



Executive Board

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 Dell Gier
 Rod Thompson
 Brett Beck
 Steve Thompson

Upcoming Events

Thursday, Aug. 31, 2 p.m.
 Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 28, 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

BOARD/STAFF TRAVEL TO ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE FOR TOUR

Executive Board Members and staff learned firsthand about the Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI) and how their services could be accessed by local companies during a visit to the AMI facilities in Manhattan on May 25.

AMI, which is an extension of the Kansas State University College of Engineering, is a full-service product and process development center and training center. Primary services include product design and engineering, manufacturing process development and technology development and commercialization. It employs engineers and experts in business and product design.

Director Brad Kramer, Deputy Director Jeff Tucker, and Commercialization Manager Brett Lanz spent time explaining their organization's operations



AMI Director Brad Kramer and Deputy Director Jeff Tucker prepare to take the board/staff on a tour.

and how there might be an opportunity to partner with North Central Kansas.

AMI typically has 20 to 25 active projects at one time. They offer business planning as well as industrial and engineering design and can provide certain technical services, such as stress testing on equipment. They also offer an intern program.

"The idea is a community recognizes they need this kind of technical talent

and they invest in a student by providing a scholarship with the idea that the student comes back to the area once they complete

school," Kramer says. "Major corporations are using this, but the original idea was to help rural areas be able to attract technical talent back to the community."

AMI would like to create more partnerships in rural areas.

"We're all about creating opportunity and wealth for Kansas," Tucker says.

For more information about AMI, visit www.amisuccess.com.

CDBG APPLICATION DEADLINES APPROACHING

Deadlines are quickly approaching for fiscal year 2007 Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications.

Deadlines are listed under "Upcoming Events." Award announcements will be made in January 2007.

All funds distributed

through the CDBG program must meet one of the following three National Objectives:

1. Benefit to low/moderate income (LMI) persons.
2. Elimination of slums and blight.
3. Elimination of an immediate threat to health and safety, where there are no local resources to do so.

The NCRPC is assisting with a number of applications across the region. While it may be too late to develop a new project in time to apply this year, it is never too early to plan for future years. Income surveys and budgeting for local match can take place anytime. Contact the NCRPC with questions.

DID YOU KNOW?

A new forum exists to provide useful information on a variety of matters of rural importance.

The Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy (OJRRP) is a publication of the NCRPC in collaboration with Kansas State University. Its purpose is to serve the academic and applied interests of the Great Plains with a focus on topics with a rural focus. Its mission is the following: "To redefine and refine what 'rural' means, and to empower rural people and places by providing, publishing, presenting, stimulating, encouraging, and making accessible information that is valuable and successful."

The Editor-in-Chief is Dr. Duane Nellis, Kansas State University Provost and Managing Editor is Dr. Tom Gould, Kansas State University Associate Professor. The Policy Board is made up of 16 individuals representing the university and other research or rural organizations.

The journal was developed partly as an answer to a general absence of rural perspective in public policy since much of the state Legislature is now made up of urban areas. This web-based journal seeks to place in the public eye academic study predicated on the rural perspective.

To view the journal, visit www.ojrrp.org.

RURAL TAX CREDIT PROGRAM REVISED

Significant changes were made to the Kansas Rural Business Development Tax Credit Program during this past legislative period.

The Kansas Legislature passed amendments to Senate Bill 324 and Governor Sebelius signed the bill on May 22.

The most significant change was raising the value of the state tax credits from the current 50% level to 75%. Individuals or businesses making contributions of \$250 or more are now eligible to receive a 75% credit on their Kansas income tax return.

According to the Conference Committee Report Brief Senate Bill No. 324, the Senate Committee amended the bill, at the request of the Kansas De-

partment of Commerce, to allow the tax credits to be retroactive. However, the House Committee amended the bill to remove the full retroactive status for the tax credits. What resulted is that any donations received prior to January 1, 2005 will not receive retroactive credit.

