

Small Grants Make Big Impact

There are parts of a community so ingrained, it is difficult to see where that community would be without them. For Ainsworth, Springview, Johnstown, and Long Pine, the loss of their recycling plant, KBR Solid Waste would be tragic.

When the brakes went out on the one, and only, forklift for KBR Solid Waste, it was devastating. They could no longer stack pallets very high, which was wasting precious space. The trucks could not be filled completely. It was unsafe conditions for the workers. They were no longer as efficient as before. Using the forklift posed serious risk, but the other equipment did not get the job done either. It would have cost \$4,500 to fix the existing forklift, but that machine was greatly outdated, and the update would outweigh the worth of the total machine!

It was decided that they needed to buy a new forklift, but they are expensive, and that chunk of money was not in the budget. Then they looked at leasing a forklift, but that monthly rent was also too expensive, especially if they could just make a payment on a new one that they could own.

So, KBR came to Central Nebraska Economic Development District to see if there was any help to be found. Judy Petersen, Executive Director was there to save the day. She worked over one weekend, put together a packet, and took it back to them. After a few changes, the grant was ready to be submitted. They looked and found a few different options for new forklifts. Finally, they settled on a forklift, decided the monetary amounts to apply for, and submitted the grant request.

Eventually, KBR Solid Waste was awarded a grant of \$16,000. With their matching amount and the grant money, they were able to purchase a newer model of forklift. It has greatly increased their efficiency of work, and they no longer have to worry about unsafe working conditions, nor do they fear any major mechanical breakdowns in the near future, since their model is so updated.

During an interview with Bruce Papstein, he had the following to say, “Judy is excellent to work with. She worked tirelessly, confirmed appointments, and was overall helpful.”

The future for KBR Solid Waste is bright and broad. They have several ideas to improve their recycling program, through bailing plastic differently to glass recycling. Where they will start, time will tell, but the Central Nebraska Economic Development District will be there every step of the way.

