

Ord Story Collection

Ord Nebraska – An Entrepreneurial Community



Downtown Ord, Nebraska – Misko Sports is a key story.

Background and Introduction

Years ago, e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (formerly the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship) identified Ord as a **best-in-class** community. Over the past several years our e2 story capture team has been working with Ord to get onto paper and video its evolving story. We have spent hundreds, if not thousands of hours working on this story capture project because of the power lessons to be learned from this community of 2,000 in north central rural Nebraska. The community of Ord has been amazing in its cooperation and grace as we have captured these stories together. Our friend, colleague, and mentor, Robert Stowell, has been our partner from start to finish (as if there will ever be an end to this story). Others who are featured in these stories have given of their time and been remarkably genuine in sharing their journeys. Collectively this body of work can help rural communities throughout North America find hope and insight on how to move from crisis, despair, and hopeless to ever greater success and prosperity.



While our focus in these stories is Ord, we must be fair, it is really about Valley County and the region where Ord is located. The picture (left) is from rural Valley County. Windmills are part of this landscape and for generations have been pumping pure and cold water for cattle and other livestock. This is a community that exists because of agriculture. It is now a community that has a bright future because it has not only diversified its agricultural economy but is growing an increasing non-agricultural economy. **We are honored to share this work in progress with Ord and rural America.**

Don Macke

In the Beginning...

Ord was the first community we partnered in earnest with focusing on entrepreneur led development. Ord was our first HomeTown Competitiveness collaborator with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Nebraska Community Foundation, and the Heartland Center for Leadership Development. We had been working with Ord and the Kellogg Foundation for a few years when the Foundation celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2005. As part of the Foundation’s year-long anniversary celebration of its remarkable work worldwide, it produced this [video](#). We encourage you to start your journey in exploring our collection of Ord stories here with this powerful video that was more aspirational than fact back in 2005.



The Long Drive Home:

How Bob Stowell and Allies Made Ord's Future Better Than Its Past

Nebraska journalist and writer Matthew Hansen is capturing the Ord and Valley County region story through community leaders like Bob Stowell. As with the 2005 Kellogg Foundation video, this will be a must-read¹ as you explore this remarkable 50-year story from crisis and decline to hope and prosperity.

Four Core Research Papers

Our e2 story capture team has curated four core papers that we encourage you to explore in this order:

1. **Defining Ord and its Economy**
2. **Development Chronology Ord, *Ord's Journey to Becoming an Entrepreneurial Community***
3. **Ord, Nebraska – *An Entrepreneurial Community***
4. **Ord's Comparative Performance Analysis**

We explore each of these papers in a bit more detail. They are available to download from our [resource library](#):

Defining Ord and its Economy. Too often we define community by its municipal boundaries. Most rural communities are much larger than that. This paper provides important contextual information on Ord, Valley County, its region, and economy. Understanding a community from within and for those on the outside trying to learn its lessons is foundational to understanding Ord's Story.

What is an Entrepreneurial Community?

Trust us there is no universally accepted definition of what an entrepreneurial community is, let alone who is an entrepreneur. Yet when we hear these words, they create images in our brains. For us at e2 an entrepreneurial community is a place embracing entrepreneurial behavior, growing an entrepreneurial culture, and supporting a robust and relevant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

¹ A link to the book will be posted in our website's [resource library](#) when it becomes available.

Development Chronology Ord, *Ord's Journey to Becoming an Entrepreneurial Community*. Every person, family, organization, institution, and community has a **journey story** we refer to as its Development Chronology. Once you have viewed the Kellogg Foundation video and **reviewed Defining Ord and its Economy** paper, we recommend you spend some time with this high-level overview of Ord's development journey complemented with some perspectives on the Central Great Plains and this region's development where Ord calls home.

Ord, Nebraska – *An Entrepreneurial Community*. The heart and soul of our Ord Stories thus far is our paper **Ord, Nebraska – *An Entrepreneurial Community***. This paper draws from all our story capture work and provides a more integrated picture of why we consider Ord to be a best-in-class rural entrepreneurial community. If there only one piece you have time to read, this is one.

Ord's Comparative Performance Analysis. As we were considering taking on this now rather massive project, we (i.e., e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems) had to answer the questions of whether Ord was materially different and doing better when compared to where it was in the 1990s, and how is it performing relative to peer communities in the Central Great Plains and its historical Nebraska peer community. This paper is full of data and analysis documenting that Ord is truly unique with respect to positive transformative change.

