals are coming to town. Thinking 2013, with a little rain, has a lot of optimism. Oh, did I mention the price of gas is under three dollars?

# CADCO



Cass/Atlantic Development Corp.  
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CADCO Update

Winter 2013

# THE CADCO

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# Update

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## United Steel Erectors Corporation

### • A recent development on the East Side

United Steel Erectors has been in business for seventeen years, owned and operated by John Welch with the help of wife Rita Welch. Until recently, USEC was based out of a small shop on the Northwest edge of Atlantic. With the company's growing success over the years, the amount and the size of the equipment had increased, therefore a larger facility was needed.

Two years ago a change was in the works. They would sell the shop building and combine office and shop space into their new facility in Atlantic's East Side Business Park next to Brymon's Home Furnishings. They are now located in a 10,000 square foot building which has a professional corporate presence. Rita oversees the daily office duties while John oversees the projects and their employees that range from 15 to 25 depending on the workload.

John has been in the steel business for 19 years.

Rita comes from a construction family. United Steel Erectors has worked with Rita's family's business, May Contracting, working on the Fontanelle Library and the Exira High School addition.

USEC constructs pre-engineered steel buildings throughout the Midwest. They are a Nucor building dealer, but as John noted, "We build a variety of different brands that may be sold to a customer and we do the steel erection."

Recently they were awarded the bid for a fifteen



thousand square foot building at the Zeigler dealership. "We weren't going to let a project next door get away."

Completed buildings in the area are a 1.8 million bushel grain storage building in Casey, IA and last year a similar storage building close to Hamlin, both for West Central Co-op. Their current projects include a 140,000 sq. ft. building for Omaha Steel Castings and the new addition to the Lourdes Catholic School in Nebraska City.

"We basically build all types of buildings, everything from churches, airport hangars to office buildings. Safety is a priority with us."

They pride themselves on their workmanship and innovation. They are always striving to find ways to complete projects quickly while providing a safe work environment.



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## 2012 Iowa Land Value Survey

### • Remarkable year in Iowa land value history

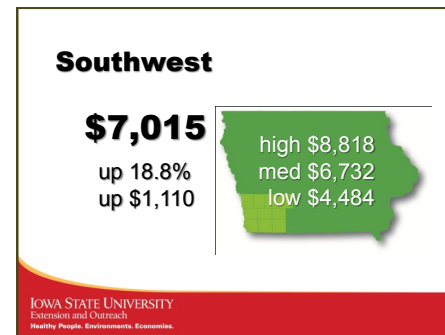
The 2012 Iowa Land Value Survey covers one of the most remarkable years in Iowa land value history. The estimated \$8,296 per acre state average for all grades of land was the highest ever recorded by the Iowa State University land value survey. The 23.7 percent increase in value makes 2012 the third year in a row where values have increased more than 15 percent. This is the first year where average county values reached levels over \$10,000.

Farmland values are highly correlated with farm income. Net farm income has increased substantially, even with considerable variation in commodity prices, over the past few years. The 2012 survey finds farmers are the primary purchasers of farmland; 78 percent of the sales were to existing farmers. The percent of sales to investors fell for the third year in a row, to 18 percent, a level not seen since 1989.



Cass County 2012 Average  
\$7,984

The increase in farm income, lowest interest rates in recent memory, the changes in investor demand, and the changes in investment alternatives have all led to higher land values. The volatility of the land market is revealed in the number of sales. Over half (56 percent) of the respondents said they had more sales in 2012 relative to 2011. On the other end of the spectrum, just 14 percent reported fewer sales and 29 percent reported the same level of sales in 2012 relative to 2011.



## Rolling Hills Communication

### • Massena Telephone Company opens store in Atlantic

The new i-wireless store, Rolling Hills Communication, is open for business. They are selling phones and computers, as well as providing a computer repair service. Located at 408 W 7th Street in Atlantic, the main focus of the Atlantic location is cellular and computer sales.

The Massena Telephone Company is locally owned and managed. Calvin Jackson is the CEO/General Manager, after 19 years of experience within the company. Services include land-line telephone, cellular service provided by i wireless, internet service, and computer sales & repair.

