



Executive Board

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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.
Frank Rytch, Republic Co.
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Pepper Roberg
Lori Thielen
Jeff Maska
Jeff Gansel
Dell Gier
Rod Thompson
Brett Beck

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, May 30

Organization Development
Workshop (Second in a series)
Eisenhower Presidential
Library, Abilene, KS

Thursday, May 31, 2 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, June 28, 2 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, July 26, 2 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting

BOARD LEARNS ABOUT DEVELOPING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE REGION

NCRPC Executive Board members and guests had the opportunity to learn about affordable housing development on April 26 at the Planning Commission.

Two representatives, Cliff Mesner and Chris Lenz, from Mesner Development Co., Central City, Nebraska, were on hand to discuss their experience with constructing new housing in both Kansas and Nebraska.

The firm is owned by attorneys Cliff and Kathy Mesner. Chris Lenz first met the couple as their banker, but has since chosen to work full time with the Mesners.

"Since housing is a common subject of concern for all cities and counties, we wanted to bring in some outside expertise on developing affordable housing in the region," says John Cyr, NCRPC Executive Director.

"The information was well received and we now have



Chris Lenz

more information available on what it will take to proceed with this initiative."

Lenz explained that many of their developments are made possible with Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Many individuals have to be involved to see a project through. A typical "team" consists of a committed community, a developer, a local non-profit, an architect and engineer, a realtor and title agent, a builder, investors, accountants, lawyers and a lender.

A first step for a community interested in developing housing is to conduct a site and project specific



Cliff Mesner

housing study. "We do our homework to make sure a

need exists in a community first," Lenz says. "That helps ensure a successful project."

Mesner explained that using the tax credit program allows them to have a turn-key project.

"When the project is over and construction is complete, everything is done for the community," Mesner says. "It also works well because as individuals move into the new housing, it frees up three-bedroom homes in the community for young families to move into."

For more information about the housing development initiative, contact the NCRPC.

KAN STEP PROJECTS AWARDED IN REGION

Three KAN STEP projects were recently awarded to communities in North Central Kansas. The Kansas Department of Commerce announced the grants in March.

KAN STEP is a self-help program that helps communities make major infrastructure improvements. Local residents volunteer

labor or services ("sweat equity") and Commerce provides funds for technical services and materials.

The City of Hunter was awarded \$296,551 to build a new multi-purpose community center. Volunteers will donate an additional \$250,021 in labor and land.

The City of Hanover was

awarded \$300,000 to build a new multi-purpose community center. The City will contribute \$49,391 in cash and \$222,791 in donated labor.

Dickinson County was awarded \$299,952 to construct a new fire station in the city limits of Woodbine. Area residents will donate \$239,130 in labor.

DID YOU KNOW?



The 2008 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant schedule was announced at the CDBG application workshop in Junction City on April 24-25.

The grant application deadlines are as follows:

Housing

App. Due Aug. 31, 2007
Awards on Jan. 5, 2008

Water & Sewer

App. Due Sept. 28, 2007
Awards on Jan. 10, 2008

Community Facilities

App. Due Nov. 1, 2007
Awards on Jan. 24, 2008

KAN STEP

App. Due Jan. 2, 2008
or July 1, 2008

Economic Development

App. Due first Friday of every month.
Awards approximately 45 days after deadline.

One of the biggest changes announced is that the KAN STEP program is evolving from an open application format to a competitive process with two application deadlines each year.

Now is the time to plan projects and conduct income surveys if necessary. If your city or county is interested in applying to the CDBG program, please contact our office soon. We will be glad to assist.

FROM THE DIRECTOR: PROGRESS IS BEING MADE ON NCRPC INITIATIVES

There are a number of things of note that have occurred since our last newsletter related to the ongoing special initiatives of the Planning Commission. What follows is an inside view of what the NCRPC is doing on behalf of its membership.

