



Season's Greetings!

# NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional  
Planning Commission

www.ncrpc.org

December 2007/January 2008

## Executive Board

### Chair:

Marcia Funke, Washington Co.

### Vice Chair:

David Thurlow, Clay Co.

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Chuck Heidrick, City of Beloit

### Executive Board Members:

Steve Errebo, Lincoln Co.

Mark Freel, City of Minneapolis

Dwight Frost, Jewell Co.

Bill Garrison, Cloud Co.

Judy Irvin, City of Salina

Mick Keating, Marshall Co.

Vicki Koepsel, Saline Co.

Jonathan Mitchell,

City of Ellsworth

Joe Nold, Dickinson Co.

Virgil Palen, Mitchell Co.

Abner Perney, City of Salina

Kermit Rush, Ellsworth Co.

Frank Rytych, 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

## Upcoming Events

### Holiday Office Schedule

Our offices will close at the end of the business day on December 21 and will reopen January 2. Happy New Year! Thank you for letting us serve you throughout the past year.

**Thursday, January 31, 2 p.m.**

Executive Board Meeting

## BOARD REVITALIZATION, CONTINUOUS LEARNING FOCUS OF FINAL WORKSHOP

Continuous learning and revitalization for nonprofit boards was emphasized in the last session in a four-part series that has been dedicated to organization development.

The final session took place November 2 in Concordia.

Michael Daigneault, senior governance consultant with BoardSource, facilitated the session. BoardSource is a nonprofit organization focused on increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations by strengthening boards of directors.

Daigneault says establishing a learning culture in a board takes effort. Some of the ways in which this can be supported is by welcoming questions, encouraging different viewpoints, explaining unwritten rules, exchanging timely information, and communicating openly.

Three major issues are changing the ways that boards communicate.

"What's the new balance going to be in the future of face-to-face versus virtual methods?"

Daigneault asked the group. "There are generational, technological and demographic changes driving major changes in the ways that boards operate and communicate."

(See *Boards*, page 2)



Michael Daigneault facilitated the session on November 2 in Concordia.

### Ideas to Continuously Educate Board Members

*One group exercise during the session was to brainstorm steps that a board could take to continuously educate board members.*

*The following ideas were shared:*

- Board orientation (i.e. Board member-to-board member, Staff-to-board member, Outside facilitator-to-board)
- Periodic board training (i.e. BoardSource)
- Member manual/notebook (Recommended to be online to ensure most current version is accessible to all)
- Board retreats
- Website (i.e. Board portal on web, podcasts, blogs, listservs, password protected area for sensitive board information, etc.)
- Newsletter
- E-newsletter or E-mail updates
- Subscriptions to relevant literature/journals/etc.
- Provide carefully chosen information or articles of interest to board members
- Encourage board members to attend specialized conferences and pay fees to attend, etc.
- Encourage open dialogue with staff/others
- Invite past chairs or board members to speak
- Survey and provide survey results to board members

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Youth Contest for Cash**

Do you know of a high school senior in need of some cash?

High school seniors are invited to participate in the 2008 RuralVoices contest by preparing an original work based on the theme, "Rural Kansas...A Proud Heritage."

The contest, sponsored by NCRPC, is in its second year. The top three entries will be recognized with publication on the EyeonKansas web site and cash awards of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250.

The original work, which should be a reflection of the theme, may be presented as a written commentary, photo essay, or video. Written work must be a minimum of 1,000 words, photo essays must contain 10 to 20 photographs, and videos must be no longer than 10 minutes. Entries are due March 1, 2008.

Any senior in high school who lives in or attends a public or private high school in the 12-county NCRPC service area is eligible. Home school students in this same area may also participate.

For more information, contact Debra Ohlde at the NCRPC at 785-446-3775 or by e-mailing [dcohlde@nckcn.com](mailto:dcohlde@nckcn.com) or visit [eyeonkansas.org](http://eyeonkansas.org) and click on the "RuralVoices" link. All entries must include the entry form located at the above link.

**FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: CHANGES TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TRANSITION**

Now is falling outside and the end of another calendar year is well in sight.

It is therefore time to announce coming changes, since next year — 2008 — will see old faces assume new roles while fresh faces are brought on board to fill personnel openings. And if everything proceeds as planned, all the changes should be transparent and involve a minimum of service disruption.

