

DAWSON COUNTY  
NEBRASKA  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2015-2016



# DAWSON COUNTY: WE'RE CERTIFIABLE



It seems though every year ends with a predominant theme to sum up our activities. This last year was no different. I could sum up our year by saying “we are certifiable.” Yes, we were re-certified as Economic Development Ready Communities. This process which Lexington, Cozad, Gothenburg, and Elwood have all endured involves evaluating the community’s target markets, sites and buildings, incentives, websites, marketing materials, labor force, and business growth and making sure they are up to par. The application is submitted to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development which elicits the assistance of advisors to make sure the communities understand and are ready for targeted growth. It can be a grueling task, but one that allows us to show off our efforts and assets when it comes to economic development.

In addition to having our communities certified, I also gained a certification. I was extremely fortunate to have been selected to participate in the Sherwood Foundation’s Community Catalyst program. The Sherwood Foundation provided resources for me to seek professional and personal development programs with the caveat that I would apply those programs to helping Nebraska communities thrive. I was able to complete the Cy Wakeman, Inc. Reality Based Leadership Certification Program. I completed the training and coursework to help organizations ditch the drama, be successful despite their circumstances, and turn excuses into results! I have now presented to a few boards and committees and am looking forward to presenting these principles to others to make sure are getting the results they desire. Call our office if you would like a Board you sit on to go through the reality based leadership board training.

Suzanne Brodine the Community Development Coordinator has been busy with housing activities. DAD has purchased two homes in Cozad that will be brought up to code then resold with down payment assistance to qualified buyers. The DAD office is currently searching for additional homes in Gothenburg and Lexington to purchase and rehabilitate. Suzanne is currently processing applications for owner-occupied housing rehabilitation for households in Cozad and Lexington. Contact our office for more information on the housing programs.

We were fortunate to add Abby Brecks to our DAD staff. Abby is the Marketing Coordinator and is currently working on the Dawson County Leadership Program for the 2016-2017 year. It is shaping up to be an excellent class and Abby has done a phenomenal job filling the shoes of Deb Jensen who retired in May of 2015. Abby has also working with Transformation Marketing on creating a new website and some promotional videos for Dawson County. Check out the Dawson County video on YouTube.

Downtown Revitalization is just wrapping up in Gothenburg and Cozad. Many transformations have taken place on our main streets due to this grant program through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Lexington is getting started with a grant called the Community Investment Stabilization program which will allow street, water, and storm water improvements in the downtown.

There are several exciting projects going on around the county. It is fun to live in an area that is seeing new businesses open and people move to our communities. We look forward to another year of working with the businesses, residents, and community leaders in Dawson County!

Sincerely,  
Jen McKeone, Executive Director



**Jennifer McKeone,  
Executive Director**

[jen@dawsonareadevelopment.com](mailto:jen@dawsonareadevelopment.com)

308-217-0004 office

308-529-0810 cell



**Suzanne Brodine,  
Community  
Development  
Coordinator**

[Sue@dawsonareadevelopment.com](mailto:Sue@dawsonareadevelopment.com)

308-217-0005 office

308-224-1406 cell



**Abby Brecks,  
Marketing Coordinator**

[Abby@dawsonareadevelopment.com](mailto:Abby@dawsonareadevelopment.com)

308-217-0006 office

308-325-4169 cell



H3 Occupations are high wage, high skill and high demand occupations. The Nebraska Department of Labor classifies occupations as H3 by using projected data on the number of annual openings, net change in employment, and growth rate to determine occupational demand.

## Truck Drivers

Annual Median Wage: \$38,235

28 Average Annual Openings

Needed: Postsecondary non degree award and short-term on the job training.

