

NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional Planning Commission
Serving Kansans Since 1972

February/March 2009
www.ncrpc.org

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Rod Thompson

Carol Torkelson

Todd Tuttle

Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 26, 2 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 29

CDBG Application Workshops

Location and times to be announced.

Thursday, April 30, 2 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting

HOUSEHOLD WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM ACTIVE, RECEIVING MORE FUNDS IN 2009

The weatherization program, which was first initiated in 1979 with its purpose being to increase the energy efficiency of qualified residential housing, is still going strong.

In fact, the NCRPC, which oversees the weatherization of housing in 33 Kansas counties, expects to have twice as much money to spend in the 2009-2010 program year as compared to this year, according to NCRPC Weatherization Director Margaret Cathey.

Funding for the program comes from Department of Energy (DOE) and Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP).

Eligibility for the weatherization program is based solely on income and verification is required. All weatherization work is done at no cost to the individual resident. If the dwelling is a rental unit, the landlord must sign a landlord release before any materials will be installed.

If an application is approved, a pre-inspection is done to determine the amount of work necessary to weatherize the home, in addition to checking safety of heating appliances.

"It's pretty much on a first come-first served basis," Cathey says. "We try to get homes inspected and in the works just as

soon as the application is approved."

Cathey says some program changes will be made in this coming year.

"We will begin testing refrigerators for efficiency so we might replace some of those units. Another change is we will be able to install central air furnaces in homes where it would work well. In the past the program could not pay for ductwork so we installed similar-style furnaces as were already there."

The NCRPC has four inspectors on staff to do weatherization inspections. In addition, there is a pool of about six contractors who regularly bid on the work. Contractors' work is guaranteed for one year.

For more information, contact Cathey at 785-738-2218. A service area map, income guidelines, and an application in a pdf format is available by visiting our Web site at www.ncrpc.org/services/housing_weatherization.html.

WEATHERIZATION SUCCESS STORY



Archie and Lorraine Hale are an elderly couple who still live in the home they bought for \$6,500 when they married. In 2008 their Abilene home was weatherized by the NCRPC.

The Hale's have been pleased with the difference in comfort since the work was completed. They now have a double sided wall furnace that blows heat into the hallway by their bathroom and bedrooms as well as into the living room where their floor furnace had been located. The Hale's home had only 2" of insulation in the attic; contractors blew an additional 8" giving them an R-value of R-38. Insulation was also installed on the crawl space walls and vapor barrier was laid on the dirt in the crawl space. They estimate their heating bills have been cut by a third.



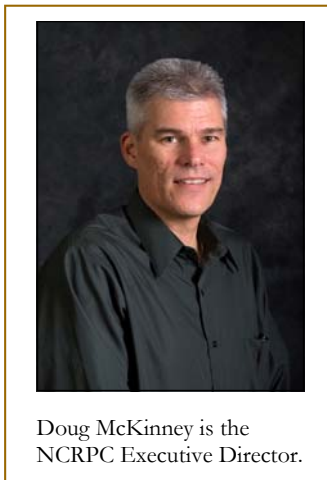
AGRITOURISM WORKSHOPS TO BE IN CONCORDIA

To learn more about Agritourism and how it might work for you, two FREE info meetings will be held in your area on April 14th, 6:15-8:30 pm at the OCCK building in Concordia and April 15th, 1:15 - 3:30 pm at Smoky Hill Vineyards & Winery in Salina. A workshop series titled "Agritourism: Your Next Cash Crop?" will then be offered in May. This series is for you if you have been thinking about an agritourism or nature-based business, if you have a business and wish to expand it, or if you have or would like to have a business that supports agritourism or nature-based tourism. The series includes five half-day sessions on May 7, 12, 14, 19 and 21 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the OCCK building in Concordia. The instructors will be from the KSBDC and Jan Janzten, Director of Rural Tourism Development and owner of Kansas Flint Hills Adventures, LLC. The cost is \$95 per person and includes the sessions, a light lunch, and a workbook. For more information call the KSBDC at 800-729-5101 x324 or for the registration form go to www.KansasCrossroads.com.