“With the constant challenge of keeping up with technology and the ever changing rules and regulations through the FCC, I felt the need to expand,” states Calvin. Towers are going up, including a new tower in Lyman and another on Jasper Rd. Construction will begin in the spring.

Rolling Hills Communication is a 4G provider in Atlantic and provides the area with i-wireless service. i-wireless is headquartered

in Urbandale, Iowa, and is a partnership between T-Mobile USA and Iowa Network Services (INS). Rolling Hills Communication offers phones with or without contracts. They offer talk, talk and text, or talk, text and web plans.

Internet service is also a strong part of their business. WiMAX wireless internet is offered to the urban areas, but they have recently begun offering wireless internet to rural Corning with plans of expansion to other rural areas in and around Cass County.

Computer sales and repair have been a nice addition. Calvin buys leased computers and restores them. He is then able to sell these computers for a lower price than a new computer. Other electronics such as televisions and security cameras are sold on special order.



“Crazy Kal” CEO



## Statistics Coming From the Recorder's Office

### • 2012 Recap

The calendar year ended with a flurry of real estate activity. December being the largest month of the year as a result of what everyone has called the “fiscal cliff”. The “fiscal cliff” was due to a combination of expiring tax cuts and across-the-board government spending cuts scheduled to become effective Dec. 31, 2012.

The office recorded 102 more documents last December over December 2011. The year ended with 405 more documents than 2011.

What is noteworthy is the value of the land transferred? The revenue stamps collected in December alone was \$38,775.20. This amount reflects \$24,258,000.00

in land transferred. In Iowa we collect \$0.80 cents per \$500.00, the first \$500.00 is exempt.

There were 47 transfers with an attached value. We filed 8 contracts in December totaling \$999,500.00 in value. There is no value attached to property that is transferred into trusts. The auditor and assessor logged over 181 parcels of land to new owners or owners of trusts. These transfers include both country and town property within Cass County.

Another interesting note this 2012 calendar year in the increased number of marriage licenses sold. Cass County averages approximately 60 marriage applications per year. However in the 2012 year we sold 101 licenses. The busiest wedding month was September, followed by June.



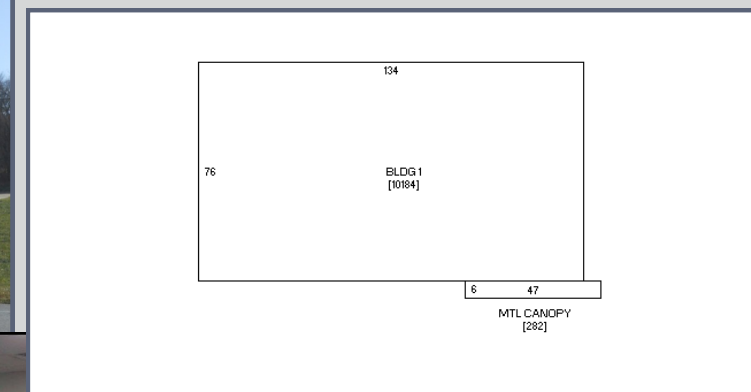
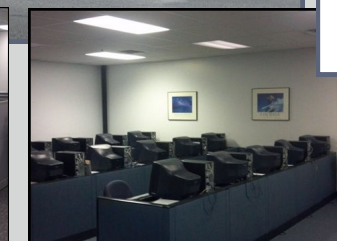
Joyce Jensen,  
Cass County Recorder

## Opportunity Available in Atlantic

### • Located at 1206 SW 7th Street

Building size: 10,184 square foot  
Lot size: 1.52 acres  
Year built: 1998  
Construction: Steel  
Finished office  
Ready-to-occupy building  
Trained workforce

Electric Distribution: Atlantic Municipal Utilities  
Natural gas distribution: Alliant Energy  
Water: Atlantic Municipal Utilities  
Sewer: City of Atlantic  
Local telecommunications: High speed internet available  
Zoning: Highway commercial



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