## School Teachers

Annual Median Wage: \$52,051

44 Average Annual Openings

Needed: Bachelor's Degree, Internship/Residency

## Farm Equipment Mechanics & Service Technicians

Annual Median Wage: \$30,546

15 Average Annual Openings

Needed: High School Diploma or equivalent on the job training

## Registered Nurses

Annual Median Wage: \$54,345

27 Average Annual Openings

Needed: Associate Degree

## Licensed Practical Nurses

Annual Median Wage: \$36,705

18 Average Annual Openings

Needed: Postsecondary non-degree award

## General & Operations Managers

Annual Median Wage: \$84,462

14 Average Annual Openings

Needed: Bachelor's degree or equivalent on the job training

# Dawson County Businesses

SEVERAL DAWSON COUNTY BUSINESSES CELEBRATED MILESTONES THIS YEAR



Nebraska Plastics

Cozad, NE

Family owned manufacturers of formulated 100%, PVC fence products and irrigation tubing.



KRVN

Lexington, NE

Second largest radio station in Nebraska featuring agricultural news programming.



Orthman Manufacturing

Lexington, NE

Orthman is a family -owned global manufacturer of agricultural equipment.



Baldwin Filters

Gothenburg, NE

CLARCOR is a global provider of filtration products and services

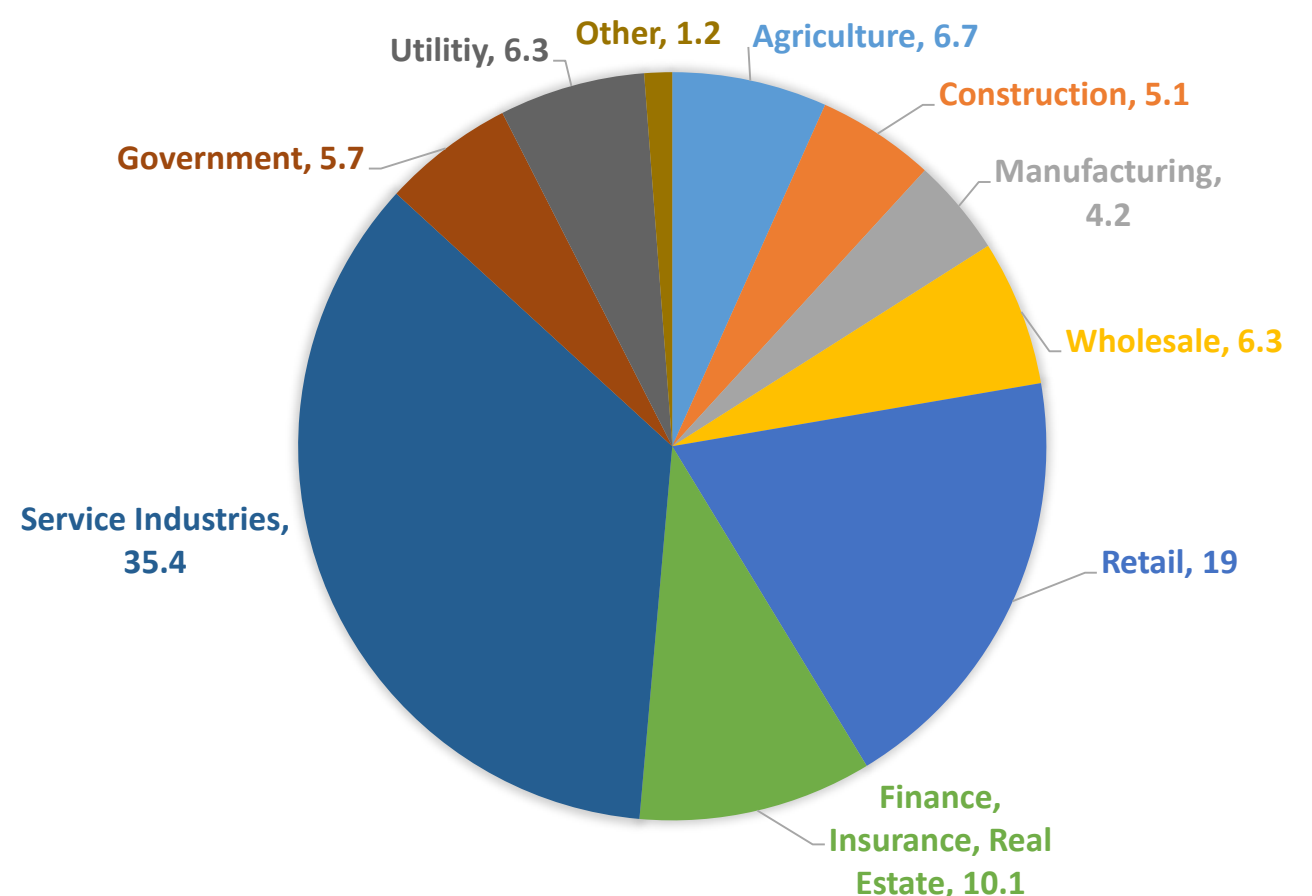
## Dawson County Business Statistics

1,277 Total Businesses

14,181 Total Employees

\$311,020,000 Annual Payroll

### BUSINESS SUMMARY



Source: US Census 2014 American Fact Finder

# Housing Study Findings

Current Demand for Next 5 Years	Number of Units	Estimated Required Target Budget
Homes to be Constructed for Purchase for Primary Residences	248	\$42,794,800
