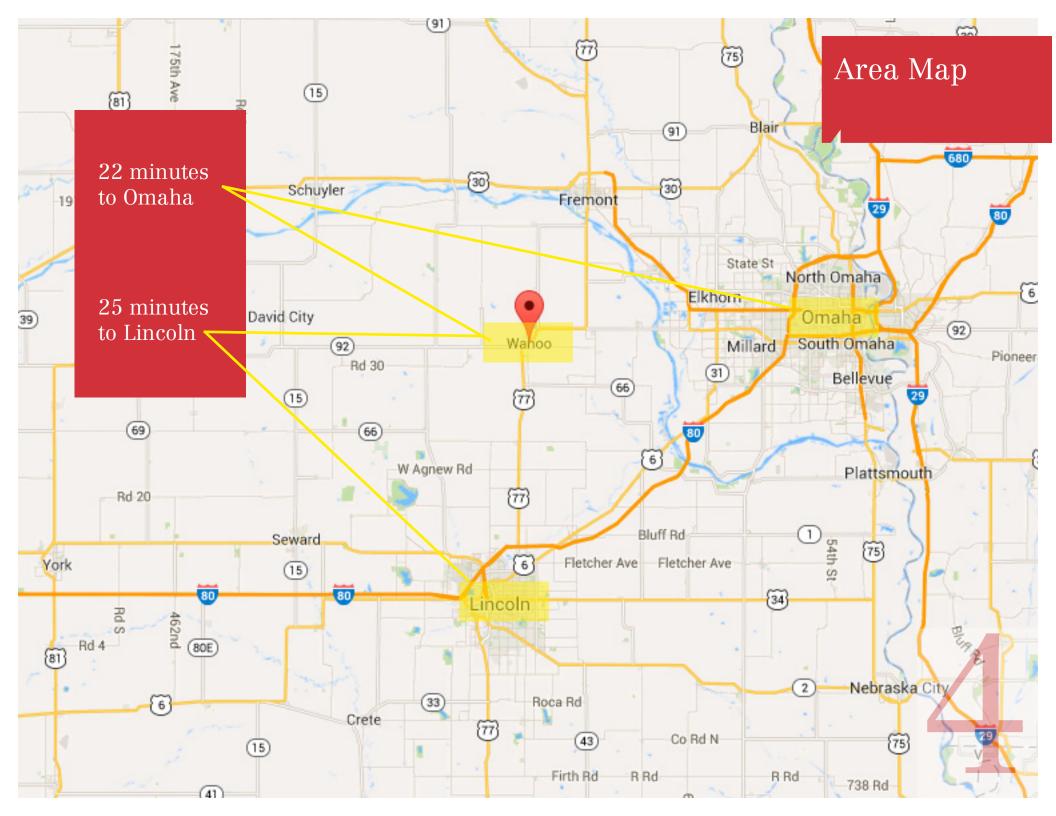


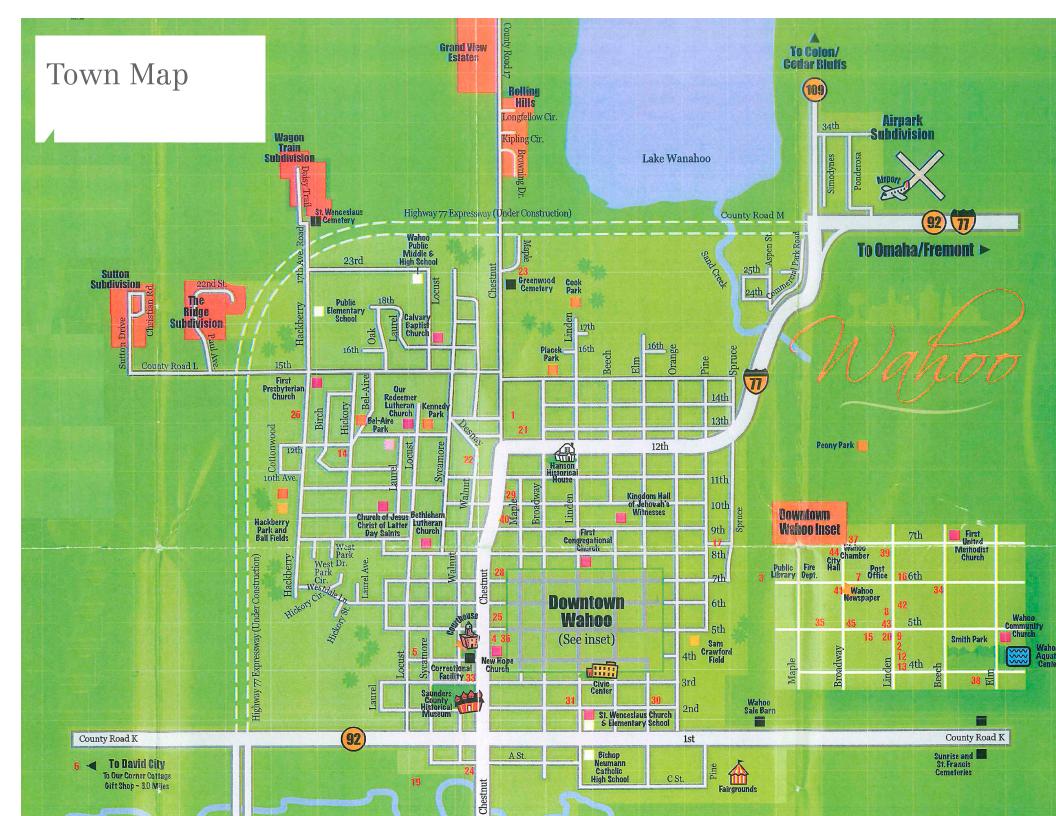
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