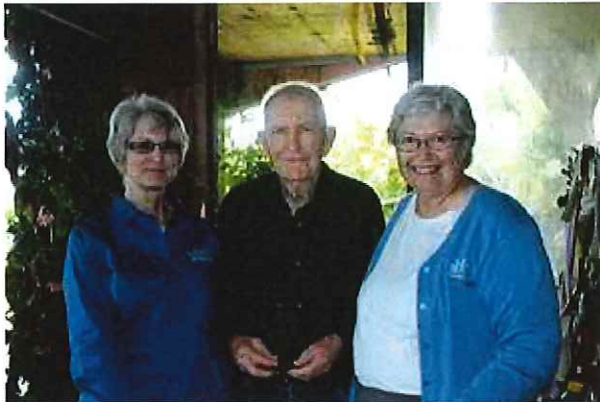


Nebraska Business Development Center celebrates client award

August 19, 2015



From left, Joy Omelanuk, award recipient Russ Finch, and Jennifer Wittrock (Photo by Kellie Aye, NBDC graduate assistant)



Russ Finch, right, uses a model to explain his new greenhouse design to members of the Alliance business community Kevin Howard, left, and Holly Heath, center. (Photo by Kellie Aye, NBDC graduate assistant)



Grow lights positioned to shine underneath the foliage to increase the size of the lower fruit in the Greenhouse in the Snow in Alliance, Nebraska. (Photo by Kellie Aye, NBDC graduate assistant)

ALLIANCE, Neb. – An Alliance business nominated for an award by Dr. Tim Donahue, former director of the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) at Chadron State College, was honored during a ceremony August 11 in Alliance.

Russ Finch, owner and operator of Greenhouse in the Snow, earned the 2015 third place Small Business Administration Small Business of the Year Award for the 3rd Congressional District of Nebraska.

On behalf of the SBA, Chadron NBDC staff members Joy Omelanuk, Jennifer Wittrock and Kellie Aye presented the award to Finch. Members of the Alliance business community were also in attendance. Brandi McCaslin from Nebraska U.S. Senator Deb Fischer's office attended and delivered a letter to Finch from Fischer.

"Greenhouse in the Snow has brought an innovation to the market that offers the possibility for a sustainable, new industry in Nebraska and other cold climate locations," Donahue said in the NBDC annual report.

Finch's use of geothermal air in his greenhouse design is a unique, sustainable practice that was recognized by the Chadron NBDC with its 2014 Sustainability Business of the Year Award at the state capitol. His annual heat bill is \$240 compared to \$3,000 for traditional greenhouses of comparable size, Finch said.

His main focus is growing 15 varieties of dwarf citrus trees from a reliable supplier in California. They include, lemons, two types of tangerines, and Valencia, Washington navel and red navel oranges. Finch has also planted exotic tropical flowers, figs, grapes, tomatoes, red beets and carrots.

“There’s no wind to knock the fruit off the trees. The longer they hang on, the sweeter they get. They’ll hang on for months,” Finch said.

Pat and Karen Runkle, owners of Lil’ Ladybug Greenhouse and Gardens in Hay Springs, sell Finch’s citrus in Rushville, Alliance and Chadron. Finch said some major regional retailers would be willing to transport citrus from Panhandle greenhouses to sites along the Colorado Front Range if there were enough producers.

“The High Plains can be a major producer of table citrus within 12 years. We need more growers. There’s a marketplace of five million people within a day’s drive,” Finch said.

In addition to operating his own greenhouse, Finch has collaborated with an Alliance metal fabrication company, Antioch Machine, to produce a greenhouse building kit – two-inch square metal pipe frames and Lexan polycarbonate twin wall sheets – for customers in six states.

Moorcroft, Wyoming, Rexburg, Idaho, and Black Hawk, South Dakota, are among the 16 building sites. A greenhouse has been built in Taos, New Mexico, and the owner has ordered three more. Finch is also nearing completion of his first export sale to a customer from Canada.

—Tena L. Cook, Marketing Coordinator

- See more at: http://www.csc.edu/modules/news/public_news/view/11052#sthash.TZEL48RL.dpuf

Nebraska Business Development Center celebrates client award

◆ By Tena Cook

CSC Marketing Coordinator

An Alliance business nominated for an award by Dr. Tim Donahue, former director of the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) at Chadron State College, was honored during a ceremony Aug. 11 in Alliance.