Entrepreneur Stories

Ord and its region could not really be an entrepreneurial community without business, nonprofit or social and government entrepreneurs. With kind support of our story capture subjects, we have developed the following stories of remarkable rural entrepreneurs:

- [Caleb Pollard and Scratchtown Brewing](#)
- [Gaylord Boilesen, Home Grown Serial Entrepreneur, Mentor and Community Leader](#)
- [Jeana and Tanner Hackel and Hackel Construction](#)
- [Melanie Boden and Jubilee Catering](#)
- [Ace VanDeWalle and Ord Locker](#)
- [Subconn, A Stage Two Non-Ag Growth Venture](#)
- [Sarah Brinkman and Utopia Space and Health Studio](#)
- [Nancy Glaubke](#)

We also curated two of Ord's largest economic drivers:

- [Valley County Health Care System](#)
- [Ord's Ethanol Value-Chain Cluster](#)

To be honest, there are so many powerful stories yet to be captured but we believe these provide great insight into the entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial ventures making Ord an entrepreneurial community.

Leadership Papers and Stories

From the very beginning it was clear that leadership was foundational in moving Ord from this community in crisis and decline to one of America's most successful and entrepreneurial rural communities. In partnership with our story capture team, we have curated a collection of leadership focused stories:

- [Reconciliation Leadership](#) by David Iaquinta
- The Long Drive Home: How Bob Stowell and Allies Made Ord's Future Better Than Its Past by Matthew Hansen (coming soon)
- [Ord's Leadership, The Empowering Element](#) by Milan Wall
- [Who Gets the Credit](#) by David Iaquinta

Leadership themes can be found throughout all our stories. Particular entrepreneur stories with strong leadership themes include:

- [Gaylord Boilesen](#), Home Grown Serial Entrepreneur, Mentor and Community Leader
- [Jeana and Tanner Hackel and Hackel Construction](#)
- [Melanie Boden and Jubilee Catering](#)
- [Nancy Glaubke](#)

The Ord Video Collection

The old saying... "*...a picture is worth a thousand words...*" comes to mind as an important component of the Ord Story Collection. We have curated the following videos:

- [The 2005 W.K. Kellogg Foundation Ord Video](#)
- [Ord Promotional Video](#) HomeTown Competitiveness in Valley County, Nebraska
- [Hometown Competitiveness \(HTC\) Video](#) Nebraska Community Foundation HomeTown Competitiveness in Holt County and more
- [The Ord, NE Story – Creating a support system for entrepreneurs, 11/6/20](#) with Jeana and Tanner Hackel, Robert Stowell and Don Macke and rural community leaders in South Dakota
- [Valley County, Nebraska – An Entrepreneurial Community](#) – Nebraska Community Foundation with B&B Productions, 2020

Related Ord Ecosystem Papers

Entrepreneurial ecosystems are so much more than access to capital, technical assistance, incubators, and programs. The entire community is the ecosystem including its culture and amenities. There are three related ecosystem stories allied to the Ord entrepreneurship story:

- [Community Centered Philanthropy](#)
- [Youth Engagement, Attraction and Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Quality of Life Placemaking through the Arts and Humanities](#)

Ord Lessons – The Articulate 360 Learning Platform

In partnership with Dr. David laquinta and Carson Co Global, e2 is transforming the Ord and Valley County region stories into a community-centered learning platform employing Articulate 360. This resource is scheduled to be available for use in 2022.

Special Thanks...

Like all community economic development, if undertaken with the value of **doing with** we must acknowledge our partners in this work beginning with Robert Stowell and the community of Ord, Andy Stoll with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (e.g., providing critical funding support, guidance, and encouragement), our friends at the Nebraska Community Foundation and the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, our e2 writing team including Cathy, David, Dana, Ann and David, and last but not least, our Ord entrepreneurs including Melanie, Sarah, Caleb, Gaylord, Nancy, Ace, Subconn and so many more that were part of our interviews and focus groups.

Questions and Additional Information

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The following three pictures illustrate this community and its region. The upper left-hand picture is an aerial view of Valley County and the beautiful Calamus River. The upper right-hand picture is of the new school dedication. The bottom picture is of the Valley County Health Care System.