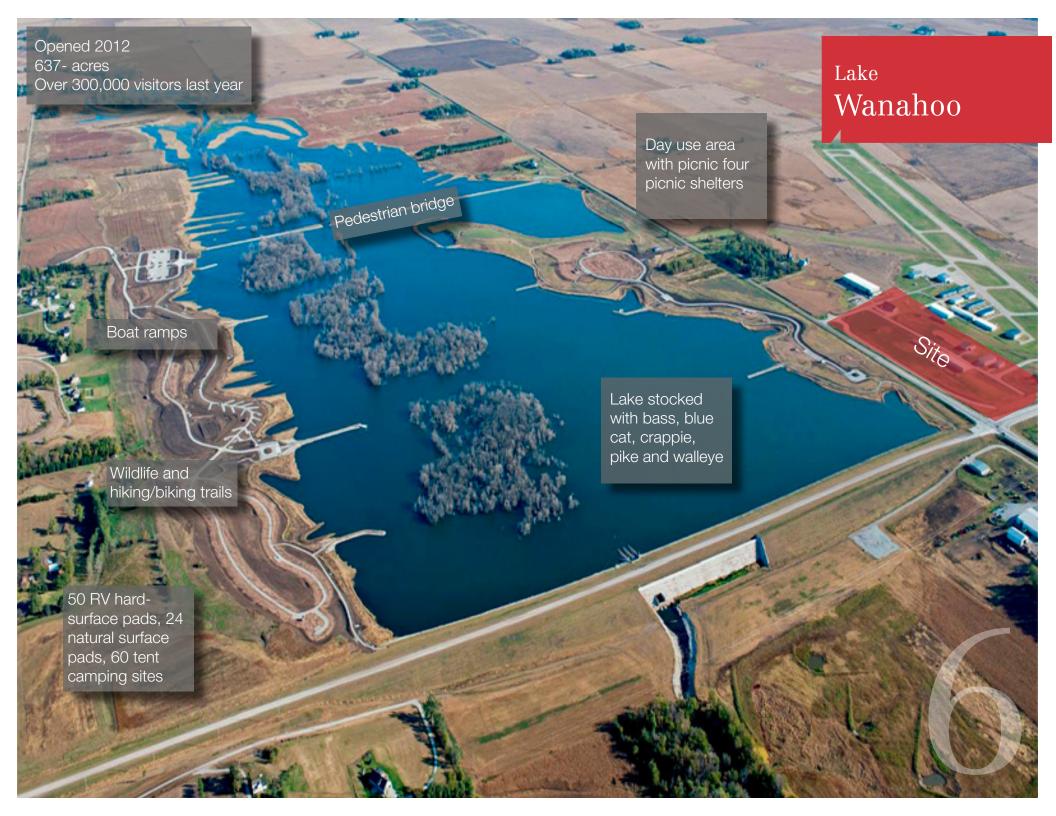
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Wahoo goes world-class with new Omaha Steel foundry

