



# NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional Planning Commission  
Serving Kansans Since 1972

April/May 2011  
www.ncrpc.org

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## Upcoming Events

### Thursday, May 26

Executive Board Meeting  
Clay Center, KS

### Thursday, July 28

Executive Board Meeting  
Beloit Main Office

## HOUSING STOCK IMPROVES WITH PROGRAM

Improving housing stock is a challenge in any community — large or small, urban or rural. Several communities in North Central Kansas have taken a proactive approach by sponsoring clean-up days and even applying for grant funds to assist low-and-moderate income (LMI) households with housing rehabilitation and demolition.

The Kansas Department of Commerce administers the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The program offers an annual housing competition with applications typically due in August each year. The program seeks to improve and preserve housing stock by adding 20 years of useful life to a home.

To rate well, a city must first decide that housing is its most critical need and then determine if there are enough people who are interested and are pre-qualified based on income.

Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, says the NCRPC can assist with project planning/and or funding assistance should a city decide to seek help.

"We like to hold a public meeting to talk to citizens about the program and heighten awareness to help get reasonable pre-applications," Torkelson says.

The planning process can take a significant



The two photos above are an example of a "Before" and "After" from a recent CDBG Housing Rehabilitation project in the region.

amount of time. Torkelson says it is important for a city to have a history of doing things for themselves, enforcing ordinances, and even sponsoring clean-up days to be able to rate well in the competition.

"Community cleanups are a way for people to clean out things that they may have no way of getting rid of on their own," Torkelson says. "All of this helps improve the

appearance of the community and helps show positive commitment to the State for rating purposes."

Cawker City has had two CDBG housing rehabilitation grants in recent years. Carol Weeks, City Clerk, recommends not getting discouraged if an application is not successful the first time.

"There is a lot of competition for these grants, but they are

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**EFFICIENCY  
KANSAS LOANS  
STILL AVAILBLE**

Kansans continue to have an extra incentive to make energy efficiency improvements to homes and small businesses through the Efficiency Kansas loan program. The program is part of a \$34 million initiative funded through stimulus money and managed through the Kansas Energy Office.

The energy efficiency upgrades covered through the loan are based on a home energy audit that is completed before the loan is issued.

Currently the required comprehensive energy audit, worth up to \$600, is available for \$100.

Eligible Kansans can access the Efficiency Kansas financing through partner lenders or utilities. Lenders throughout the state offer Efficiency Kansas loans. For Kansans whose electric and/or natural gas utility is a partner, the improvements can be financed through the utility (with loan payments made on the utility bill). There are 24 partner utilities currently signed on with the program, 17 of which are city utilities. For more information, visit [www.encykansas.com/](http://www.encykansas.com/).

## FROM THE DIRECTOR: LEADERSHIP ACTIONS CAN HELP ACHIEVE SUCCESS

**T**is the season for graduations. My daughter and a daughter of another staff member are finishing their high school chapters this month. Graduation thoughts also come to mind as Leadership Salina, and leadership classes in Lincoln, Mitchell, and Dickinson Counties wrap up months of training. Additionally, new leadership programs are currently being explored for Marshall and Ottawa Counties. Below are a few bulleted thoughts about leadership actions that can boost the human side of local units of government and business operation in north central Kansas.

- A great way to grow is to take a chance and test yourself.
- Seek mentors in your church, your community, your workplace and those who can sharpen you with monthly counsel and accountability.
- Tackle a defined project, one that involves getting others involved and has success lighting up the end of the tunnel. Clay



Doug McKinney is the NCRPC Executive Director.

Center did this with a fantastic park improvement effort this past month. NCRPC used tax credits to match Clay County and the City with removal of the large blight next door so the park could be safely enhanced. 800 volunteers responded. Miltonvale, Lincoln and Wilson are among others with similar efforts in recent years. Kan Step and Small Community Improvement Programs (SCIP) are great aids to communities needing a financial boost to assist a worthy project.

- Involvement and education are vital to

become a thought leader in your field. Never resist learning, do not cease practicing, and do not stop asking questions.

- Find volunteer opportunities that match your vision and talents, which will lead you to deciding on a career and leadership path of service and influence.
- Read! Learn from those who have succeeded and those who have tried and failed.
- You are who you hang out with. Surround yourself with friends who encourage you to grow in your leadership.

