



NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional
Planning Commission

www.ncrpc.org
April 2006

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Upcoming Events

Thursday, April 27, 2 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, May 25, 2 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting

**Wednesday and Thursday,
May 3 and 4**
Kansas Department of
Commerce CDBG Application
Workshops, Salina, Kansas

NCRPC News is a publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission and is published every other month. Contact Lori Thielen with story ideas at lthielen@nckcn.com.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING TOPIC OF NCRPC WORK/STUDY SESSION

The severity and frequency of natural disasters in 2005 prompted a recent board work/study session topic on a "50,000 foot" overview of emergency preparedness planning.

A three-person team presented different aspects of emergency preparedness planning at the February 23 board session in Beloit. Dr. David Proctor, Director of the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy (ICDD) at Kansas State University, provided a broad overview of risk and crisis communications, focusing on the need for early and complete communication between local elected officials and local populations.

Captain Dave Young of the Kansas National Guard discussed the Incident Command System and specifically addressed the responsibilities of local elected officials in that system.

Charlie Griffin, a Professor at Kansas State Univer-



Professor Charlie Griffin of Kansas State University discusses the importance of all-hazards behavioral health.

sity and a member of the statewide Disaster Mental Health Response Team discussed the importance of recognizing and responding to citizens' mental health issues associated with risk and crisis.

Proctor says the presentation was particularly

timely.

"Following Hurricane Katrina, people have now seen the devastation and disruption caused by disasters," Proctor says. "They now believe in the importance of risk and crisis planning and are motivated to put these types of plans in place."

Advance communication, planning and training were all discussed as being key.

"Elected officials need to begin communicating with and preparing their citizens," Proctor says. "They must also communicate

and plan with all relevant parties who would be involved in a disaster response. Disaster responders must be familiar with those they will work with and adequately prepared to respond when and if disaster hits."

For more about the ICDD, visit www.k-state.edu/icdd.

CDBG APPLICATION WORKSHOP ANNOUNCED

Kansas Department of Commerce (KDOC) is sponsoring a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Annual Application and Recertification Conference in Salina at the Holiday Inn on May 3 and 4.

The new 2007 CDBG applications will be released for the upcoming year. The

conference will also provide a forum to discuss CDBG related issues and allow local officials, planning commissions, certified administrators and state officials to exchange ideas.

The general session will include a presentation, "Attracting Young People Home to Kansas," by Craig Schroeder of the Center for

Rural Entrepreneurship.

Registration for the conference can be made online at www.kansascommerce.com or by calling the KDOC at 785-296-3004. The deadline to register is April 24, 2006.

If you are considering applying for a CDBG grant, please contact NCRPC for more information.

Did You Know?



Eye on Kansas is a resource for Kansans created and maintained by Kansans and available online at www.eyeonkansas.org.

Published quarterly, the online magazine offers opportunities to spread the news about the communities in which we live and for authors to have a publishing forum.

Highlighting people, places and things is essential in forming the magazine about what makes Kansas our home.

The *Eye on Kansas* magazine is a subpart of Rural Oasis (www.ruraloasis.org), which is a collaborative effort of community leaders, academic researchers, and professionals seeking to enhance, energize and deepen the sustainability of Kansas rural life.

Some of the communities currently highlighted through *Eye on Kansas* include Barnes, Belleville, Beloit, Cawker City, Clay Center, Formoso, Jewell, Lincoln, Longford, Osborne, Tipton and Washington.

Eye on Kansas needs your stories about people doing interesting things, places you've visited, or interesting things. Dr. Thomas Gould, Kansas State University Professor, edits the magazine. Send stories, photos or ideas to him at tgould@ksu.edu or contact John Cyr (jcyr@nckcn.com) or Lori Thielen (lthielen@nckcn.com) locally at the Planning Commission.

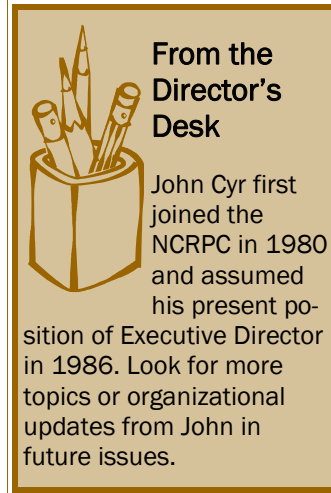
FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEFINED

Economic development means many things to many people. If asked, most will agree it's the introduction of outside capital into a local economy. How one achieves that status is too often left to the imagination of those involved. It also falls short of explaining that ultimate goal.

A pragmatic approach finds economic development to be a process, the desired outcome of which is the generation of opportunity leading to increased personal wealth within a defined geography. The process itself can be broken into a number of components, but all are predicated on continuous growth in local leadership and business service variety.