Homes to be Constructed as Rentals	170	\$29,335,200
# of Homes in Need of Rehabilitation	386	\$14,010,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>\$86,140,080</b>

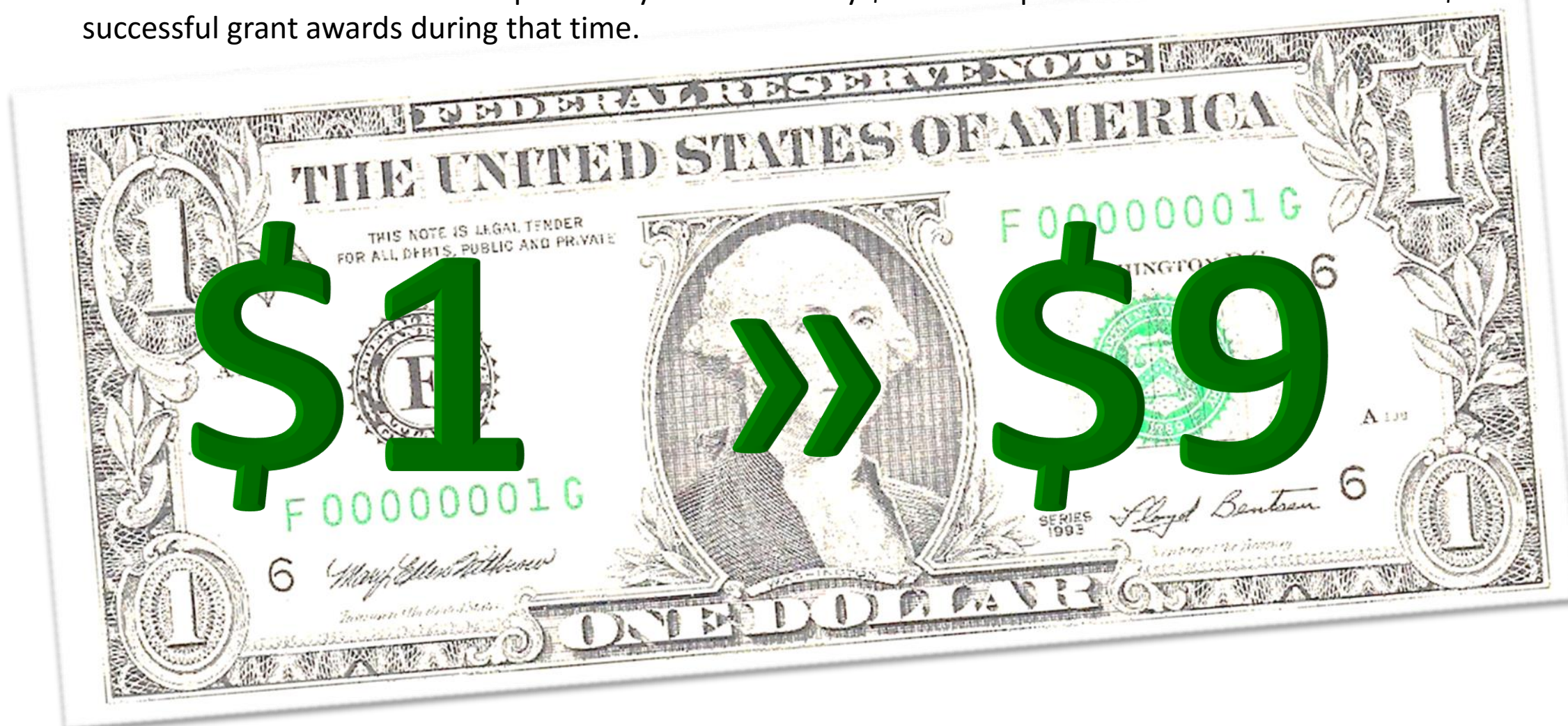
Future population and household growth in the Dawson County Area will be driven by new and expanded housing and economic development activities. The most critical housing issues in the Area include promoting the development of housing for the local workforce and young professionals, affordable to all salary income levels and at a pace that will equal the demand of a rapidly growing region. Other priority housing needs include providing housing opportunities for the elderly, first time homebuyers, middle-income persons and families and persons with special needs.