The Rural Business Development Tax Credit program is a product of the Kansas Economic Growth Act that passed in 2004. The purpose is to "help regional foundations utilize tax credits to help rural communities with job creation and retention, business support services, regional leadership development, and technology improvements that enhance entrepreneurship and small business creation in

each of the seven economic development regions in the state of Kansas."

The Kansas Department of Commerce designated the NCRPC/NCKCN as one of the seven regional foundations in December 2004, with each region being awarded \$1 million in 50% state tax credits.

The \$1 million in credits were set up to be divided across three state fiscal years, these being July 2004 to June 2005, July 2005 to June 2006 and July 2006 to June 2007.

However, changes passed in SB 324 rescind any unsold credits that were made available from July 2004 to June 2005.

For more information or to contribute, contact John Cyr at the NCRPC.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER APPEARS VIABLE

The North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC) does its best to serve the development interests of 12 counties in North Central Kansas. It relies on member counties to determine how staff might best serve their individual interests with such service typically being in the form of grant writing and funded project management. That's the easy part. How the NCRPC addresses the collective development interests of the membership is a bit more difficult due to the complexity inherent in most regional approaches.

One strategy now being explored is that of

From the Director's Desk

John Cyr first joined the NCRPC in 1980 and became the Executive Director in 1986.

"technology" or "knowledge" transfer, which, if successful, will enable individuals throughout North Central Kansas to develop or expand businesses. This focus is recognized worldwide as being one key to rural revival, since it relies upon resident entrepreneurship rather than a methodology focused on recruiting business from the outside. The

process is complicated, requiring commitment from — and a willingness to fulfill that commitment by — all parties involved; but it also promises to provide long-term sustainability as an outcome.

Earlier this year the NCRPC initiated contact with the National Institute for Strategic Technology Acquisition and Commercialization (NISTAC) and the Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI) at Kansas State University to engage them in the process.

NISTAC is a 501(c)3 and manages a portfolio of patents accumulated by KSU over the past decade from

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SCHOOL-TO-WORK PARTNERSHIP GIVES SENIOR NEW OUTLOOK ON COUNTY

In her 18 years, Sarah Monsanto might have thought she learned about everything there was to know about Republic County.

But a unique school-to-work partnership with the Republic County Economic Development Corporation equipped the graduating Belleville High School senior with information not found in any textbooks.

"I think young people have a negative attitude about what they can do in Republic County after they graduate from high school," says Monsanto about the future plans of her peers. "In fact, Republic County is one of the best places there is to start a business."

Monsanto spent two hours a day after school this spring working with Republic County Economic Development coordinator Bryanna Spafford. Not only an educational experience, Spafford said Monsanto's



High School senior Sarah Monsanto interned with the Republic County Economic Development Corporation.

skills helped the economic development office compile much-needed business presentation packets, and also gave the economic development board new insight in ways to draw young people back to Republic County once they complete college educations.

"We need to talk to young people about the opportunities here," Spafford says. "We need to find more ways to show young

people, and teachers, some of the kinds of work that are being done here now, and can be done here in the future."

Monsanto's position was funded by Republic County Commissioners, not only to provide assistance to the economic development office, but also to expose youth to local opportunities.

Involving youth in business and asking their opinions about local issues is one aspect of the Hometown Competitiveness (HTC) Model, a program local officials participated in through the NCRPC.

"I learned a lot about the different business and government aspects of Republic County," Monsanto says of her internship.

Thanks to Deb Hadachek for allowing us to reprint a portion of her article from the Belleville Telescope. Is your community doing something related to the HTC model (i.e. leadership, entrepreneurship, youth attraction, wealth retention)? Let us know.

now need to identify local business leaders who possess both the capacity and capability of turning an idea into reality and introduce them to NISTAC and AMI. Then we need to set up a mechanism whereby that conversation becomes long term.

Such a mechanism is already being developed and the NCRPC recently hosted a local business and the KSU parties named. That meeting explored the goals and objec-

tives of all sides plus detailed what was needed for them to become mutually involved. We have also received a Request for Proposal on two products developed by AMI, asking us to locate one or more businesses within the region capable of producing and marketing the products. Thus the process of transferring knowledge from one location to another begins. It's up to us and others in the region to now make it work.

