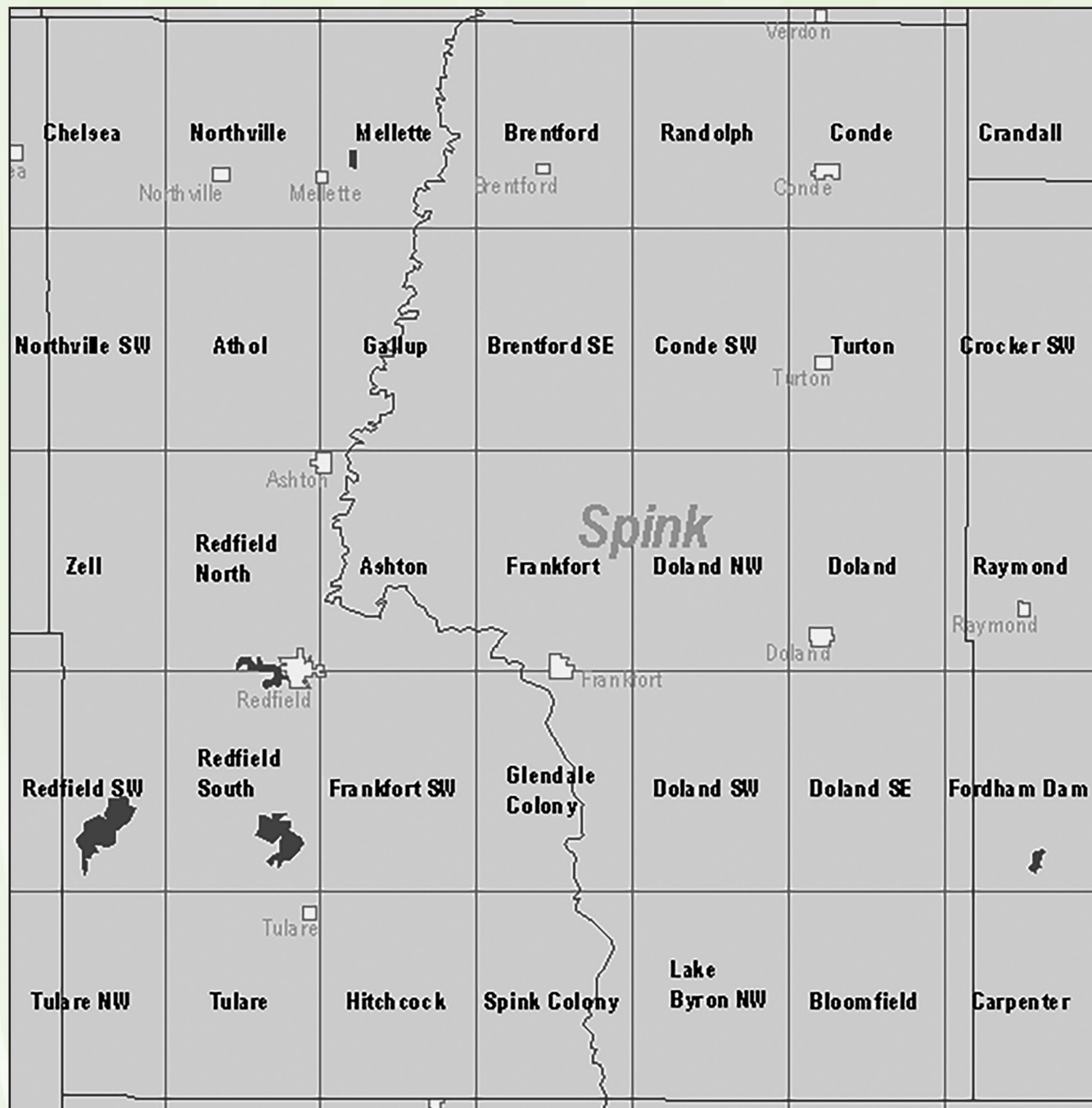


# Progress Tab



**A special publication of:**



# Progress Tab

## *Daycare Project Finds a Home*

The old Wells Fargo building will be the site of the Spink County Daycare. The purchase was made possible by an implementation grant. The building will need renovations, as well as many other things once it gets established.

There is demand for childcare. Gianna Schieffer, director of Grow Spink, one of the partners in the project, stated that she already has had people calling and messaging her to ask if they could enroll their children. The project is not to that stage yet. At this time, it's uncertain whether the center will be open before 2025.

The Spink County Daycare will be a 501(c)(3) charity. It will serve all of Spink County. Eventually, a director and staff will be found. Until then, Grow Spink its partners, and the daycare board will head things. The Spink County Daycare board consists of 5 community members who showed interest in the project.

The building, build in 1982, is in good condition, but will need some work. Right now, renovation needs are being considered. Bids are being taken from contractors. Building plans are not completely set yet, but some things

will definitely be included. Areas for infants; toddlers; preschoolers; afterschool care; storage; records; an office; a kitchen; an indoor play area; bathrooms and a diaper changing area; and laundry are essential.