Complete Dawson County Housing Study at:  
[Dawsonareadevelopment.com/downloads/](http://Dawsonareadevelopment.com/downloads/)



## DAD Grant Activities

Dawson Area Development has assisted with over \$8 Million of grants to Dawson County and our member communities over the past five years. For every \$1 of dues paid to DAD we have returned \$9 in successful grant awards during that time.



# Recruitment of Targeted Cluster Industries

An industry cluster is a group of businesses linked by core products or services. These businesses may have common supply chains, labor needs, technologies and markets. Dawson County communities identifies four key "Industry Clusters" for targeting. The clusters are based on our key strengths, available sites, existing initiatives, industry strength, and future growth potential.



## Transportation/ Logistics

Central location, High level of truck drivers, and services related to trucking industry



## Process Manufacturing

Corn, beef, alfalfa, and soy are available in mass quantities for by-products.



## Advanced Manufacturing

Skilled Labor, Available Sites, training resources, and experience with green field start-ups.



## Ag Support

Exposure to high tech producers, policy makers and sector technology.

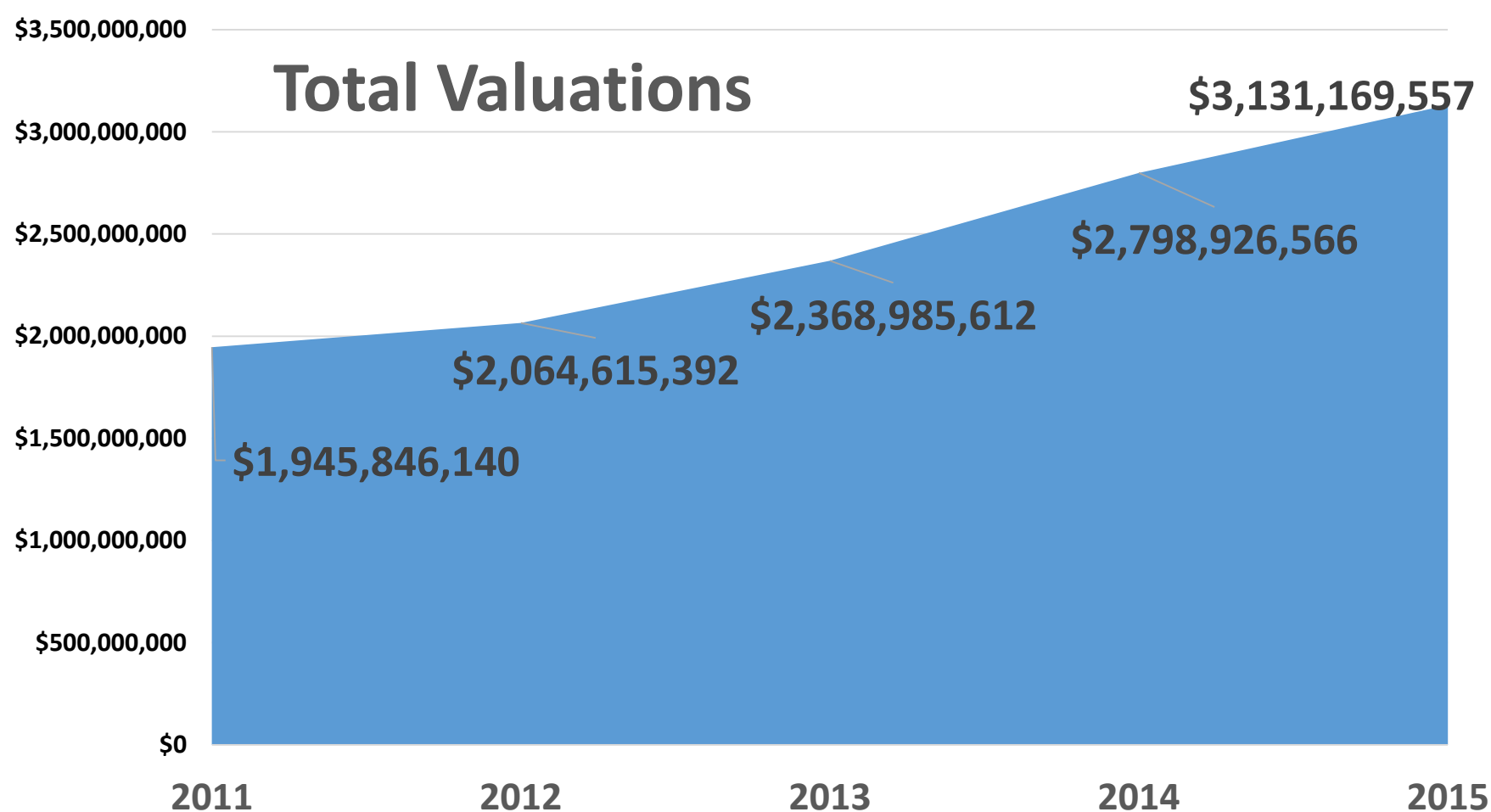
*Dawson Area Development had the opportunity this year to present to a group of site selectors and then be evaluated by Ady Advantage as to our capacity and readiness to recruit businesses to Dawson County. The chart below shows how we compare to other organizations from Missouri, Ohio, Colorado, and Nebraska.*

