

Spotlight: Rush County

by **Kathy Mayer**

DON'T LET THE HORSE and buggy, historic one-room schoolhouse or quaint covered bridges fool you. While Rush County celebrates its well-preserved past, appreciates its traditional Amish farming and enjoys a healthy tourism industry, the county of 18,000 has signs of the 21st century. Those buggies travel routes lined with fiber-optic cable. And newcomer Incerco makes ceramic parts for the space station.

In December, Rush Renewable Energy LLC announced it would build an \$82 million ethanol that will produce 60 million

gallons a year. "This new development will mean economic growth for both agriculture and manufacturing in the area," says Mayor Bob Bridges.

The news followed Pioneer Hi-Bred International's announcement last summer that it would spend \$4.2 million to remodel and expand its seed-corn plant in Rushville.

"This is a strategy to take advantage of the ag niche Rush County has," says Greg Griffin, executive director of the Rush County Economic & Community Development Corp.

On the high-tech side, the Economic & Community Development Corp.

has optioned 80 of the 250 acres in the new Industrial Park North. The organization hopes to attract life sciences, information technology, advanced manufacturing and logistics companies, Griffin reports.

Manufacturing, meanwhile, is robust. The top three employers, all in Rushville, are INTAT Precision, with 380 employees making foundry castings for the auto industry; Copeland Corp., which employs 250 and makes compressors; and The Trane Co., with a workforce of 200 who make air-conditioner components.

Also in Rushville are Fujitsu Ten America Corp.,

where 175 workers make stereo systems; Harcourt Industries in Milroy, employing 80 who distribute school supplies to 13,000 schools in 50 states as well as private-label commercial supplies; and Smurfit-Stone Container Corp. in Rushville, employing 57 who remanufacture corrugated paper.

Tourism, too, will continue to be strong, says Pam Leisure, executive director of the Rush County Chamber of Commerce.

"Our covered bridges are a huge draw," she says of the six bridges built by the famed Kennedy family of bridge builders, who called Rush County home. ■