The 1st floor of the building is where the daycare and aftercare programs will be held. It has 7,315 square feet. The rooms for the kids may vary in size a little. Schieffer explained that the Department of Social Services requires a certain number of square feet per child. The daycare area will have space for 53 kids total. Fundraising and continued support from the community are what will see this project through to fruition. "Now's the time to show support," Schieffer said. An account for Spink County Daycare has been set up at Heartland State Bank. A fundraising opportunity called "2024 The Kids Campaign" will be starting soon. This will be an ongoing effort. Many smaller expenses needed for the daycare will be recurrent. Schieffer has been working to efficiently spend the grant money. The money must be spent by September, and any not used must be returned. These grants cannot go toward building and renovation costs. However, Schieffer said, needed appliances have been covered. She has purchased other items, which will sit in storage until the center is ready. Eventually, community members may be able to donate used items that are in good condition.

She is optimistic about community support for the project. "This is the prime example of collaboration," Schieffer said. She added "If we can do this, what can't we do?" A lot of planning and other work has already gone into the project, and more is to come. It keeps Schieffer busy. She said "It will be worth it if it helps anyone."

There has been a childcare crisis throughout the U.S. This has even reached into rural areas such as Spink County. Schieffer said that it had been an issue for a while – but parents found solutions. These could include things like staying home from work, getting a relative to watch the children, or moving. But, per Schieffer, in the last couple of years, the lack of childcare spots has reached crisis level. One reason for this was providers retiring but not being replaced.

There's a gap between how much parents pay for childcare and how much providers actually receive after covering all of their necessary expenses. This is one reason that it's more difficult these days to get people to go into childcare. The Spink County Daycare board offered some statistics. First, families spend an average of 27% of their household income on childcare expenses. Also, in South Dakota, childcare professionals are among the lowest paid in the U.S. They often earn close to minimum wage, with limited or no benefits.

Schieffer explained that childcare is part of economic development. She stated that she knew of people who elected to not move to town because of the lack of childcare spots. Per the fact sheet provided by the daycare board, employers in SD lose about \$150 million

a year due to childcare challenges faced by their employees.

Grow Spink is often involved in many projects at once. The organization's role is to help get things up and running. Then someone else takes over. The projects are meant to be for the good of the community.

Small towns are more prone to dying. Schieffer said that Redfield even is not immune to this. The key to keeping a town going, she said, is community engagement. "A little group of doers" who care about their home can get things done. She said that towns also need to not be afraid of change, or of new people. Resources for shopping, playing, and working locally are necessary. "You need to be able to get everything you need." Schieffer said. That includes access to childcare.



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PHOTO BY CHRIS FISCHER

*The old Wells Fargo building will be the site of the new Spink County Daycare center. The project is ongoing.*



# Progress Tab Inn Refresh



The long-standing Wilson Motor Inn has new owners, who have renamed it Amaris Inn. The new owners, the Vialls, are hoping to re-open the business on Aug. 1st. They have some experience in this field. "We've done hospitality before, we've done Air bnb. So this isn't our first rodeo." Laura Viall said. The new moved to town just a few months ago from Arizona. They were drawn to the "Quieter pace of life." She said "Everybody has been begging us to get it

re-opened." The focus for now is on basic updates. "We're just trying to do a refresh and bring it kind of into the 21st century." Eventually, they may expand. This could include RV hookups and campsites. The business will be a family affair. She expressed understanding that the customers are made of mostly of hunters, fishers, and construction workers who come through town. Viall hopes to be around for a long time. "We care about our community. We want to grow here." she said.

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## *Car Dealership Sees Change in Ownership*

In its latest iteration, the local car dealership and repair shop will be known as Redfield Ford. It will be part of the Doeden Investment group, which owns Aberdeen Chrysler Center, among many other businesses.

Tobey Doeden, president of the group, was a long-time employee of the Chrysler Center before he took it over. More recently, the Doeden group was formed. "Primarily, we look for value-added businesses that are either struggling or the owners are ready to retire, and that we feel we can grow and scale from what they are doing," he said. The group has also started businesses. Categories include car dealerships, rental properties, a coffee shop, restaurants, gas stations, and a lumberyard.

Doeden's group had been aware of the Redfield dealership for years. Both of the previous 2 owners had separately reached out to the group to see if they were interested in purchasing the business. It wasn't until earlier this year that negotiations were successful. A few snags came up, such as computer troubles. Also, Doeden said, "Getting the approval process through a major car manufacturer is tedious. So we just got our preliminary approval here in the last week or two. We're just dotting some i's and crossing some t's here." The closing date had been delayed, but is impending.

