



### Executive Board

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Mark Freel, City of Minneapolis  
Dwight Frost, Jewell Co.  
Marcia Funke, Washington Co.  
Bill Garrison, Cloud Co.  
Chuck Heidrick, City of Beloit  
Judy Irvin, City of Salina  
Mick Keating, Marshall Co.  
Vicki Koepsel, Saline Co.  
Jonathan Mitchell,  
City of Ellsworth  
Joe Nold, Dickinson Co.  
Larry Paine, City of Concordia  
Virgil Palen, Mitchell Co.  
Abner Perney, City of Salina  
Kermit Rush, Ellsworth Co.  
David Thurlow, Clay Co.  
Harold Wilber, Republic Co.

### 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  
Brett Beck  
Steve Thompson

### Upcoming Events

**Thursday, June 29, 2 p.m.**  
Executive Board Meeting

**Thursday, July 27, 2 p.m.**  
Executive Board Meeting

#### **CDBG Application Deadlines:**

**Friday, September 1**

Housing/Neighborhood  
Development

**Monday, October 2**

Water and Sewer

**Wednesday, November 1**


Community Facilities

## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR: GIS PROGRAM UNDERWAY AT NCKTC

**G**eographic Information Systems (GIS) technology has been in existence now for well over a decade, although it hasn't received much attention at the local level until recently. Now, as vendors come out of the woodwork, almost everyone is scrambling to get up to speed on the subject.

GIS itself is a computer system capable of capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information. The power of a GIS system, which includes the operators, spatial data and procedures, comes from its ability to relate different information in a spatial context and to arrive at a conclusion about that relationship. Since most of the information we have about our world today can be located through use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) device, it is easy to establish those relationships. Such information is helpful for planning purposes, especially when capital improvements plans are being developed.

For example, the location of water line failures along with valve, fire hydrant and meter replacements in water systems can be logged as they happen, then compared against other statistical data specific to the water



**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.

system to best ascertain just where and when system maintenance should be planned or whole systems should be replaced. The same data can be compared to other databases, such as soil types, rock formations and the hydrology of given locations to see if there are external reasons for an increase in problems should they occur. The wonderful thing about GIS is that it not only produces a data matrix for review, it produces a map that visually shows just what is taking place.

While planning is our primary motivation for becoming active in GIS technology, NCRPC staff has learned another use is as a reporting device for cities and counties as they compile information they need to meet GASB 34 demands. The GASB 34 is a

new financial reporting model that requires data from cities and counties on infrastructure assets. While governments can delay their decision to provide information up to four years following implementation, ultimately the minimum requirement is to report major infrastructure assets acquired in fiscal years ending after June 30, 1980. GIS can help simplify that demand.

It is for these and other reasons the NCRPC is responding to what we perceive to be a growing need, that being a neutral source of technical information and service, as well as on-going support.

The NCRPC recently hired Steve Thompson, who is highly skilled in GIS application, to lead this initiative. The North Central Kansas Technical College (NCKTC) in Beloit has agreed to provide office space, software and equipment in support of the position. Partnering promises many benefits.

Working with the North Central Kansas Technical College (NCKTC), we hope the program being developed will prove beneficial to all our members and associates in North Central Kansas as it delivers training and technical service to all needing such support.

## Did You Know?



Entrepreneurs have a new resource available to help guide them to the right organization for business assistance.

The recently launched online resource, NetWork Kansas, is a service of the Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship that was established through the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 to promote an economic environment in the state.

NetWork Kansas enables entrepreneurs and small business owners to connect with resources they need at various stages of business development. There are currently more than 240 NetWork Kansas partners registered to provide business services to entrepreneurs and small business owners. Four Rivers Development, Inc. and NCRPC are registered as partners.

The system connects the entrepreneur and small business owner with the resource that has the expertise they need. NetWork Kansas Counselors are available to assist in the process. The website also maintains a calendar of educational opportunities and classes available across the state.

More information is available by calling toll-free at 877-521-8600 or by visiting [www.networkkansas.com](http://www.networkkansas.com).

## COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IMPACTED MANY COMMUNITIES OVER TIME

Ten years ago, Kansas Department of Commerce first funded projects intended to address multiple needs of any given community.

The Comprehensive Development Program was created by individuals within Commerce who were looking for a project that broadened the impact a typical Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award might otherwise have. Two demonstration projects, one in North Central Kansas, were funded in 1995 to test the program's feasibility. Commerce went on to fund 26 more projects across the state between 1996 and 2005. A total of \$29.7 million was awarded through these 28 projects.

