

NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional Planning Commission
Serving Kansans Since 1972

April/May 2010
www.ncrpc.org

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Lori Thielen

Rod Thompson

Carol Torkelson

Todd Tuttle

Upcoming Events

Thursday, May 27, 2 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting

**Fiscal Year 2011 CDBG Grant
Application Deadlines**

Aug. 31, 2010: Housing

Sept. 30, 2010: Water/Sewer

Oct. 29, 2010: Community

Facilities

THREE RECOGNIZED WITH TOP ENTRIES IN NCRPC RURALVOICES YOUTH CONTEST

Three high school seniors from North Central Kansas will each receive \$650 for submitting the top entries in the Fourth Annual RuralVoices Youth Contest sponsored by the North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC).

Students had three options to participate that included submitting a written essay, a video or a photo series. Winners were Allison Bruna, Hanover High School, photo series; Samantha Dean, Rock Hills High School, video; and Haylee Steffen, Abilene High School, written essay.

All three students are recognized with the John R. Cyr RuralVoices Award, which is named in honor of Cyr who served for 22 years as the NCRPC Executive Director. The top entries are also published on a NCRPC sister site, the Eye on Kansas Online Magazine (www.eyeonkansas.org).

Lori Thielen, Contest Coordinator, said this year's contest theme was "Rural Kansas...Working Together."

"We are thrilled that the contest continues to grow each year," Thielen says. "Our panel of judges continues to be impressed with the caliber of work that students from across the region are submitting."

Bruna says her love for photography and living in a rural community made this contest a perfect fit for her.

"It gave me the opportunity to capture the helpful attitudes of rural Kansans," Bruna says.

Dean created a video about three schools becoming one.

"It is about the coming together of rivals and old traditions, that have now formed friendships and school spirit that would not have existed without this unity," Dean says.

Steffen chose to write a fictional story inspired by



Bruna's favorite photo entry shows her dad and nephew working together in a garden.

her friendships with some elderly friends and her grandmother.

"I felt those friendships truly represented how neighbors help neighbors, or friends help friends beyond just physical needs," Steffen says.

The contest is open to high school seniors in the NCRPC's 12-county service area. To view this year's top entries, visit www.eyeonkansas.org and click on the RuralVoices link.



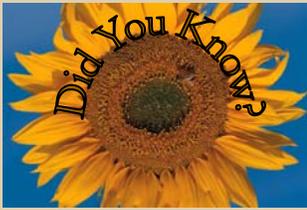
Allison Bruna, Hanover



Samantha Dean, Mankato



Haylee Steffen, Abilene



PUBLIC PROJECTS GRANT PROGRAM

Grants are available to help cities and counties implement energy efficiency projects in public buildings that will result in reduced utility costs.

The State Energy Office (SEO), a division of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), has established the Public Projects Grant Program.

The program supplements the existing Facility Conservation Improvement Program (FCIP) by focusing on projects that are (1) too small for FCIP or (2) include specific improvements that exceed the 30-year statutory payback period. The grants provide 60% of the total eligible cost, up to \$150,000.

Projects should provide measurable energy savings. Improvements must be identified through either an engineering study or an Investment Grade Audit.

Applications must be received by *June 16, 2010*, and will be reviewed and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

For more information, visit <http://kcc.ks.gov/energy/arra/publicproj.htm> or call 785-271-3241.

FROM THE DIRECTOR: SPRING REMINDS US TO BE PREPARED, WORK TOGETHER

Eastertide, blossoms bursting, and migrating songbirds are all signs of spring. A related indication of this time of year is the sight of storm spotters — a reminder for us to be prepared in case of an emergency.

North Central Kansas has had a plethora of storm events since the December 2007 ice storms and subsequent power outages. Tornadoes, flooding, gas pipeline failures, and winds in excess of 80 miles per hour have caused damage in many parts of the region.

Notable have been the recovery efforts in Jewell and Chapman since late May and mid-June 2008. NCRPC assisted with the funding for electrical and water system repairs and storm warning systems in each. With the mutual aid of neighbors and those from afar, both



Doug McKinney is the NCRPC Executive Director.

communities were cleaned and rebuilt to some degree. Improvements have been made and continue to occur, yet full recovery remains.

An item being explored through the North Central Regional Homeland Security Council is how to aid the economic and community recovery efforts long after a disaster happens. The program guidance promises to assist public works and

elected officials, economic and community developers as well as business leaders affected by such circumstances.

Various state agencies, the North Central Regional Homeland Security Council, and the NCRPC recently participated in Foreign Animal Disease and AgroGuard preparedness via workshops in Salina, Beloit and Clay Center. The need for proactive vigilance and coordinated reaction in the case of infestation was discussed at the workshops.

All Kansans need to be vigilant in their efforts to make this state a safe and productive place to reside, do business in and persevere as a healthy habitat for future generations. Let's work together and communicate constructively providing mutual aid and assistance before, during and after problems arise.

FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE WORKSHOP HELD

The North Central Kansas Regional Homeland Security Council sponsored a workshop this spring titled "Permitted Movement in a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD)."

The objective was to increase awareness and understanding of roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local responders; as well as the private sector during a FAD incident. More than 150 attended the workshop, which was offered at three locations including in Salina, Beloit and Clay Center.



James Lane, Ford County Undersheriff, speaks during the workshop that took place April 19 in Clay Center.

