



NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional
Planning Commission

www.ncrpc.org
August 2005

NCRPC Staff

John Cyr
Carol Torkelson
Connie Cyr
Doug McKinney
Margaret Cathey
Deb Ohlde
Debra Peters
Todd Tuttle
Sherry Angell
Pepper Roberg
Lori Thielen
Jeff Maska
Jeff Gansel
Dell Gier
Rod Thompson

Executive Board

Kaye Crawford, City of Salina
Debbie Divine, City of Salina
Steve Errebo, Lincoln Co.
Mark Freel, City of Minneapolis
Dwight Frost, Jewell Co.
Marcia Funke, Washington Co.
Bill Garrison, Cloud Co.
Chuck Heidrick, City of Beloit
Vicki Koepsel, Saline Co.
Joe Nold, Dickinson Co.
Larry Paine, City of Concordia
Virgil Palen, Mitchell Co.
Kermit Rush, Ellsworth Co.
David Thurlow, Clay Co.
Harold Wilber, Republic Co.

Upcoming Events

August 25

Board Work/Study Session, 2 p.m.
John Keller, KSU Landscape Architecture/Regional and Community Planning professor, will discuss land use planning and zoning.

September 29

Board Bus Tour is being planned to tour Bioprocessing and Industrial Value Added Program (BIVAP) at Kansas State University and NCRPC project sites. More details will be announced as plans are finalized.

Note This...

If you prefer to receive this newsletter via e-mail, please send your contact information to lthielen@nckcn.com. Feedback is always welcome.

KANSAS SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE POLANSKY ADDRESSES NCRPC BOARD

Bioscience continues to be a focus for opportunities in rural Kansas, according to Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky during his recent address at the NCRPC.

The Kansas Bioscience Initiative, which is part of the Kansas Economic Growth Act passed by the Legislature and Governor in 2004, will bring opportunities to Kansas, Polansky says.

"I believe it's a foundation on which we can build and compete in this arena," Polansky says. "It has some real potential for the future. There is also the hope there will be about \$600 million available to help develop bioscience businesses in Kansas."

Polansky says a process will be started this fall to look at ways of investing the money in Kansas.

When talking about subjects such as biofuels and agritourism, Polansky says



Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky addresses the NCRPC Executive Board and guests on July 28 in Beloit.

Polansky Seed in Belleville. "The Department of Agriculture is an important advocate for rural Kansas and needs to be at the table in discussions involving subjects such as bio-

those items are just a part of the solution.

"There isn't a magic silver bullet of one thing that is going to be responsible for a change in rural Kansas," Polansky says. "But when all are put together it does provide opportunities."

A lifelong Kansan, Polansky was appointed Secretary of Agriculture in 2003. Polansky has extensive agricultural experience and owns Polansky Farms and

sciences," Polansky says.

Polansky says North Central Kansas is important to him and he is proud his son and daughter-in-law came back to the family farm and his daughter and son-in-law own and operate City Pharmacy in Minneapolis.

"We need to do a better job of realizing some of the benefits we have in rural areas. Sometimes we sell ourselves and our communities short," Polansky says.

BOARD COMMITS TO FURTHER GIS SYSTEMS

Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which allows viewing and analyzing data from a geographic perspective, has become a valuable decision-making tool as technology continues to advance.

Several counties in North Central Kansas already use GIS for certain functions such as property maps, road

and bridge departments, and 911 systems.

Due to interest expressed by some of the NCRPC membership, the executive board recently committed to exploring what it would take to develop a regional GIS system to provide basic support services to all member counties and communities.

"While a number of coun-

ties are already using GIS in some form, there is ample opportunity for the NCRPC to provide additional databases above and beyond those now maintained by those counties," John Cyr, Executive Director, says.

Additional information will be available in the future. For questions or comments, contact Cyr.



North Central Regional Planning Commission
109 N. Mill, P.O. Box 565, Beloit, KS 67420
Phone: 785-738-2218
Fax: 785-738-2185
www.ncrpc.org

MEET THE STAFF

Lori Thielen joined the NCRPC as a community development specialist in Fall 2004. She assists in community-related projects, is involved with grant writing/project administration, and is a certified administrator for the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant Program. She also produces the NCRPC bi-monthly newsletters.

Raised on a family farm and Hereford ranch near Falun in southwestern Saline County, Lori graduated from K-State with majors in agricultural economics and agricultural communications.

Prior to moving to Beloit, she worked three years in the Agricultural Economics Department at K-State as a research associate. Lori has also interned in Kansas City at Fleishman-Hillard Communications and John Deere.

"I look forward to continuing to meet people from the region and providing project assistance," Thielen says.

MULTI-COUNTY EXERCISES TEST PLANS

Several counties from the North Central Kansas Public Health Initiative collaborated to create a tabletop exercise to test emergency plans and procedures. One biological scenario was developed with assistance from multiple key partners.

The first cooperative effort between Jewell, Mitchell, Republic, and Washington County Health Departments took place May 11, 2005 in Belleville. A mock scenario was presented with an opportunity for agencies to identify ways to communicate and work together should this type of incident or emergency occur in their county or the North Central Kansas region.

The objectives for the exercise included: determining agency lead roles and responsibilities using the incident command system, evaluating the effectiveness of response measures, and identifying gaps in local and regional preparedness plans and the ability to coordinate. Action and corrective action reports are sent out to participating counties following the exercise.



Participants representing four counties and many organizations work together during the tabletop exercise in Belleville in May.

Sherry Angell, Regional Bioterrorism Coordinator, says the event gave agencies the opportunity to further examine their current strengths and weaknesses in the ability to detect and respond to an unanticipated biological event.

"The goal of planning is to enhance the capabilities of response to any type of disaster and to ensure continuity of emergency services and communication both within the county and at the regional level," Angell says.

Eighty-five participants attended the exercise representing public health, hospitals, city/county officials,

law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, emergency management, pharmacies, Red Cross, area schools, and others.

Several agencies provided staff to facilitate and evaluate the exercise including Kansas Department of Health & Environment, Kansas Homeland

Security Regional Coordinators, Department of Preventive Medicine & Public Health, KU School of Medicine-Wichita, Dickinson County Health Department Bioterrorism Coordinator, and the Regional Bioterrorism Coordinator.

Similar tabletop exercises will be presented on August 10 in Lincoln County and on August 16 in another multi-county effort involving Russell, Ellsworth, Smith and Osborne counties.

Thirteen counties currently participate in the North Central Kansas Public Health Initiative projects and activities.