Omaha Steel Casting Co.

By Steve Jordan

10/11/2013

WAHOO, Neb. — Wahoo's new \$17 million steel plant is poised to compete with the world, its owner said Thursday as the company celebrated the opening of the foundry.

"Everything we've done with the plant is lean process," said Phil Teggart, owner of Omaha Steel Castings Co. "We can outperform everyone."

The biggest savings, he said in an interview before hosting a lunch and public tours by hundreds of visitors, will be time.

From start to finish, the plant on the eastern edge of Wahoo can turn out finished steel castings in four weeks. That's one-half to one-third the time of most competitors, and saving time means added profits, Teggart said.

That's proof, he said, that American industry can hold its own in world markets despite the cheap labor available in some countries. "If U.S. manufacturers could get their heads out of the sand, they could see that," he said.

The plant is shifting 30 miles to the west from its long-time site at 48th and Farnam Streets in Omaha. So far, 50 workers report to the new location, with the 125 others continuing production in Omaha. Within the next several weeks, Teggart said, everyone will report to the new 130,000-square-foot plant.

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman praised the company's decision to build a plant that will add jobs and boost productivity.

"This is why we have the third-lowest unemployment rate in the nation," said the governor, who grew up in Wahoo and was joined by his mother, Irene, at the ceremony.

Among those touring the plant was Michael Gonser of Omaha, who ate breakfast at the Wigwam Cafe before heading to the open house. His mother grew up in Wahoo as part of the Virgl clan that emigrated from Moravia, a region of Czechoslovakia.

"This is a huge day for Wahoo," Gonser said. "It certainly is going to change the town. It's a positive."

One change: Every weekday, hundreds of Wahoo's 4,500 residents commute to work in Omaha, Lincoln and Fremont. Now there are new commuters headed to Wahoo from Omaha.

One of them will be Robert Graves, a finisher at Omaha Steel who got his first look at the new plant during Thursday's tour. He plans to commute to Wahoo, a 45-minute drive from his north Omaha home, as soon as his work migrates west.

"This is really nice," Graves said, looking at the steel-sided building as he waited outside for the open house. "I'm committed. I love my job, and I'm here to stay."

He and dozens of other Omaha Steel workers, making their first visit to the plant, wore new black company T-shirts with the motto "A solid history. A bright future. Wahoo, NE" on the back. A crane held a huge American flag aloft outside the plant, and a bulldozer sat in the gravel parking lot. Omaha Steel made parts for both.

Teggart said he wants as many of the Omaha employees as possible to follow the 107-year-old company to Wahoo, although some live an hour or more away in Council Bluffs.

His goal is to double production and increase employment to at least 250 as the economy recovers and orders increase from customers such as heavy equipment makers Caterpillar, Gardner Denver and Link-Belt and pet food manufacturer Extru-Tech Inc.

He expects workers to be available to fill new job openings or replace workers who don't make the move. At a job fair held in February, 120 qualified applicants showed up.

For Wahoo, the prospect of a 200-employee industrial plant is the equivalent of an 18,000-employee plant coming to Omaha. Teggart said one economist estimated the plant and its payroll would have a \$32 million-a-year

Continued...

economic impact on the community.