Representatives from the Kansas Animal Health Department (KAHD), Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), and Kansas Highway Patrol

(KHP) took part in all three sessions.

James Lane, an undersheriff from Ford County, also spoke. Lane is credited with

developing the Agroguard Community Policing Program, which is similar to the "Neighborhood Watch" program, but for agriculture.

NCRPC BOARD TOURS WIND ENERGY FARM

NCRPC Executive Board Members took a break from regular business and spent its April board meeting on a field trip to Meridian Way Wind Farm near Concordia.

Doug McKinney, Executive Director, says a board field trip has taken place nearly every spring since 2006.

"I view this field trip as a learning visit to an innovative place of business in the region," McKinney says.

Meridian Way Wind Farm, developed by Horizon Wind Energy LLC, achieved commercial operation in late 2008.



Justin Van Beusekorn of Horizon Wind Energy, pictured at far right, led the board during its April 29 field trip to the Meridian Way Wind Farm. Here the group is pictured in front of the western most wind turbines at the farm located approximately three miles north of Glasco.

MEET THE BOARD



Roger Otott

Roger Otott joined the NCRPC Executive Board of Directors in 2009. He also serves on the Washington County Board of Commissioners.

Roger farms and operates a cow-calf business southwest of Washington. Prior to his current cow-calf endeavors, Roger and his wife, Nancy, had been in the dairy business for 40 years.

Born and raised south of Linn, he graduated from Linn Rural High School and attended Kansas State University before returning to the county to begin the dairy operation. He has served on numerous boards including church, hospital and soil conservation among others. Roger and Nancy have four grown children including sons Jeff and Jamie and daughters Carrie and Amy. They have 14 grandchildren.

One of Roger's favorite activities is attending K-State football games. For many years he has traveled to home and away football games, becoming familiar with the Big 12 conference territory.

NEW LEAD-BASE PAINT RULES NOW IN EFFECT

New, more stringent Lead-Based Paint legislation took effect on April 9, 2010. The rule will have an impact on many business owners and operators.

"What we have learned is that most contractors in the state of Kansas who work on pre-1978 homes or child-occupied facilities — including schools and day cares — will be required to be licensed by KDHE as a Licensed Renovation Firm," Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, says.

The NCRPC hosted a series of workshops to certify housing rehabilitation and weatherization program contractors on April 14 and 15 in Beloit. Baker Environmental, Lenexa, Kan., provided the 4-hour refresher course required for a contractor to become

a "certified renovator." More than 70 attended the workshops.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Prevention Program officially implemented revised regulations that include the adoption of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rules.

The rules are designed to protect residents from the dangers of lead. Lead is common in our environment and many individuals, especially children, show no outward signs of lead poisoning.

The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states lead poisoning is one of today's major preventable environmental health problems. Blood lead levels

(BLLs) as low as 10 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL) are associated with harmful effects on children's learning and behavior.

KDHE has been responsible for enforcing regulations dealing with lead-base paint in housing in Kansas since 2000.

Torkelson says contractors will have more paperwork to comply.

"For our Federally funded projects including CDBG and HOME, we won't notice a big change because those projects already required that contractors be trained in lead-safe work practices," Torkelson says. "This will certainly have an impact state-wide though."

For more information about the new regulations on the Lead Hazard Prevention Program, visit www.kshealthyhomes.org.

WT REPAIR, RURAL BELOIT, UNDERGOES EXPANSION

When Wes Thompson opened WT Repair in April 2000 to repair farm equipment, he began his business in a 44 x 50 square foot building. Today he operates in a space nearly five times larger and employs four full-time technicians, one full-time parts manager, and one full-time bookkeeper in addition to himself.

Thompson started WT Repair, located south of Beloit, to help fill a void left by the closing of Moritz Implement, a Case equipment dealer, in Beloit. Thompson's business primarily repairs Case farm equipment, specializing in combines and tractors. In addition, WT Repair sells used Case combines and tractors and is also a MacDon header dealer. The business primarily serves customers in Mitchell County and the contiguous counties.

Thompson has 17 years experience as a farm equipment technician

including eight years as an employee at Moritz Implement and nine years as owner of WT Repair.

A recent business expansion project included the construction of a 5,950 square foot building that is connected with a breezeway to an existing building. The new facility offers needed space for the business and allows room for two combine technicians to each have their own service bay. This increases efficiency as each technician is able to have multiple machines disassembled at one time and eliminates the down time of waiting for parts for each of the technicians. In addition, the turn around time to the customer is improved. The existing building now houses the office and a tractor technician.

Additional equipment was also purchased during the expansion project to help the business run more efficiently. Equipment purchases include a used



WT Repair owner, Wes Thompson, is pictured with his wife, Renee, in the new shop that was constructed during a recent business expansion.

service truck body/service box, shop heaters, a new industrial-sized air compressor, work benches, a two-post lift to assist in the repair of combines, and various other tools required to equip the shop fully for two combine technicians.

This business expansion was made possible with funding from the Guaranty State Bank, the North Central Regional Planning Commission Revolving

Loan Fund, StartUp Kansas, and investment by the owners.

The project has created additional full-time technician positions and will create some additional part-time seasonal help.

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.

Interested in rural and community development? Visit our sister sites!
Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy
www.ojrrp.org
Eye on Kansas
www.eyeonkansas.org

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