MEET THE STAFF

Brett Beck joined the NCRPC staff full-time in April as a tele-



Brett Beck

communications technician for the North Central Kansas Community Network (NCKCN) Internet system. He previously provided contract labor for NCKCN. His primary responsibilities include installing and servicing NCKCN Broadband Wireless Internet customer accounts as well as installing and maintaining the NCKCN Broadband Wireless Internet Backbone.

Originally from Claflin, Kansas, Brett moved to Beloit in 2003 to attend school at the North Central Kansas Technical College in the Electrical Technology program. He completed the Electricity I and II programs. Brett says he enjoys his job because it gives him the opportunity to work outdoors and with a type of electrical wiring.

In his spare time, Brett enjoys drag racing with his 1976 Oldsmobile 442 and he has won several awards for his efforts. He competes primarily in Great Bend, but has also raced in Nebraska, Topeka and Arkansas City. He is also engaged to Brianne Bader and they plan to marry within the next two years.

(Cont. from Page 2)

on-campus research or private corporations. AMI is an extension of the College of Engineering and offers technical support to businesses seeking product validation or improved engineering design.

Combined, NISTAC and AMI possess the tools motivated entrepreneurs can use to create new business and industry. They can also help individuals expand existing business operations by introducing them to new product lines. We

FOUR RIVERS DEVELOPMENT, INC. RECEIVES \$150,000 FROM AREA BANKS FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLBank) of Topeka recently announced approval of six JOB Grants totaling \$150,000 to assist in the financing of a like number of projects impacting the cities of Cawker City, Jewell, Scandia and Sylvan Grove, as well as Lincoln and Washington counties.

Approved applications were sponsored by area banks affiliated with the FHLBank of Topeka at the request of Four Rivers Development, Inc., (FORDI), a non-profit organization specializing in business finance in North Central Kansas.

The purpose of the new Business Development Fund is to enhance both job growth and job preservation. Its main purpose will be to provide gap financing for viable projects that exhibit some credit weaknesses that otherwise prevent an area bank from approving the entire re-

quest. Examples include business start-ups, insufficient down payment/equity, repayment based on projected earnings, insufficient collateral, etc.

Bank referrals will be required for assistance through the fund. The money is expected to become available in August or September with the FORDI Board of Directors administering the newly created Business Development Fund.

Funds recaptured following the initial round of loans will be pooled by Four Rivers Development to create a regional revolving loan fund benefiting future projects in North Central Kansas. Recaptured funds could be available to FORDI's 10-county service area in as early as six months.

The FHLBank JOB Grants program has become increasingly competitive with only 41 of the 105 applications submit-

FORDI Service Area

Cloud County
Dickinson County
Ellsworth County
Jewell County
Lincoln County
Mitchell County
Ottawa County
Republic County
Saline County
Washington County

ted this year being funded. From the four-state FHLBank area, 15 applications were approved from Kansas, one from Colorado, 14 from Nebraska and 11 from Oklahoma.

"It is evident that a fund of this type is needed in our 10 counties as 26 of the 34 banks in North Central Kansas that are members of the Federal Home Loan Bank submitted an application on FORDI's behalf," says Debra Peters, FORDI General Manager.

Peters says the region will benefit from more projects going forward, result-

ing in more jobs being created or retained.

"The Business Development Fund will complement the North Central Regional Planning Commission's Revolving Loan Fund by increasing the amount of capital available to loan and by enabling the region to address some of the existing program's restrictions required by EDA," Peters says.

The NCRPC Revolving Loan Fund was created 14 years ago and has a capital base of \$814,000 with \$127,000 currently available to loan in the pool.

Four Rivers Development, Inc. is a 22-year old non-profit organization with locations in Beloit and Salina. It provides loan packaging services to businesses and banks in a 10-county area. For more information about the newly instituted Business Development Fund, contact Debra Peters at 785-738-2210 or 785-823-6106.

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

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