FROM THE DIRECTOR: HOUSING AND WEATHERIZATION PROGRAMS BENEFICIAL

Shelter, food and clothing are basic provisions of life for humans. We hear from householders seeking important changes such as help with a failed furnace while others are challenged to seal a drafty window sill. So, we engage the many resources available such as those cited in this newsletter to aid residents in northern Kansas.

Efficient energy use remains a growing concern for all of us. That is one reason the household Weatherization Assistance Program exists. Whether or not you agree with The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act all of us should agree with the concept of reducing energy consumption. This initiative is being boosted by the stimulus plan. The intent of amplifying it is multi-



Doug McKinney is the NCRPC Executive Director.

faceted. For the average low income household in Kansas, 14% of their income is spent on utilities, while other households expend only about 4% of their incomes. Resulting are fewer delinquencies and less utility emergencies. The dollars saved are then available for spending elsewhere in the local and regional

economies. The U.S. Department of Energy research reveals every dollar spent on weatherizing a home multiplies to about \$2 in area economic benefits.

We at the NCRPC believe the program is very helpful and we want to bring it to homes in your community just as we have for the past three decades. We are looking for applicants and are seeking to broaden the contractor pool throughout the service area. Please contact the office with any questions.

Finally, I wish to salute two more persons who are departing from the NCRPC Board. Thank you to Jonathan Mitchell and Abner Perney. The time and energy they brought to the organization has been encouraging.

BOARD MEMBERS RECOGNIZED



Two Executive Board Members were recognized on February 26 for their service to the NCRPC.

Pictured top left is Abner Perney and Vice chair Steve Erbeo. Perney has represented Salina on the board since 2006. Pictured below left is Jonathan Mitchell and Erbeo. Mitchell has represented Ellsworth on the board since 2005. Both will be stepping away from the board this spring. We thank them for their contributions.



CPR TRAINING

Sixteen staff members from the Planning Commission were certified using the curriculum of the AHA Heartsaver CPR Program. Mitchell County EMS Director, Ed Debasis, led the course on January 29 in Beloit.

COMMUNITIES TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FOR HOUSING REHABILITATION, REPAIRS

The City of Abilene will soon be able to tap into its \$250,000 grant for Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance Awards made possible by the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program. Kansas Housing Resources Corporation administers the HOME program.

The NCRPC assisted Abilene with its application and is providing the grant administration.

The program allows municipalities to distribute the housing rehab grants in the form of deferred loans that are non-interest bearing, requiring repayment only if the rehabbed property is sold within three years.

Two other parts of the region will receive

assistance through a different program – the USDA's Housing Preservation Grant Program. These funds are provided to local non-profits. The NCRPC applied for and was awarded \$48,000 to help provide financial assistance for the repair/rehabilitation of eight lower-income owner-

occupied homes in Linn and Clifton.

Some cities have inquired about how the HOME program differs from the CDBG Housing Rehabilitation program. What follows is a brief comparison. For more information, contact the NCRPC Housing Director, Carol Torkelson.

CDBG PROGRAM

- Per rehab limit-\$18,000*
- Rental units allowed
- Demolition allowed
- Match not required
- Longer application to award period (Aug. to Jan.)
- Target area limitations
- <20% of applications funded
- Administration fees are funded in grant.

*(slated to increase in 2009-2010)

HOME PROGRAM

- Per rehab limit-\$25,000
- Homeowner only
- No demolition allowed
- Matching funds of 25%
- Shorter application to award period (Aug. to Nov.)
- City wide program
- Less application competition
- Administration limited to 5% of project costs; city must inject an additional 5% (not considered match).