Tax Credit Program

The North Central Kansas Community Network Co. (NCKCN) continues to receive private sector donations in support of its regional economic development program, this time a \$262,239 donation made in April from a source that prefers to remain anonymous. That means the NCRPC - NCKCN team has raised almost \$1.2 Million through placement of state tax credits arising from the Kansas Rural Business Development Tax Credit Program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

GIS/GPS

The North Central Kansas Technical College (NCKTC) has informed the NCRPC that the Kansas Board of Regents recently approved the new GIS / GPS training program the college developed this past year, involving the NCRPC in the planning process in so doing. One novel aspect about the program is that it has the full support of Fort Hays State University. NCKTC and FHSU have entered into an agreement whereby future graduates of the NCKTC GIS / GPS program will have the op-

From the Director's Desk

John Cyr has been the NCRPC Executive Director since 1986.

tion of transferring any credits earned at NCKTC to FHSU if the student chooses to continue his or her formal education. Such a resource in North Central Kansas means area cities and counties seeking to create a GIS program can now turn to NCKTC for high-level, on-going support. It also means students attending the college will now receive training on cutting-edge technology involving both GIS and GPS information systems.

AMI/NISTAC

The NCRPC is continuing to work with both the Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI) and the National Institute for Strategic Technology Acquisition and Commercialization (NISTAC) at Kansas State University in an attempt to develop a process whereby the knowledge and skills of AMI can be accessed in support of patents placed by NISTAC in the North Central Kansas region. In April NISTAC provided a demonstration of the patent databases accessible via a variety of websites as one means of introducing

prospective new ideas to area businesses. Those presenting the demonstration included Ruth Nellis, Director, Information Management, NISTAC; Dr. Jeff Zacharakis, Department of Educational Leadership, KSU; and Chris Ostrom, Graduate Student. Meanwhile, AMI continues to expand the services of its operation so it can now provide not only engineering support in product development, but also market identification and business development support, specializing in first-to-market strategies.

Online Journal of Public Policy and Research

One website sponsored by the NCRPC, this being the "Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy" (www.ojrrp.org) is adding a new feature this month. Shortly, readers will be able to view 5 to 10 minute video clips of the authors discussing the subject of their paper. This feature exhibits the application of leading edge technology and provides us with a glimpse of future web publications. Tom Gould, Editor and KSU Professor in the School of Journalism, sees this adding value to a site that is intended to spur additional thinking about rural conditions and development concerns.

We invite you to join us for the second workshop in the NCK Organization Development Series on May 30 in Abilene. More information is in this issue.

CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOCUS OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT SESSION

Regional leadership was represented among the approximately 25 individuals who took part in the first NCK Organization Development Series workshop on March 12.

With a title of "Constructive Partnerships: The Board and Executive Director Relationship," the focus was on the respective duties of the two major parts of any nonprofit organization and the resulting expectations of their performance.

The facilitator was Michael Daigneault from BoardSource, Inc. in Washington, D.C. Daigneault is a senior governance consultant for BoardSource and has made previous trips to North Central Kansas.

The workshop was the first in a four-part series that is being partially funded with donations to North Central Kansas Community Network, Co. (NCKCN) resulting from the placement of 75% state tax credits from the Kansas Rural Business Develop-



Michael Daigneault

ment Tax Credit Program as administered by the North Central Regional Planning Commission on behalf of North Central Kansas.

NCRPC Executive Director John Cyr says the day was informative in explaining the basic responsibilities of a nonprofit board and its executive director.

"Michael stressed that the board sets the tone and the director carries it out," Cyr says. "It's basically a two-way sounding board and you ideally want both elements to be very strong."

Daigneault says this means understanding that both sides will be challenged occasionally.

While the executive di-



The Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene hosted the session on March 12.

rector is often the visible part of the organization, it was stated that it is the board itself that is the organization.

"We learned that if board members do not see themselves in that role, it can become an issue," Cyr says. "A board should be invested emotionally and be willing to give of their time, talent and knowledge."

Nonprofit staff members then carry out the functions of an organization as directed by the board.

The dates of the remaining three workshops have been set and are below. Mark your calendars now.

MEET THE BOARD

Virgil Palen has served on the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners and the NCRPC Board since 2001.

He started Palen Construction Company in 1962

and operated the business for 44 years.