When the state began receiving a reduction in Federal CDBG funds, Commerce had to decide how to handle the shortfall. Ultimately, the Comprehensive Development Program was dropped after 2005.

"Since we funded only a couple of projects a year for a huge amount, we decided it would benefit more people to leave money for the annual CDBG competition," Debbie Beck, CDBG Economic Development Specialist, says.

Beck says the program had pros and cons.

"The advantage was you could do a lot more to a community at one time instead of spreading it out over several years of funding," Beck says. "The dis-



Construction of an addition/assisted living facility at the Mid-America Health Care nursing home in Lincoln was one component of the Lincoln County Comprehensive Development project.

### 10-Year Look at Comprehensive Development Projects

*The following is a brief summary of projects awarded in North Central Kansas. It does not include the numerous private investments that were spurred by these projects.*

#### **Mitchell County Demonstration Project, 1995**

Housing rehabilitation and economic development in Mitchell, Cloud and Smith counties as well as development of NCKCN Internet services.

#### **City of Salina, 1996**

Infrastructure, housing rehabilitation, economic development as well as redirecting of traffic patterns in the Salina Airport Industrial Complex.

#### **Lincoln County, 1997**

Infrastructure, housing rehabilitation, remodeling of the Finch Theater in Lincoln and construction of an addition at the Mid-America Health Care nursing home in Lincoln.

#### **City of Jewell, 1998**

Waterline improvement, housing rehabilitation and construction of a community center to house the library, community room, office spaces, motel rooms and day care.

#### **City of Herington, 1998**

Renovation of a former school structure for a variety of community and housing related uses including apartments and senior citizen/community center.

#### **City of Jamestown, 2000**

Infrastructure, housing rehabilitation, construction of facility to house businesses and library and renovation of school to support senior citizen and community center.

#### **City of Wilson, 2001**

Business enhancement, construction of wastewater treatment facilities, housing demolition, and renovation of former grade school for assisted living purposes.

#### **City of Solomon, 2004**

Infrastructure, housing rehabilitation, and elimination of blighted conditions in downtown, all contributing to private investment to construct a new 15,000 SF building.

#### **City of Mankato, 2005**

Demolish dilapidated commercial structures, construct a new community center/library/senior center, renovate swimming pool bathhouse and housing rehabilitation.

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advantage was that we funded wants of communities instead of needs. We fund more needs when there is more competition in the program, like annual competition. With a shortage of funds we need to fund the needs and not the wants.”

Although the program no longer exists, it made a visible impact in many communities. Nine (9) projects were awarded within North Central Kansas.

The first Comprehensive Development project awarded in the region was in 1995 as part of the demonstration program offered by Commerce.

“It was about that time that Fleming Foods, Inc., a grocery store warehousing operation in Concordia and Smith Center closed its doors laying off nearly 150 people,” John Cyr, NCRPC Executive Director, says. “Conversation with Commerce led me to believe this might be the type of project they were looking for as a demonstration of what could be done with a bit of imagination.”

The business closure had a negative impact on Smith, Osborne, Jewell, Mitchell, Republic and Cloud counties since each county housed one or more of the employees affected.

“Each individual had mortgage needs; each had need of information concerning the latest news associated with the closure plus potential jobs in the area; each had a desire to stay as close to home as possible,” Cyr says.

The Demonstration Pro-

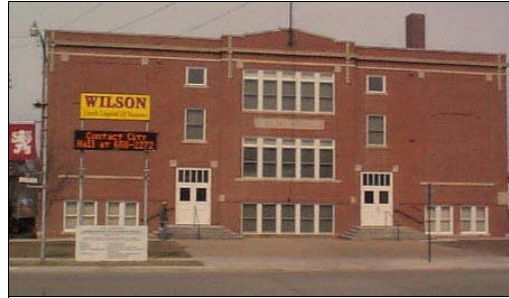
ject resulted in housing rehabilitation in Mitchell, Cloud and Smith counties and economic development through job creation, specifically at Kan-Am Industries and Gerard Tank and Steel. In addition, community development was targeted through creation of the North Central Kansas Community Network. This was intended to increase communication among neighboring population centers and provide local Internet access through NCKCN.

“The three areas Commerce wanted for the demonstration project was Housing, Business Development and Community Development, so we met the test,” Cyr says.