The cost of the plant, originally estimated at \$12 million, grew as planning and construction went ahead, Teggart said. He had hoped to find more used equipment but ended up buying nearly all new. Stricter environmental rules required huge air filters known as bag houses, and there were some other cost overruns.

The plant occupies half of the 20-acre site. It was in a flood plain, requiring 3 feet of fill before construction could start. The 8,800 truckloads of dirt came from Lake Wanahoo, a recreation and flood control lake just north of town. The plant also needed extra water mains for fire suppression.

But all the construction hurdles are behind now, and Teggart was emotional at the start of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, thanking the staff and their family members and others who helped with the project.

The new plant is much more automated than the old one, he said, with less manhandling of the heavy casting molds and faster processes. Of the sand and other material used in casting, more than 95 percent is reused. Scrap steel, which is stored outside in Omaha, will be piled inside the plant at Wahoo.

There's a separate building to store parts patterns, which are made almost entirely of

wood and too valuable to have vulnerable to a fire.

The plant and its electric furnaces will add about 5 megawatts of electrical load to the Wahoo area, said Nebraska Public Power District spokesman Mark Becker, diversifying the town's portfolio of energy users. That's enough to power 1,500 homes. Supplier and vendors may add facilities near the steel foundry, he said.

Doug Watts, executive director of the Wahoo Chamber of Commerce, said some small communities end up with manufacturing facilities that overwhelm the town's resources, but Omaha Steel is "just right."

Wahoo is the seat of Saunders County, and Omaha Steel soon will be its largest employer, passing the Saunders Medical Center.

Wahoo Mayor Janet A. Jonas said Teggart has become a strong Wahoo booster. He lives in Papillion but is considering a move closer to the plant.

Jerry Divis from Home Real Estate in Wahoo said he has heard of some rental requests but so far no housing sales in town related to the new plant, and that's fine with him.

"They're just getting started. I like slow growth," he said. "Two to five houses a year

coming out of there would be a perfect situation for Wahoo. We wouldn't want 200 people looking for houses tomorrow because we don't have them.

"I think the community and the plant will grow great with each other." •

Article taken from Omaha.com





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	1 mile	3 miles	5 miles
Population			
2000 Population	76	4,107	5,035
2010 Population	100	4,463	5,519
2013 Population	102	4,509	5,578
2018 Population	105	4,592	5,683
2000-2010 Annual Rate	2.77%	0.83%	0.92%
2010-2013 Annual Rate	0.50%	0.32%	0.33%
2013-2018 Annual Rate	0.57%	0.36%	0.37%
2013 Male Population	49.0%	49.3%	49.5%
2013 Female Population	51.0%	50.7%	50.5%
2013 Median Age	37.5	39.2	39.4

In the identified area, the current year population is 5,578. In 2010, the Census count in the area was 5,519. The rate of change since 2010 was 0.33% annually. The five-year projection for the population in the area is 5,683 representing a change of 0.37% annually from 2013 to 2018. Currently, the population is 49.5% male and 50.5% female.

Median Age

The median age in this area is 39.4, compared to U.S. median age of 37.3.

Race and Ethnicity			
2013 White Alone	95.0%	94.1%	94.4%
2013 Black Alone	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%
2013 American Indian/Alaska Native Alone	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%
2013 Asian Alone	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%
2013 Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2013 Other Race	2.0%	1.5%	1.4%
2013 Two or More Races	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%
2013 Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%

Persons of Hispanic origin represent 3.5% of the population in the identified area compared to 17.4% of the U.S. population. Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. The Diversity Index, which measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups, is 17.0 in the identified area, compared to 62.1 for the U.S. as a whole.

