



# NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional Planning Commission  
Serving Kansans Since 1972

October/November 2009  
www.ncrpc.org

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## Upcoming Events

**Thursday, December 3, 2 p.m.**  
Executive Board Meeting

**Thursday, January 28, 2 p.m.**  
Executive Board Meeting

**Thursday, February 25, 2 p.m.**  
Executive Board Meeting

## CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN TAKES EFFORT, ORGANIZATION

Although it is often the arrival of spring that brings a desire for communities to concentrate on clean-up campaigns, there are many things that can be done in advance to prepare for these events.

This is especially true of communities that may be considering applying for funding for housing rehabilitation projects.

Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, says it is important for communities to have ordinances and enforce what they may already have on the books.

Ordinances, at a minimum, should address Nuisance Abatement and Health and Safety. While this is important for all communities, this is critical to be competitive for funding through the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Rehabilitation program. The League of Kansas Municipalities has sample ordinances available.

"When the NCRPC is invited to speak to a community about a prospective housing rehabilitation project, nearly 90% of those communities have adopted ordinances, but probably more like 50% of those are actually enforcing what they have," Torkelson says.



One clean-up event included the loading and hauling away of old appliances, furniture and junk iron in this North Central Kansas community.



Many communities have at least one dilapidated property such as the one above. This structure has since been demolished with assistance from a CDBG grant.

Darla Bebber, Miltonvale City Clerk, says that enforcing ordinances is not always popular. The city has nuisance ordinances that include tall grass, vehicles, dangerous structures, and other nuisances such as trash in yards and appliances. The city's code books were revised with assistance from the League of Kansas Municipalities in 1997.

"You will have resistance," Bebber says. "My advice is to decide before you move forward

as a council if you will be ready for resistance and be willing to stick to your guns." Once improvement begins to be visible in a community, it tends to encourage

further clean-up efforts.

"Residents begin to take pride in their property and neighborhood," Torkelson says.

Many communities sponsor annual clean-up days where they haul old cars, scrap iron, and appliances. Some landfills waive fees for disposal.

The City of Narka began several clean-up campaigns in 2005. In an effort to keep work days fun for volunteers, they were sometimes followed by community hot dog roasts. Narka was awarded a CDBG Housing Rehabilitation grant in 2007. As a result, seven dilapidated structures were demolished and 15 housing units were rehabilitated.

Miltonvale has had two housing grants in the past. In addition, the city has demolished six units with its own funds in the last three years.

*(Continued on page 2)*



#### FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

Grants are available to qualified community foundations in Kansas through GROW II, a second chapter of the Kansas Health Foundation's Giving Resources to Our World (GROW) Healthy Kansas Initiative.

Building on the success of the original GROW program, the main goals of GROW II are to 1) to help more Kansas community foundations build permanent resources that will measurably improve the health of local residents, and 2) to support collaboration and alliances among community foundations to ensure a well-managed and self-sufficient community foundation field in Kansas.

GROW II Programs include Matching Grants (\$300,000 to \$800,000), Operating Grants (3.5% of the Matching Grant awarded), Training and Consulting Support, and Planning Grants (\$5,000 to \$100,000).

Complete GROW II information including eligibility requirements, program guidelines and an application form can be accessed at [www.kansashealth.org](http://www.kansashealth.org).

## FROM THE DIRECTOR: CHANGE MAY BE DIFFICULT AT TIMES, BUT OFTEN NEEDED

My family and I have had the privilege to visit a few unique places in Kansas and elsewhere in this great country of ours. One time we were venturing along a winding road when we came across a large flock of sheep moving down the road toward us. A lone shepherd with his dog was in our path, leading his flock out of summer pasture and to winter quarters closer to the farmstead.

We pulled to the side of the road and waited while the flock ambled by us. We watched until they were out of sight and I contemplated whether animals fear change or relocation to new places.