Leadership growth is needed to articulate a readily understood vision of the future. It requires business and community leaders to set forth a horizon that brings focus to everyone's efforts and then to direct available resources to where they are most needed in pursuit of that horizon.

Business service variety



From the Director's Desk

John Cyr first joined the NCRPC in 1980 and assumed his present position of Executive Director in 1986. Look for more topics or organizational updates from John in future issues.

is essential for meeting the ever-evolving assistance competitive business operations consume and demand. In rural locations access to service variety is as important as having the needed service located next door. That then requires some degree of ingenuity and, most likely, communications technology to deliver such service to rural settings.

How one evaluates the success of any economic development program varies. The most frequently used measure is job growth. It is visible and easily quantified, but job growth alone is not an adequate reflection

on what is taking place, especially if the goal remains increased personal wealth.

Two better measures are the resulting changes in average earnings per job and per capita personal income from job growth. New jobs do not necessarily mean positive economic development; for it is entirely possible to create jobs that lower the average earnings per job in a specific location, as well as lower per capita personal incomes. While outside capital may indeed be introduced into the local economy to produce new jobs, in this case, economic development is not necessarily taking place.

Industrial development is an item that is often seen to be synonymous with economic development. That too is not necessarily true, for while the former can occur during times of the latter, positive economic change does not always occur during periods of industrial development. Stated another way, economic development inures to the benefit of the individual pro-

See **Director** on Page 3

TWO MORE CDBG PROJECTS AWARDED IN AREA

Two counties in the region received good news when Kansas Department of Commerce (KDOC) announced additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awards in mid-February.

Washington County received a grant for \$400,000 to replace seven dilapidated bridges and will match the

grant with \$400,000 in cash and labor.

Lincoln County received funds to construct a new fire station for the Barnard Rural Fire District. The fire district is providing \$67,500 in matching funds.

Approximately \$3.5 million in grants were awarded in February. This follows the more than \$10.4 million in

federal CDBG funds to Kansas communities announced in January, bringing this year's total to approximately \$14 million.

To receive grants, local government units must meet one of three program objectives: benefit low and moderate-income persons, eliminate slums and blight, or resolve an urgent need.

MEET THE BOARD

Harold Wilber joined the NCRPC Board after being elected to the Republic County Board of Commissioners in 2002. His first government involvement came in the late '70s and early '80s when he served on the Belleville City Council for two terms and then two terms as mayor.

Having started his own business 36 years ago, Harold continues to operate Harold's Auto Glass today with the help of his son, David. His business helps drive his interest in economic development in the region.

Harold says he has enjoyed being closely involved with the NCRPC.

"I like that the organization is always looking for new solutions," Harold says. "The future is ours to make and I'm glad to be part of that."

He also enjoys the challenge of guiding his county into the future.

"What we are to become depends a lot on our local leaders," Harold says.

Director from Page 3

vided the average earnings per job increase, while industrial development always inures to the benefit of local government.

We say that because industrial development is linked to fixed asset construction and purchase of personal property in support of new jobs. As such it constitutes an expansion of the local tax base and does not always contribute to affecting positive economic change in the individual lives of local residents.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOCUSES ON THE YOUTH OF ELLSWORTH COUNTY

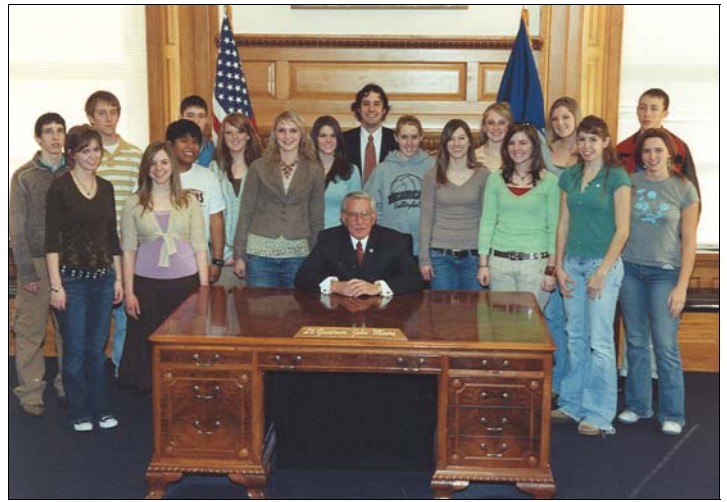
Leadership training is just one component of the Ellsworth County Pride of the Prairie youth leadership program.

Director Michelle Brokes, who is also an Ellsworth County Extension Agent, says one of the biggest benefits is showcasing the businesses and opportunities in the county.

