

# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Four Panhandle businesses were honored by the Governor and Chief Medical Officer for growing the seeds for wellness. Cabela's, Fred A. Lockwood and Co PC (FALCO), Panhandle Public Health District, and Upper Niobrara White Natural Resource District all received the Governor's Excellence in Wellness Award at the Grower Level.

Governor Heineman and Dr. Joseph Acierno presented the awards at the Panhandle Safety and Wellness Conference and Awards Luncheon in Gering last Thursday.

Since the award was created six years ago, over 200 businesses throughout the state have received it-50 in 2013 alone. Governor Heineman and Dr. Acierno thanked the recipients for their leadership and relayed the importance of worksite wellness to conference attendees as a key strategy to control health care costs and maintain a vibrant economy.

Cabela's taps into wellness through wellness champions at each of their locations which has been a key success to rolling out their "Reel in Better Health Program." The participation-based incentive program provides a health screening, health risk assessment, and various wellness activities and will transition to an outcomes-based reward program focusing on actual screening results.

Brian Nepl, Cabela's Wellness Manager, said, "our annual wellness week has become tradition by providing opportunities for outfitters to celebrate wellness, learn more about personal health, and take advantage of opportunities to add activity throughout their workday. We are excited for the continued wellness opportunities and seeing momentum for years to come."

"Birthdays and company gatherings look different now at FALCO," Annie Loutzenhiser, Partner touted. "It was common to see birthday cake and heavy meals, but now employees bring in healthier desserts and salad fixings, we also decided to switch out pop in company refrigerators to offer water and diet juices. Our annual company get-together was a fun time to include active opportunities for employees to interact with their families. "

She concluded, "It is working, nutrition levels increased by almost 10% in just one year and employees are reporting increases in number of days per week they exercise."

Panhandle Public Health District has engrained their wellness culture through supportive management practices like flextime and ongoing supports like walking workstations, break time for physical activity, and healthy food at company sponsored functions. In the past year, overall body mass index (BMI) has decreased by 5% which significantly decreases risk to chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

Regular blood screenings to check cholesterol and blood pressure have increased awareness about wellness for Upper Niobrara White Natural Resource District employees. A statewide friendly competition between Nebraska natural resource districts increased intra-office camaraderie encouraging being active and eating balanced.

Worksite Wellness Coordinator, Jessica Davies noted, “We are so proud of each of these organizations for their commitment to employee health. They are certainly leaders in the region and we commend them for all of their work.”

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit [pphd.org/pwwc.html](http://pphd.org/pwwc.html), call Davies at 308-487-3600 extension 101. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is a division of Panhandle Public Health District in partnership with Scotts Bluff County Health Department. The council offers extensive membership benefits to help build evidence-based worksite wellness initiatives for local organizations.