MEET THE BOARD



Vicki Koepsel joined the NCRPC Board of Directors in August 2004 after becoming the Planning and Zoning Director for Saline County. In her role, she is responsible for administering zoning regulations and the floodplain program, coordinating county building permits, enforcing regulations, updating the county's comprehensive plan, and administering tax exemption, industrial revenue bond and enterprise zone programs. Previously, she worked as a Senior Planner for the City of Salina, a Long Range Planner for the City of Hutchinson, a Long Range Planner for Kitsap County, Washington, and a Planner for ERO Resources in Denver, Colorado.

Vicki has bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. She is involved with the Boy Scouts of America, DVACK of Salina and the Friends of the Smoky Hill River. Vicki and her son, Taylor, enjoy hiking, camping, kayaking, bicycling and swimming.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCES CDBG AWARD, AVERAGE RATES, WORKSHOP

The City of Blue Rapids was notified earlier this year that it will receive \$230,425 through the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to construct an underground water storage tank.

The project will also include demolishing the existing storage tank that was constructed in the 1930s. The local match includes another \$230,425 in the form of a loan through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The Department of Commerce, in a February

newsletter, stated that some water and sewer grants were awarded in January from carryover dollars because of public health and safety concerns.

Commerce reports that as soon as its 2009 HUD allocation is received, other CDBG awards will be made. These were not available at publishing time.

Updated average water and sewer rates for the state were also recently announced. These are important to note for communities in terms of a self assessment of their own situation, and important to know for grant

competitiveness, particularly if a community is applying for a CDBG water or sewer grant. The average rates (all calculated to 5,000 gallons) are as follows:

City Water: \$31.05

RWD Water: \$47.51

City Sewer: \$26.24

A CDBG application workshop will take place April 29 to give details about the next annual application round. If you would like to be notified of workshop details or if you would like to request NCRPC assistance with a project, call the NCRPC main office at 785-738-2218.

CT FABRICATION, LLC OPERATING IN REPUBLIC COUNTY

A large building just east of Scandia that had been vacant for several years received new life when CT Fabrication, LLC purchased it in 2007.

The building, located along US Highway 36, formerly served as a sweet corn processing plant.

“Before Jess Anderson, owner of CT Fabrication, purchased the building it was empty for five years and community members were concerned and discouraged that the large building would remain empty,” says Clare Kuhn, former Republic County Economic Development Coordinator. “When Jess purchased the building, community members and local government leaders were supportive and quick to assist the business with a variety of needs, recognizing the potential for growth and job creation in Republic County.”

CT Fabrication, LLC is a start-up business owned by Jess Anderson, Gillette, Wyoming. Mike Kasl

manages the operation locally.

The business manufactures steel water tanks and vacuum semi trailers to be used for natural gas and oil drilling rigs in Texas and other states. The tanks hold 24,000 gallons of water.

The business began with seven full-time and three part-time employees to carry out welding, assembly, electrical and plumbing work on the tanks. As of December 2008, CT Fabrication, LLC has 16 full-time equivalent employees.

With approximately 25,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space, CT Fabrication can take advantage of concentrating manufacturing under one roof in an energy efficient insulated plant.

A recent project added an office addition to the building. Prior to the office construction, managers were using an office in nearby Belleville.



CT Fabrication, LLC, is located just east of Scandia along US Highway 36. It made use of a former vegetable processing plant.

Now, managers can be on site where production is taking place. In addition, an overhead crane was purchased and installed.



Funding for the office addition and crane purchase were provided by the owner, Four Rivers Development, Inc.’s (FORDI) North Central Kansas Business Development Fund and NetWork Kansas.

Water tanks like the one pictured here are manufactured at CT Fabrication, LLC.

For more information about the funding programs used, contact Debra Peters, FORDI Manager, at 785-738-2210 or dpeters@nckcn.com.

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Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy
www.ojrrp.org
Eye on Kansas
www.eyeonkanssas.org

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