Virgil Palen

Virgil completed a variety of projects in his business, with the majority relating to soil conservation such as building terraces, waterways and ponds. He estimates he has built 2 million feet of terraces in his lifetime. In March 2006 Virgil sold his equipment and retired from his business, but continues to maintain roads in the Pittsburg and Carr Creek Townships in Mitchell County.

A 1957 graduate of Tipton High School, he also serves on the Mitchell County Economic Development Board and has been active in the Knights of Columbus, the Lion's Club and the Booster Club in Tipton.

Virgil and his wife, Betty, were both born and raised in Tipton and continue to live there today. They have four sons and one daughter and seven grandchildren. Virgil enjoys golfing and watching their grandchildren's activities in his spare time.

NCK ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Miss the first workshop in the series? Save the following dates for the remaining workshops:

Wednesday, May 30, 2007: "Strategic Thinking When Creating a Culture of Inquiry"

What is "strategic thinking," how does it differ from "strategic planning" and why is the development of such a thought process necessary? (*Register by May 23, 2007*)

Friday, Sept. 28, 2007: "The Ethos of Transparency and Its Importance to Non-Profit Operation"

How nonprofits can engage prospective donors and then ensure their satisfaction with projects paid for by the proceeds of their donations.

Friday, November 2, 2007: "Continuous Learning and Revitalization"

How boards evaluate their successes and failures yet ensure the continued interest of board members.

Cost: \$25/person/workshop. For Registration Information Call the NCRPC at 785-738-2218.

NEW ACADEMY OPENS IN FORMER SCHOOL IN ESBON

White Rock Academy, Inc. recently opened as a start-up state-licensed treatment facility for adolescents ages 11 to 18 in the former grade school building in Esbon.

The facility specializes in working with adolescents with behavioral and/or emotional problems who require a level of structure and treatment beyond that available in traditional outpatient clinics, but who do not require inpatient psychiatric care. The academy is licensed for 36 students.

The School District closed the grade school's doors in May 2006 and the building was purchased in June 2006. The building offers adequate square footage and amenities for the success of a residential center for youth.

"The majority of all equipment and supplies were left in the school for the business to operate as a turnkey operation, thanks to Superintendent Mr. Bill Walker and the School Board," Ted Madsen, Executive Director

and Founder, said.

Ted and his son, Todd, manage the academy. Ted has a bachelor's degree in special education and worked in the industry for 5 years. Todd Madsen is Director of Business Operations. White Rock Academy Corporation has also designated an Advisory Board to provide advice to the Executive Director and Board of Directors regarding the business of the company and other services as may be required.

The Madsen's are originally from Utah where buildings similar to the Esbon school no longer exist and the labor market is drying up. As a result, those wanting to enter the business or expand an operation are looking for alternative locations. Kansas provided that alternative for the Madsen's.

The rural setting provides a unique opportunity for adolescents to experience the Heartland of America and its way of life.

"We have arranged for our clients to have an op-



Ted Madsen (left) and his son, Todd, manage the day-to-day operations at the newly opened White Rock Academy in Esbon, Kansas.

portunity to participate on a working dairy and learn about getting milk from farm to market," Ted said. "The setting is an opportunity to teach work ethic and responsibility that interfaces with Positive Peer Culture principles."

The academy also provides opportunities for community service for students to build self-esteem and personal satisfaction.

According to Susan Topliff, Jewell County Community Development Association Coordinator, the academy is a win-win situation.

"The success of this start-up business will

greatly improve the quality of life in Esbon and Jewell County by providing an excellent use for an existing facility, creating jobs for the area, and bringing visitors to the school who will in turn

have an impact on local restaurants and motels," Topliff said.

This start-up business was funded with loans from the Guaranty State Bank & Trust Company of Esbon, the North Central Regional Planning Commission Revolving Loan Fund Program, the NCK Business Development Fund, and an investment from the owner.

"The services offered by Four Rivers Development, Inc. were very instrumental in making all this come together for us," Ted said.

For more information, visit www.whiterockrtc.com.

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

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