The Demonstration Project also offered a truly regional approach to community planning.

Eight more comprehensive development projects were awarded in the region throughout the life of the program. Many of the cities and counties have had continued positive results and additional investment.

For instance in Jewell,



Renovation of a former grade school into an assisted living facility was a part of the City of Wilson Comprehensive Development project.



One component of the City of Jewell’s project addressed dilapidated buildings in the downtown area. Above is a “Before” picture.



Above is the “After” picture. The Jewell Community Center replaced dilapidated structures and provided new opportunities for the town.

the initial award of the comprehensive development project sparked private investment in the community.

“An individual left money to the city to construct a first-class city park facility right across from the new community center in the downtown area,” Amy Arasmith, Jewell City Clerk, says. “The comprehensive project was great for our community.”

That sentiment is echoed in many locations.

## MEET THE STAFF

Steve Thompson recently joined the NCRPC staff to



lead a GIS initiative in collaboration with North Central Kansas Technical College.

A graduate of Kansas State University-Manhattan with a degree in civil engineering, Steve has been a licensed Professional Engineer in Kansas since 1976. He has worked for Wilson & Company Engineers and Architects in Salina, K-State at Salina, Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) and as a GIS/GPS consultant working with KRWA, several cities and counties and the private sector.

During his tenure as a professor at K-State at Salina, Steve taught Math, Computer Sciences, Surveying, Civil Engineering and GIS/GPS Technologies. In 1990 he established the first Global Positioning System (GPS) Base Station for the State of Kansas at K-State at Salina. That same year, with a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Steve began the first GIS/GPS Associate Degree option in the nation at K-State at Salina.

Steve grew up in Concordia and attended Cloud County Community College before transferring to Kansas State University. Steve has two sons, Joel and Luke.

## HOBBY LEADS TO LIVELIHOOD FOR BUSINESS OWNER

When Randy Rundle first learned to drive in a 1948 Chevrolet pickup, he had no idea that would eventually lead to his livelihood.

From his early driving days, he gained firsthand knowledge of 6-volt electrical systems and the problems associated with them such as hard starting, yellowish dim headlights and dead batteries.

"They all had electrical problems and would never start when you wanted them to," Randy recalls. "I went to all the mechanics in the area and asked them how to fix it. I got lots of ideas but no permanent solutions."

Eventually he created his own solution and invented a 6-volt alternator.

Randy officially started Fifth Avenue Antique Auto Parts in 1987. Advertisements costing \$2,000 in national car magazines were beyond his budget, so Randy decided in 1989 to try to get involved in the Great American Race,

which involves driving pre-1940s cars across the United States every year.

"I figured the race would help establish the Fifth Avenue name," Randy says. "I started going down the list of entrants and calling."

A racer in Seattle, Washington, decided to give the alternator a try and placed in the top 10, which opened more doors for Randy. Another Great Racer from New York installed one of the alternators in 1991 and it went on to win the Great American Race in 1993.

"Local antique car owners saw my alternators on the Great Race cars, which proved they worked. They then wanted to buy an alternator for their own car," Randy says.

Fifth Avenue's work caught Hollywood's attention and 6-volt alternators were installed in vehicles in the Columbia Pictures movie "Devil in a Blue Dress" and Warner Bros movie "LA Confidential."



Randy Rundle started Fifth Avenue Antique Auto Parts in Clay Center to market the 6-volt alternator he invented.

Randy also completed a project for the Royal Minister of Transportation for the Queen of England. For the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Pan-American games, Queen Elizabeth requested using the original 1954 Cadillac Series 62 convertible that had once belonged to the royal family. It needed some work to solve the same reliability problems common to all 6-volt antique vehicles.

"This guy called with a thick British accent and I thought it was a joke at

first because I have friends who like to do that," Randy recalls. "I told him if he really was the Royal Minister of Transportation he needed to fax something on Royal stationery. I had to call and apologize."

While the business has been extremely successful in recent years, Randy recalls the early challenges of advertising and marketing.

"I never guessed it would be just as difficult to market the product as invent it," Randy says.

Fifth Avenue has now sent alternators to customers in all 50 states and around the world.

His best advice for potential entrepreneurs is to find a niche and do the required homework.

For information, see [fifthaveinternetgarage.com](http://fifthaveinternetgarage.com).

Know others who would like to receive this newsletter? Prefer e-mail format? Send contact information to [thielen@nckcn.com](mailto:thielen@nckcn.com). Feedback is always welcome.

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