Though he spent much of his adult life around cars, Doeden said "I am definitely not a car guy. I couldn't pick out a dipstick from an air filter." However, other parts of the industry appealed to him. "I love selling cars. I love talking to folks. I like making people happy. I like making sure people have safe vehicles to drive and all that kind of stuff. That part excites me, but I don't care what the new model is or the outgoing model is or the collector's. I don't care about any of that. To me, the cars are just a commodity, just like anything else. What I enjoy doing is connecting the consumer with a commodity in a way that they want and at a price they can afford."

The group will make assessments once they fully take over the Ford dealership in Redfield. Doeden said that no big changes are planned for the immediate future. The business will follow Doeden's philosophy of low margins, high volume. He said "It's very simple. Put a fair price on a car, recondition it properly, stand behind your product and treat people fair and they'll keep coming back." Aside from some central services such as payroll, insurance, advertising and marketing, businesses are allowed to maintain their uniqueness.

Doeden was born and raised in Groton. He was somewhat familiar with Redfield. He said "When we analyzed the city of Redfield - I was born and raised in Groton, which

is very close. I competed against Redfield. They were the same class as we were in sports and stuff. I'd been to Redfield a thousand times, but I had never been there to experience the town. I'd been there on a bus or driving to see my kids, get to the school, go to a game, come home."

Doeden and his team were impressed. "When we actually spent a day in Redfield here back early this spring, I was blown away by the amenities that the city has." He added "Redfield is a really, really nice town. It's a self-sustainable town. It's far enough away from everything that it has to have all the amenities."

But Doeden saw some urgency. "If we don't get involved here in the car business, Redfield is going to lose Redfield Ford. They've already lost their other two new car dealers in the last 20 years. How can a town like Redfield not have a new car franchise dealer? Forget about the sales side of it. The service and parts side is more important than the sales. Anybody can sell a car. It's not that difficult; but cars, like anything else, they break down. People need reliable transportation."

Doeden had a message for residents: "We very carefully put a lot of consideration in before we invest into a community, because it's a big commitment. We're

*Continued on next page.*



# Progress Tab

## Car Dealership Sees: Continued

invested in Aberdeen, of course. We're invested in Ipswich, we're invested in Groton, we're invested in Webster. Every time we make a decision to go into a new city, we know that comes with commitments of giving back to the community. We've already been doing outreach with them directly here in the next week or two. We are going to start meeting all the community leaders and the folks at the school and city council and anybody else that wants to get to know us better. And so when we come into

a community, yes, we're going to own the business, we're going to operate it and we're going to do a great job there. But we feel like Redfield needs to become part of our group as much as we're becoming part of their town." As part of this, Doeden said, the group will have customer appreciation events. They also plan to support local activities. Doeden and his wife have been married for 28 years. They have 4 grown children, all of whom are involved in the business. They also love dogs. They endowed the Aberdeen Humane Society with funds for their new shelter. He said "Our last

name is on the front of the building, and I was happy to do so because we live and die dogs and pets and rescues and all that kind of stuff. My wife and I have 5 dogs and cats, and we're in the process of moving to a new place where we're going to be able to foster dogs and even do more for them." He added "We love our dogs. All of my kids have dogs. When we get together, there's like 15, 16 dogs. I can't even keep track of 'em all, but it's pretty crazy. Our dogs and our cats take precedent over us, basically. So that's how we feel about our pups."

The dealership will be found online at RedfieldFord.com



PHOTO BY CHRIS FISCHER

Redfield Ford, formerly Harr's Redfield, will now be part of Doeden Investment Group. This group owns several businesses, including Aberdeen Chrysler Center.



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# Progress Tab

## *Business Updates*



PHOTO BY CHRIS FISCHER

*Redfield Energy now has rows of solar panels. All Energy Solar is the company that installed them.*



PHOTO BY CHRIS FISCHER

*New duplexes are being built south of Redfield Lake.*



PHOTO BY CHRIS FISCHER

*The new EMS center is complete, and has been active.*



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PHOTO BY CHRIS FISCHER

*The old movie theater building is in the process of being sold. It will likely be replaced. Many residents have fond memories of it.*

Some new business name records show up on the Secretary of State's website. These filings can signify a new business, a new owner, or simply a change in name or venue. Records added since July 2023 include: MoDak Lodge; Amaris Inn; Techie Miss Becky; Redfield

Firearms; Simply Charming; Wolff Advantage; Pheasant City Wholesale; Daddo's Baked Goods; Turtle James Inn; Gypsy Soul Boutique; Country Estates; and Starline Transport. New listings outside Redfield include: Pheasant Country Hotshot, Ashton; 360 Home

Inspections, and Computers and More; Athol; MGGQ Sunset, Conde; Bloom and Bridal, Bawek Aerotech, and Paladin Concrete, Doland; Mason Ranch, Frankfort; Daryls gun shop, Checkered Out Boutique, Northville; and All Natural Shea Butter LLC, Tulare.





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