



September 18, 2019

On Hand Development Corporation
526 N. Broadway Ave
Miller, SD 57362

Dear Hand County Commissioners:

My name is Kecia Beranek and I am the Executive Director for On Hand Development Corporation in Miller, SD. The mission of On Hand Development Corporation is to maintain and assist in the expansion of existing businesses and support the growth of new businesses while striving to improve the economy of the Miller area. On Hand Development Corporation is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to improving the economic health of Miller, SD, and the surrounding area.

I am writing you today to inform you of 2 tours of 2 properties that I took earlier today (September 18). This morning, I toured Jackrabbit Farm and Blue Stem Farm both outside of Mt. Vernon, SD. Both of these farms are owned and operated by Pipestone Systems and both properties are similar to the potential farm that could make its way to Hand County. These visits weren't planned in advance and the employees at the locations didn't know I was coming.

Jackrabbit was built in 2014. Since 2014, Jackrabbit has never had any environmental issues or fractions. When we circled the property from a mile of each direction, I couldn't smell a thing. I honestly wouldn't have known what the property was. When we pulled in the driveway, there was a man mowing the grass with no mask or anything covering his nose. The property is well taken care of and they take pride in that. They have rows of trees around the property and have a very nice lawn. I couldn't smell any unpleasant odors until we got within feet of the buildings. There was an odor but only when we were right next to the buildings.

Blue Stem was built in 2007. We also circled this property and I didn't notice any odor until we got within feet of the buildings. I found it interesting that on one of the buildings there was an Ethan Lumber Company sticker and when I asked Nick about it, he said that they built the buildings.

I also took note of the road conditions. Each farm has about five loads of feed and two loads of pigs each week. The most traffic on these roads comes from their employees. The roads are in good condition. Now, keep in mind last week this area did see some major rainfall but overall, the roads were good. There was one road we couldn't use but that was because of the flooding and it was closed because it was washed out.

I learned today that Pipestone has an extremely low turnover rate for employees. Their average is 30%. Most of their employees are ages 25-40. I would assume that with 20 jobs in open in Hand County, we could see families moving to our area to fill our school and houses for sale. Nick made sure to mention that some of these employees would be coming from current farms and have the opportunity for a promotion. This gave me a feeling of reassurance because these people already know what they are doing and are understanding to the needs of the business. There are four management positions at each farm; a manager that oversees the entire farm, a farrowing house lead, gastrin lead, and a gilt development lead.

I am not a pig farm expert. I don't know what gastrin lead or gilt development is but I have now toured Christensen Farms, Moeller Farms with Karen and Matt Moeller and two properties of Pipestone. I am educating myself on farms and the guidelines they all have to follow. All of the properties that I have visited are well maintained and cared for. All of the properties have a significant positive impact on the county. I believe there is a negative stigma around hog farms. I ask all residents to know the facts before you decide on something, be aware of your attitude and behavior, choose your words carefully, educate others, focus on the positive, support people and include everyone.

Pipestone is committed to these properties. They wouldn't invest the money that they are going to invest if they wouldn't take care of the land, the water, and the roads.

I support the Pipestone Systems that is potentially making their way to Hand County. I support Pipestone System because I support Economic Development in Hand County.

Sincerely,
Kecia Beranek
Executive Director
On Hand Development Corporation