Like most persons, I like the "fold" or the old, familiar places. But I have realized change occurs



Doug McKinney is the NCRPC Executive Director.

whether we like it or even realize it. Taking no action will result in change, for better or worse. So each of us may be nudged or directed away from familiar surroundings. As a state transportation official recently stated, we have to be prepared for some change each day.

The NCRPC has gone through some changes this

year. Whether responding to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act efforts or new regulations and community interests, we are trying to respond.

Explained further in this issue are the business finance services still being offered with the same competency; now fully through the NCRPC.

Additionally, our interest in community and individual health is featured. Community pride and efforts to make our places more inviting to others are challenges that warrant attention.

This issue also contains discussion on the increasingly important subject of the H1N1 virus.

Check out our website at [www.ncrpc.org](http://www.ncrpc.org) and contact the office if you have questions about us or our program offerings.

### *(Continued from page 1)*

Dan Kahl, in a Kansas State University Kansas PRIDE publication, lists five areas that are important to a successful and sustainable community clean-up effort.

#### **1. Organizing for Success**

Identify key individuals to form the core planning committee.

#### **2. Establishing Clear Project Goals & Plans**

Keep the project scope achievable. Develop a detailed plan that includes what will be done, when, how, and by whom.

#### **3. Advertising the Event**

Demonstrate to the public that people are concerned about

beautification and show why a clean-up effort is important.

#### **4. Project Execution**

Inform leaders of community organizations and others about the campaign and follow up asking for help. Make volunteers feel welcome and give them a job to do. After the event, gather volunteers to celebrate the work done.

#### **5. Sustaining the Effort**

Remember that community clean-up projects serve more purposes than just physical "picking up." They also create opportunities for fellowship and investment in the community.

For additional information, visit [www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu](http://www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu) and search *Conducting a Clean-Up Fix-Up Campaign*.

For any community considering applying for a CDBG grant, the next step after adopting and enforcing ordinances is to conduct a housing interest survey to determine a target area. Contact Torkelson at the NCRPC for additional information.

While it takes work, cleaning up is worth it.

"It will sometimes feel as if it is a never ending battle, but first impressions are everything for a community," Bebbler says.

## BUSINESS FINANCE PROGRAM MODIFIED

Recent changes have improved the transparency of the NCRPC's program of business finance. Previously, the effort was spearheaded by Four Rivers Development, Inc. (FORDI), an affiliate staffed by the NCRPC. Now, the NCRPC has stepped forward and assumed full responsibility for the services offered.

The modification will not affect personnel. Debra Peters will continue to be the primary contact for such service, only now she is the NCRPC Business Finance Director.

The main change people will see is the territory served has now been expanded to include all 12 NCRPC member

counties. The primary service goal, however, remains that of increasing both bank and business access to specialized financing for projects in North Central Kansas. The main objective is to package loans that illustrate program options to start, expand, or purchase a business.

"We are able to help customers access financing from a number of specialized programs," Peters says.

That statement has been borne out in the past 25 years since such services, whether through FORDI or the NCRPC itself, have resulted in packaged private business loans in excess of \$80.7 million benefiting more than 300

businesses and creating / retaining 1,845 jobs in the region.

The programs frequently tapped include the NCRPC Revolving Loan Fund and the Four Rivers NCK Business Development Funds, along with those unique to local banks, area revolving loan funds, U.S. Small Business Administration, StartUp Kansas, Kansas Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development, and the Economic Development Administration.

For more information about the business finance programs available, visit [www.ncrpc.org/services/business.html](http://www.ncrpc.org/services/business.html) or contact Peters at 785-738-2218.

## MEET THE BOARD



Ray McGavran

Ray McGavran joined the NCRPC Board in 2008, which was also his 12th year to serve on the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. He has been in the grain elevator and chemical business for 52 years. He purchased the Ada Grain Co. in 1980 and has served as its president for 28 years.

Ray attended Hutchinson Community College and Fort Hays State University majoring in business. He is active in Ottawa County serving as the Board Chair for Ottawa County Property Management, LLC and on the board of the Ottawa County Health Planning Commission. In addition, he is past president of the Ada Lions Club and the Minneapolis Area Chamber of Commerce.