"We have each session in a different community in the county and as part of that we highlight businesses in that community," Brokes says. "The thought behind that is to help kids realize there are opportunities to come back home and not just to the large employers like the hospital or the school."

Since its start in 1999, the youth leadership program attracts 15 youth from throughout the county to participate each year. A competitive application process decides each class.

"We try to make the class representative of the three different schools within the



The 2005-2006 Youth Pride of the Prairie leadership class ended the year with a trip to Topeka to learn about state government. They are pictured with Lt. Gov. John Moore and Rep. Josh Svaty.

county," Brokes says. "They get to network and meet others from the county."

The class meets once per month from September through March. In addition to each of the county communities hosting a session, one session highlights county government and the last session in Topeka highlights state government.

There are no studies to

see who returns home after college, but Brokes believes the program is beneficial.

"We always hear the kids say they had no idea all this was here," Brokes says.

Is your community doing something related to the HTC model (i.e. youth attraction, leadership development, wealth retention, entrepreneurship)? Let us know so we can highlight it.

USDA FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ENERGY PROJECTS

USDA Rural Development is offering agricultural producers and rural businesses \$11 million in competitive grants and \$176 million in guaranteed loans to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements.

For renewable energy systems, the minimum grant request is \$2,500 and the maximum is \$500,000. For energy efficiency improvements, the minimum grant

request is \$1,500 and the maximum is \$250,000.

The maximum amount of a guaranteed loan made to a borrower will be \$10 million. The guaranteed fee amount is 1.0% of the guaranteed portion of the loan with an annual renewal fee of 0.125% of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Applications must be submitted to the appropriate USDA Rural Development State Office postmarked no later than May 12, 2006.

The program's funding can support a wide range of technologies encompassing biomass (including anaerobic digesters), geothermal, hydrogen, solar, and wind energy. Energy efficiency projects typically include installing or upgrading equipment that results in a significant reduction in energy use from current operations.

For more information, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/ or contact Debra Peters at FORDI at 785-738-2210.

EXCELLENT WATER QUALITY PAYS OFF FOR LONGFORD

Water in the southwestern Clay County town of Longford has long been boasted as some of the best in Kansas. Now it is helping sustain this community of 89 people.

The Longford Water Company, established for the purpose of bottling and selling the local water, opened in May 2005. The water is bottled and marketed as Kiowata, a name taken from the Kiowa Formation of underground rocks that naturally filter the product. The business purchases the water from the city.

"The only thing we have to do is remove the chlorine from the water supply," Manager Kim Kramer explains. "All we add back to the water is the ozonation, which takes out bacteria."

This is in contrast to the reverse osmosis process that occurs in most bottled waters. No water softeners are necessary either.

Approximately 20 investors formed Longford Water Company, LLC and financed the entire project through private funds. The husband and wife team of Kim and

Wava Kramer manage the business. The couple ran the local Coachlight Cafe for 18 years and has each served on city council at different times.

"We wanted to sell it as an LLC so other investors from the community could get involved," Kim says. "We recognized the need for community support and we didn't have a bit of trouble getting investors."

Although business started slow, it has grown significantly. The couple credits that growth with finding a niche in private labeling for schools, churches, events and businesses.

Water is currently delivered within an approximately 50-mile radius of the community, although privately labeled water extends beyond that area.

"Delivery is an obstacle as well as cooler space for businesses," Kim says. "We want to grow into more markets and be in more stores, but we want to do that in a proper fashion."

Although there are challenges, there are also rewards such as seeing the



Kim and Wava Kramer can fill 600 to 700 bottles per hour on an average day. Water is available in 16.9 ounce, 20 ounce, and 1 gallon bottles.

business grow.

"They said it would take two to three years to be profitable, but we're trying to achieve that in one year," Kim explains.

Wava says one of the biggest rewards for her came following Hurricane Katrina when they sent a semi-load of water for relief efforts. People from the community donated money and labor to send more than 27,000 bottles of water to the devastated areas.

Freight was a concern to send that much water that far, but TSI Trucking from Clay Center found out about the effort and donated the original shipment's freight.

"After all of that I had a call from a guy in South Carolina inquiring about a private label," Wava says. "He had tasted our water at a Biloxi, Mississippi, work site following the hurricanes and he said it was the best water he ever had."

Another highlight was receiving a Building Better Communities Award after being nominated by Congressman Jerry Moran.

"That came about basically from a listening tour that Congressman Moran did in our area," Wava explains. "He talked about communities needing to do things on their own without government assistance. This project took his advice, was financed completely through private funds, and he recognized us with an award."

For more information, visit www.kiowata.com.

Know others who would like to receive this newsletter? Prefer e-mail format? Send contact information to thielen@nckpc.com. Feedback is always welcome.

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