**COMPARISON OF YOUR ORGANIZATION TO OTHER EDOS**

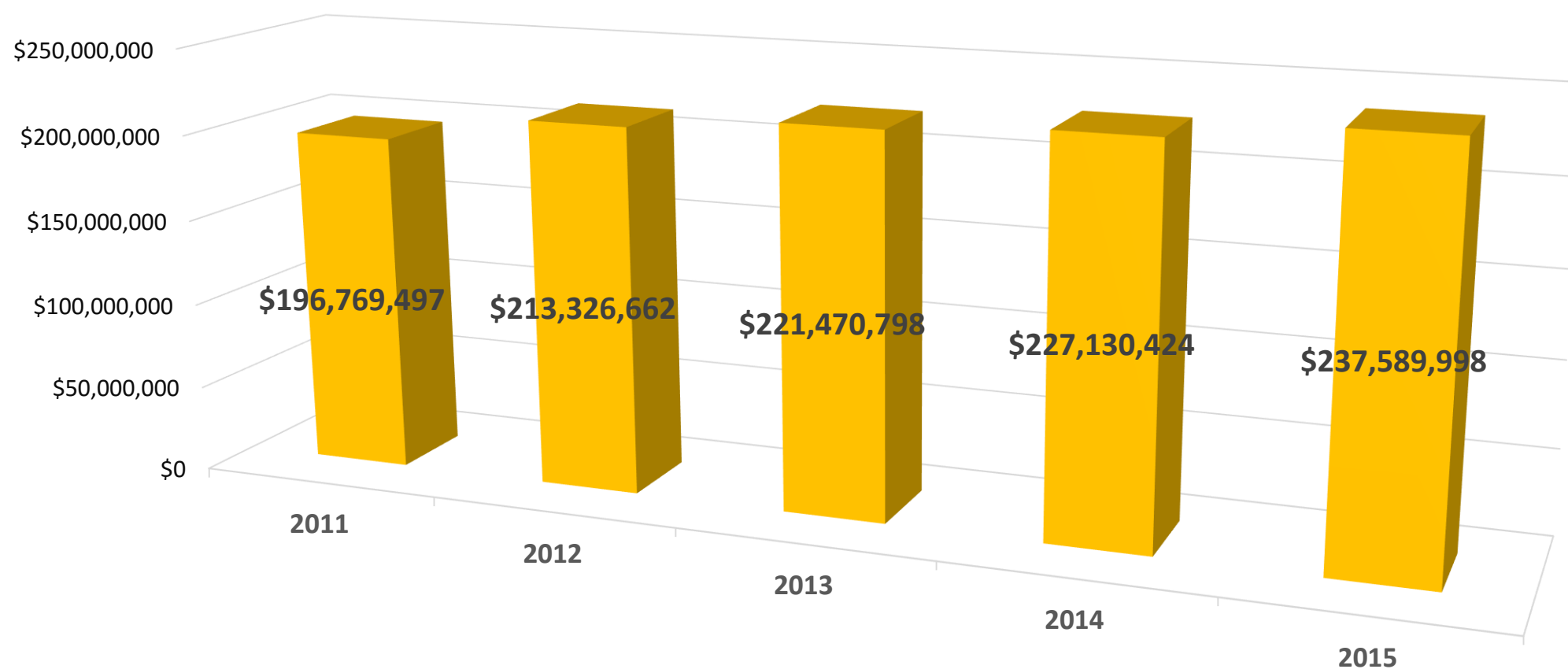


# Economic Indicators

Total valuations have seen a 61% increase in the past five years. Approximately 15% of those increases are in non-agriculture related valuations.