Households			
2000 Households	29	1,648	1,952
2010 Households	38	1,796	2,144
2013 Total Households	39	1,820	2,172
2018 Total Households	40	1,861	2,223
2000-2010 Annual Rate	2.73%	0.86%	0.94%
2010-2013 Annual Rate	0.61%	0.40%	0.40%
2013-2018 Annual Rate	0.64%	0.46%	0.46%
2013 Average Household Size	2.49	2.36	2.45

The household count in this area has changed from 2,144 in 2010 to 2,172 in the current year, a change of 0.40% annually. The five-year projection of households is 2,223, a change of 0.46% annually from the current year total. Average household size is currently 2.45, compared to 2.46 in the year 2010. The number of families in the current year is 1,418 in the specified area.

	1 mile	3 miles	5 miles
Median Household Income			
2013 Median Household Income	\$61,470	\$50,986	\$52,584
2018 Median Household Income	\$81,100	\$67,139	\$70,460
2013-2018 Annual Rate	5.70%	5.66%	6.03%
Average Household Income			
2013 Average Household Income	\$72,948	\$67,377	\$68,953
2018 Average Household Income	\$86,628	\$85,557	\$87,186
2013-2018 Annual Rate	3.50%	4.89%	4.80%
Per Capita Income			
2013 Per Capita Income	\$26,917	\$27,320	\$27,570
2018 Per Capita Income	\$31,615	\$34,587	\$34,738
2013-2018 Annual Rate	3.27%	4.83%	4.73%
Households by Income			

Current median household income is \$52,584 in the area, compared to \$51,314 for all U.S. households. Median household income is projected to be \$70,460 in five years, compared to \$59,580 for all U.S. households

Current average household income is \$68,953 in this area, compared to \$71,842 for all U.S households. Average household income is projected to be \$87,186 in five years, compared to \$83,667 for all U.S. households

Current per capita income is \$27,570 in the area, compared to the U.S. per capita income of \$27,567. The per capita income is projected to be \$34,738 in five years, compared to \$32,073 for all U.S. households

Housing			
2000 Total Housing Units	32	1,734	2,052
2000 Owner Occupied Housing Units	23	1,159	1,401
2000 Owner Occupied Housing Units	6	489	550
2000 Vacant Housing Units	3	86	101
2010 Total Housing Units	42	1,955	2,329
2010 Owner Occupied Housing Units	28	1,233	1,510
2010 Renter Occupied Housing Units	10	563	634
2010 Vacant Housing Units	4	159	185
2013 Total Housing Units	42	1,972	2,349
2013 Owner Occupied Housing Units	28	1,232	1,510
2013 Renter Occupied Housing Units	11	587	662
2013 Vacant Housing Units	3	152	177
2018 Total Housing Units	43	2,007	2,390
2018 Owner Occupied Housing Units	30	1,280	1,568
2018 Renter Occupied Housing Units	10	581	654
2018 Vacant Housing Units	3	146	167

Currently, 64.3% of the 2,349 housing units in the area are owner occupied; 28.2%, renter occupied; and 7.5% are vacant. Currently, in the U.S., 56.4% of the housing units in the area are owner occupied; 32.3% are renter occupied; and 11.3% are vacant. In 2010, there were 2,329 housing units in the area - 64.8% owner occupied, 27.2% renter occupied, and 7.9% vacant. The annual rate of change in housing units since 2010 is 0.38%. Median home value in the area is \$125,383, compared to a median home value of \$177,257 for the U.S. In five years, median value is projected to change by 11.06% annually to \$211,830.

Contact



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Mike specializes in retail in large and small markets. He has more than 35 years of retail experience. Mike ran and supervised stores in South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska. For the past seven years, Mike was the head of Pamida's Real Estate and Property Division. In this capacity, he was responsible for 250 leases in 17 Midwestern states, and worked with 120 different landlords to negotiate leases on more than six million square feet of retail space. Mike adds great value by his ability to evaluate smaller markets and understand the community.

During this period, the company developed 25 new locations in the Midwest. Mike worked with local agencies to utilize TIF where available, and other local economic development funds. He also oversaw the site selection, development and construction of these facilities.





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