Russ Finch, owner and operator of Greenhouse in the Snow, earned the 2015 third place Small Business Administration Small Business of the Year Award for the 3rd Congressional District of Nebraska.

On behalf of the SBA, Chadron NBDC staff members Joy Omelanuk, Jennifer Wittrock and Kellie Aye presented the award to Finch. Members of the Alliance business community were also in attendance. Brandi McCaslin from Nebraska U.S. Senator Deb Fischer's office attended and delivered a letter to Finch from Fischer.

"Greenhouse in the Snow has brought an innovation to the market that offers the possibility for a sustainable, new industry in Nebraska and

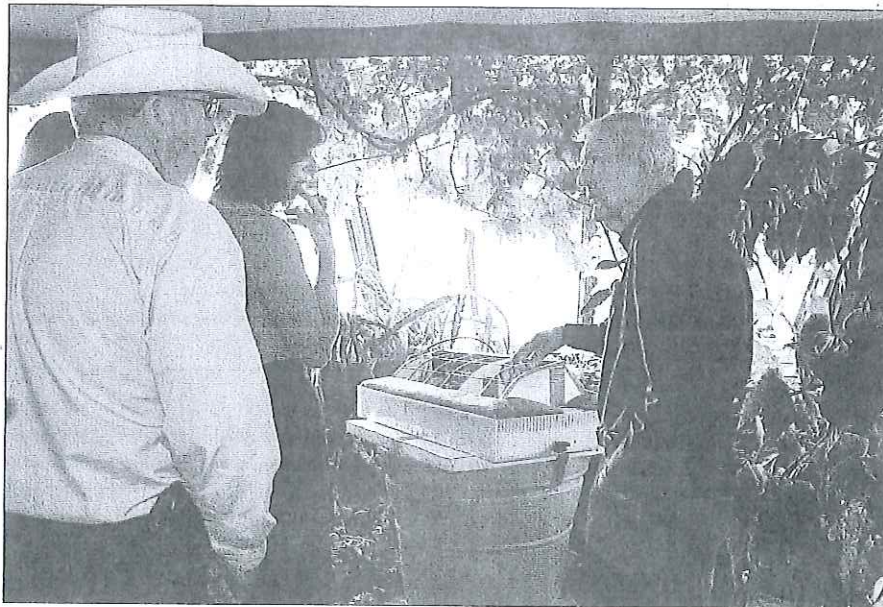


Photo by Kellie Aye, NBDC graduate assistant

Russ Finch, right, uses a model to explain his new greenhouse design to members of the Alliance business community Kevin Howard, left, and Holly Heath, center.

other cold climate locations," Donahue said in the NBDC annual report.

Finch's use of geothermal air in his greenhouse design is a unique, sustainable practice that was recognized by the Chadron NBDC with its 2014 Sustainability Business of the Year Award at the state capitol. His annual heat bill is \$240

compared to \$3,000 for traditional greenhouses of comparable size, Finch said.

His main focus is growing 15 varieties of dwarf citrus trees from a reliable supplier in California. They include, lemons, two types of tangerines, and Valencia, Washington navel and red navel oranges. Finch has also planted exotic

tropical flowers, figs, grapes, tomatoes, red beets and carrots.

"There's no wind to knock the fruit off the trees. The longer they hang on, the sweeter they get. They'll hang on for months," Finch said.

Pat and Karen Runkle, owners of Lil' Ladybug Greenhouse and Gardens in Hay Springs, sell Finch's citrus in Rushville,

Alliance and Chadron. Finch said some major regional retailers would be willing to transport citrus from Panhandle greenhouses to sites along the Colorado Front Range if there were enough producers.

"The High Plains can be a major producer of table citrus within 12 years. We need more growers. There's a marketplace of five million people within a day's drive," Finch said.

In addition to operating his own greenhouse, Finch has collaborated with an Alliance metal fabrication company, Antioch Machine, to produce a greenhouse building kit – two-inch square metal pipe frames and Lexan polycarbonate twin wall sheets – for customers in six states.

Moorcroft, Wyoming, Rexburg, Idaho, and Black Hawk, South Dakota, are among the 16 building sites. A greenhouse has been built in Taos, New Mexico, and the owner has ordered three more. Finch is also nearing completion of his first export sale to a customer from Canada.

*The Chadron Record
Wednesday, August 26, 2015*