A native of Ottawa County, Ray and his wife, Margaret, live in Minneapolis. They have three grown children, Mike, Mark and Michelle, and four grandchildren. He enjoys his baseball card collection, watching KU sports, playing golf, and spending time with his family.

## NCRPC BOARD HEARS ABOUT H1N1 VIRUS

Whether it is to report more cases, talk about how to take precautions against it, or tell where vaccines are available, the H1N1 Flu Virus is in the news daily.

Patricia Dowlin, Mitchell County Health Department Director, spoke to NCRPC Executive Board members about H1N1 and its potential threat to rural counties of Kansas during a recent board meeting.

"Unless something happens, public health is not usually at the forefront of people's minds," Dowlin says. "It has certainly been at the forefront recently."

Dowlin shared that in most counties, the Board of Commissioners also serves as the Board of Health. She said some



Dowlin addresses the Board. tough decisions may have to be made.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has updates on the virus available at [www.kdheks.gov/H1N1/](http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1/).

"H1N1 was declared a pandemic virus by the World Health Organization earlier this year," Dr. Jason

Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and Director of Health for the KDHE, says. "This means we can expect to find H1N1 in virtually every part of Kansas. Testing everyone with flu-like symptoms for H1N1 is no longer needed. What is needed is for people who are experiencing flu-like symptoms to stay home, rest and drink plenty of fluids so that they can recover without spreading the virus to others."

Dowlin encouraged Board members to keep aware of the situation as things change.

"It will take everyone working together to protect our communities from what could be a situation with devastating outcomes."

## TACO JOHN'S OWNERS BUILD NEW FACILITY IN CONCORDIA

When the owners of the Taco John's restaurant in Concordia were faced with having to re-image their store location to stay in compliance with the franchisor, they opted to construct a new facility.

While the owners, Tim and Carrie Parker, could have spent less money to re-image their leased location, the building at the leased location was more than 30 years old and was small and inefficient.

Therefore, the best long-term solution for the owners was to construct a new store on the southern edge of Concordia along U.S. Highway 81.

The new facility increased seating capacity from 54 to 70 for a 30% increase and added two new drive-thru windows. There has also been a 110% increase in customer parking from 20 to 42 stalls. In addition, the new construction is more energy efficient and inviting to customers. An

atrium in the old location was inefficient and resulted in excessive electrical bills in the Summer and Winter.

The Concordia Taco John's opened in 1985. Tim Parker managed the store from 1985 to 1993 and became a 25% owner in 1987. The Parker's bought out the remaining partners in 1993.

The Parker's have plans to rent signs along U.S. Highway 81 on the south and north entrances to Concordia. With the new facility and increased marketing efforts, the couple anticipate a boost in sales.

Taco John's International reports that the nationwide increase in sales after remodeling in the first year is "hyper sales" that are maintained going forward and a 3-5% additional increase in the second year.

While the project was not

without challenges, the Parker's think it was well worth it.

"Just getting all the new routines down was probably the hardest adjustment to the new store," Parker says. "This included opening and closing each day, cleaning schedules, and using the new technology the store has in it. The payoff is that overall, our first six months of operation in the new facility saw an increase of 31.5% in sales."

This project was made possible with funding through The Citizens National Bank, SBA 504 Loan Program, NCK Business Development Fund, and investment by the owners. Parker says he appreciates all of the partners' involvement.

For more about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or by email at [dpeters@nckcn.com](mailto:dpeters@nckcn.com).



The new Taco John's restaurant is located on the southern edge of Concordia along U.S. Highway 81.

Interested in rural and community development? Visit our sister sites!  
 Online Journal of Rural Research  
 and Policy  
[www.ojrrp.org](http://www.ojrrp.org)  
 Eye on Kansas  
[www.eyeonkanssas.org](http://www.eyeonkanssas.org)

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