Doug McKinney and Debra Ohlde have been identified as the next Executive Director and Assistant Director respectively of the North Central Regional Planning Commission. The Board made this decision at its November meeting with the plan being for Doug and Deb to

**From the Director's Desk**



*John Cyr has been the NCRPC Executive Director since 1986.*

assume their new roles on April 1, 2008, the beginning of NCRPC Fiscal Year 2009. I will continue as Executive Director until that date, after which I will begin my new part-time supporting role.

Carol Torkelson will become Housing Director on January 1, 2008, in response to Connie Cyr stepping away from that position and assuming her new

role as reported elsewhere in this edition. Margaret Cathey, meanwhile, has already assumed the role of Weatherization Program Director, this occurring in 2007.

Pepper Roberg will become General Office Manager beginning January 1, 2008, overseeing not only the day-to-day office supply needs, but the financial bookkeeping as well. This means there will be a new receptionist answering the phones and greeting guests at the door. That individual has yet to be identified.

If it is not readily apparent, the NCRPC should be proud of its personnel for they have both the capacity and capability to grow and absorb change, and thereby benefit the North Central Kansas region.

**(From Boards, page 1)**

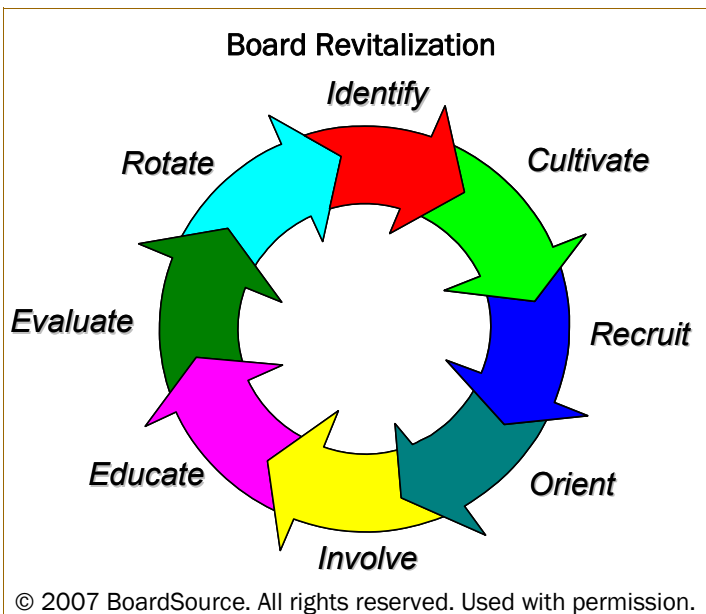
Daigneault says that board revitalization should be a constant, ongoing and cyclical process as illustrated in the following graphic from BoardSource.

"The best boards don't happen by accident," Daigneault says. "Boards that are exceptional are intentional and have a strategy in place to develop a board rather than just putting a body into an open slot."

This development series was partially paid for by funds donated to the North Central Kansas Community Network, Inc. through placement of 75% state tax credits from the Kan-

sas Rural Business Development Tax Credit Program.

For more on BoardSource, visit [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org).



## MINNEAPOLIS RECEIVES KDOT PROJECT

Minneapolis will get \$250,000 from the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.

The award is Phase II funding. The city received Phase I last year.

Mark Freel, Minneapolis Economic Director, is one of the partners in the project. Other key partners include the Ottawa County Health Department, the Minneapolis Police Department and USD 239.

Phase I involved surveying students, interviewing parents, and studying how safety could be improved.

"What we found in the planning process was that because the infrastructure and sidewalks were not in place, parents were driving their kids to school and causing congestion," Freel says. "It's a vicious cycle."

Phase II will construct

almost 7,000 linear feet of sidewalks and install 64 ADA ramps. Education and promotional materials will also be created and distributed. Sidewalk

construction will begin around the Junior High and Grade School buildings and work out to the key routes that were identified in Phase I.

"Partnering really made this project work," Freel says. "It's going to benefit the entire community."

The intent of the SRTS program is to enable and encourage children to walk or bicycle to school; make walking or biking to school



School traffic makes this Minneapolis street congested, similar to many communities.

safe and appealing; and facilitate projects that will improve safety, and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of the school.

Also in the region, the City of Abilene and the Salina School District both received Phase I funding.

Visit <http://ksdot.org/burTrafficEng/sztoolbox/> for more information about the program.

## MEET THE BOARD



Joe Nold joined the NCRPC Board in 2005 after being elected to the Dickinson County Board of Commissioners.

He is a retired Executive Vice President of the Coleman Co., Inc. where he was responsible for 26 manufacturing and distribution operations world wide. During his 30-year career with Coleman, he lived in Kansas, Pennsylvania, California, Colorado, Nebraska and Florida.