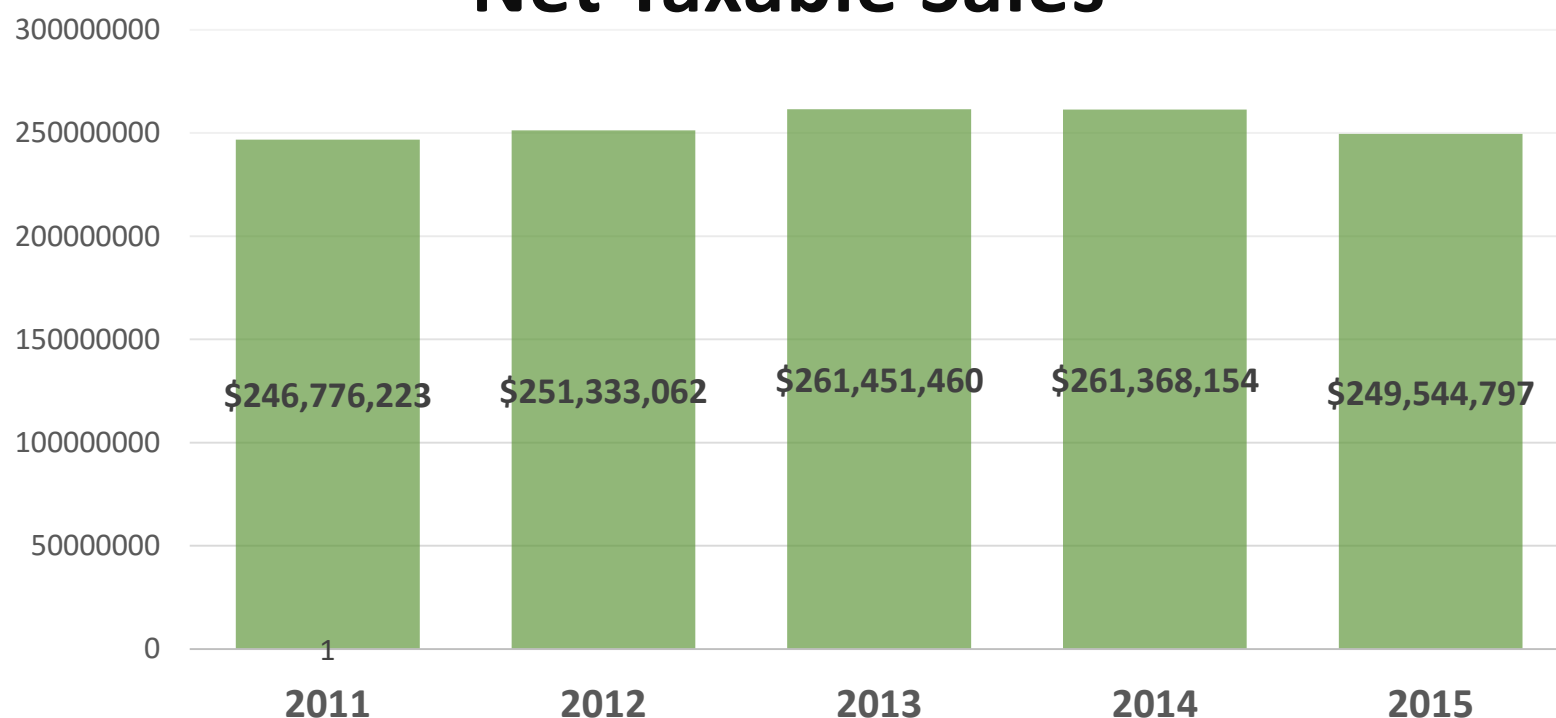


## Commercial and Industrial Valuation Growth



Dawson County has had a 21% increase in commercial and industrial valuation growth over the past five years.

## Net Taxable Sales



Taxable Sales over the past five years continue to rise. 2013 and 2014 were higher than predicted due to large construction projects occurring in the county.

# DAWSON AREA DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-2016

Dawson Area Development

1501 Plum Creek Parkway, #2B

Lexington, NE 68850

dawsonareadevelopment.com

308-217-0008 office

Joyce Hudson, Chairman  
Robyn Geiser, Vice Chairman  
Dean Kugler, Secretary/Treasurer  
Joe Pepplichtsch, Past Chair  
Dave Stenberg  
Karen Widick  
Susan Kloeping  
Lance Kizer  
Mike Bacon  
John Fagot

Gothenburg  
Cozad  
Gothenburg  
Lexington  
Lexington  
Farnam  
Cozad  
Overton  
Gothenburg  
Lexington

## MISSION STATEMENT

To promote a spirit of unity and cooperation in order to plan, organize, and effect the future development of the Dawson County area. The Council shall endeavor to diversify the local economy, foster a favorable business climate, help existing businesses grow and expand, retain existing jobs, create new jobs and career opportunities, and develop the area's resources to their full potential.

## Member Communities





# Additional Investment into Dawson County

## Lodging Tax-67% Growth Rate Over Five Years

The tax dollars are used to promote Dawson County and to improve local tourism attractions.