Locally, he is president of the Dickinson County Community Foundation, secretary of the Kiwanis Club, finance chair at Abilene First United Methodist Church and serves on the Coronado Area Council of Boy Scouts of America.

He is also past president and current board member of the Dickinson County Community Foundation.

Joe received a bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State University and served with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division.

He and his wife, June, have three grown children, Jill, Jeff and Joe Jr., and six grandchildren. Joe enjoys woodworking, flower gardening and developing wildlife habitat.

## LONG-TIME EMPLOYEE TO SCALE BACK

Long-time NCRPC employee, Connie Cyr, will step down as Housing Director and into a part-time position beginning in January.

Cyr has served the Planning Commission for over 27 years in a variety of roles.

Her first assignment with the NCRPC was as Weatherization Program Coordinator. She was promoted to Weatherization Program Director in 1982. As the NCRPC moved into housing rehabilitation, she assumed the directorship of all housing programs

offered by the organization in 1992.

Connie is a familiar face among many communities in the region. She has been involved with 26 housing rehabilitation projects since 1993 in 11 out of the 12 counties in the region resulting in nearly \$20 million.

In 1995 she received the "Partnership Apprecia-



Connie Cyr

tion Award" from Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing, acknowledging her work helping numerous North Central Kansas communities recover from the 1993 flooding.

"It's been challenging because programs are always evolving and you have to keep up, but it's also rewarding," Cyr says.

Connie has taken a particular interest in trying to locate additional partners and resources to help fill gaps for homeowners.

"I truly enjoy meeting and working with different people," Cyr says.

## NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS RURAL BUSINESS TAX CREDIT INITIATIVE MAKES FIRST LOAN TO PLANT AT SCANDIA

An ethanol plant near Scandia was the recipient of the first loan made by the North Central Kansas Rural Business Tax Credit Initiative.

Forty-three percent of the equity for the multi-million dollar project for Nesika Energy, LLC, was provided by 28 investors mostly from North Central Kansas. Banker's Bank provided third party participation financing for the project. In addition, the Rural Business Development Tax Credit Program and NCK Business Development Fund provided financing to purchase specialized equipment.

Nesika Energy, LLC, headquartered in Scandia, was formed for the purpose of constructing, owning and operating an ethanol plant. Planning for the project began in October 2005, with groundbreaking taking place a year later on October 3, 2006. The plant is about 10 miles south of

the Kansas-Nebraska state line, adjacent to the Premium Feeders, Inc. feedlot. It is getting set to begin production in January.

Corn will be the primary feedstock for the plant. It is expected to grind 3.6 million bushels of corn, produce 10 million gallons of ethanol, and produce 80,000 tons of wet distillers grain per year. The plant is estimated to create 15 jobs. It is the first plant of this size to be built.

The principal revenue source will be the sale of ethanol as a clean burning fuel additive. The byproduct of the ethanol production process, distillers wet grain (DWG), will also be sold. DWG is a desirable feedstock for cattle feedlots and dairies and it is anticipated to be utilized by feedlots within a 50-mile radius of the plant.

According to the Renewable Fuels Association, there are currently 115

operating ethanol plants in the U.S., eight of which are in Kansas. Many more are under construction or in the planning stages.

The tax credit financing was made possible, in part, from private contributions made to the North Central Kansas Community Network (NCKCN) through use of the Kansas Rural Business Development Tax Credit Program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The NCK Business Development Fund's purpose is to enhance both job creation and job preservation in the 10 counties it serves by providing gap financing for business projects. The NCK Business Development Fund is one project development tool provided by Four Rivers Development, Inc. (FORDI). It was created by a donation from Astra Bank and other banks in the region.

John Cyr, who provides administrative oversight for

the North Central Kansas Rural Business Development Tax Credit Initiative, says they were pleased to provide financing for a small part of this significant project.

"A project of this magnitude offers many benefits to the county, the region and even to the state," Cyr says. "Whether it's the jobs it will create or the new business opportunities resulting from the construction and operation of a new industry or simply increased tax revenues/tax base — it all has the potential to be beneficial to the region."

For more information on Nesika Energy, LLC, visit [www.nesikaenergyllc.com](http://www.nesikaenergyllc.com).

For more information on the Rural Business Development Tax Credit Initiative, contact John Cyr at 785-738-2218. For more information on the NCK Business Development Fund, contact Debra Peters at 785-738-2210.

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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