NCRPC is an encourager of leadership development, of capital improvement planning, of community assessments and of continuity planning in preparing for disruptions. In short, NCRPC encourages pondering and reflection on past accomplishments, present undertakings and future needs and possibilities. Thereby, one can realize the benefits of working together and achieving success in our region.

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doable," Weeks says. "These projects are a good way to improve housing stock for future years."

A second CDBG housing rehabilitation project is currently in progress in the City of Blue Rapids.

"We have many LMI people who cannot or will not rehabilitate their homes," Susan Hass, City

Clerk, says. "The housing grant either provides the impetus to make improvements and/or the money to make the improvements."

The CDBG program requires that communities select a target area of no more than 200 homes. Within the identified target area, income eligible homeowners may apply for

assistance. Renters are also eligible if the landlord agrees. If a landlord is not LMI, a 25% match is required of the owner.

Weeks says their projects have made an impact in Cawker City. "You can just see the way the houses look now and know that the program has been a positive for the community," Weeks says.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD TOURS CRISIS CITY

**N**CRPC Executive Board members recently traveled to Crisis City, located approximately 10 miles southwest of Salina, for its April 28 board meeting thereby continuing the tradition of taking an annual field trip.

Frank Coots, Manager of Crisis City, gave an overview of how the facility came to be and then led a tour showing the many training venues available.

Crisis City was developed in response to initiatives by then Gov. Sebelius and the Adjutant General, Major General Bunting, in April 2007 initially to fill the need to enhance the State's capability to defend against terrorism threats and respond to disasters and emergencies. The facility opened in May 2010 and encompasses a 156-acre training area.

"Crisis City was designed by Kansas first responders for first responders," Coots says.

Crisis City is under the jurisdiction of the Kansas Adjutant General's Department and managed by the Kansas Department of Emergency Management (KDEM). Crisis City is a tenant organization on the Smoky Hill Weapons Range Complex, working with the Great Plains Joint Training Center. Crisis City caters to first responders, military, and private industry.

Classroom space for up to 150 people is available in the main building. In addition, multiple training venues are set up to simulate a wide variety of operations/scenarios that may be encountered.



The main building has classroom space and an observation floor with a view of all of Crisis City.

Manager Frank Coots (pictured middle) is shown describing the rail venue training capabilities to NCRPC Board Members and staff.



An urban village simulates a small urban setting with buildings of varying stories for training purposes.

Crisis City contains two large collapsed structures with underlying tunnel infrastructure that are used for a variety of operations.



Several NCRPC Board Members view the collapsed structure rubble pile from atop the five-story structure known as the technical rescue tower.

### MEET THE BOARD



Joe Koch

S. Joe Koch II joined the NCRPC Board in March 2011. He is the Director of Emergency Management for Saline County. He has been in this position since 2010.

Joe previously spent 22 years in the U.S. Army, moving to rural Saline County near Assaria after his retirement from the military. Originally from Ohio, he received a bachelor's degree in Healthcare Administration and a master's degree in Emergency Management.

In addition to his position on the NCRPC Board, Joe serves on the North Central Homeland Security Council, Kansas Commission on Emergency Planning and Response Local Emergency Planning Sub Committee and the Crisis City Advisory Board.

Joe and his wife, Aimee, have a son, Sam, and a daughter, Brooke. In his spare time, Joe enjoys hunting, fishing and boating.

## BELLEVILLE STORE IMPROVES ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Food Mart Thriftway, Belleville, is undergoing a major project to replace the refrigeration system in the entire store. The business, started in 1953, has been at its current location since 1966 and has undergone multiple expansions over the years. However, many of the cold cases are 25 to 50 years old and are now being replaced with new energy efficient cold cases.

The project will include new compressors, new lines to bring power to the units, as well as new lighting throughout the entire store. New cases will feature LED lighting that will allow for better display of existing inventory. A new hot case will also be added to the deli. The business plans to add new items as they become available.

The ability to add new products, the savings from more energy efficient units, and reduced maintenance costs of existing lines and units will be a benefit to customers and the store.

Nick Munk, President of Food Mart, Inc., has owned and managed the business for more than nine years in addition to working in the business in various capacities most of his life. His father, Clifford Munk, was one of three founders of the store. Clifford eventually bought out the other two owners and became sole owner.

The business employs approximately 45 people with a full-time equivalency of 30.75 FTE. This project will create 2.25 FTE positions within 24 months. Jim Crim is General Manager and Ursula Bachofer is Office Manager.

Food Mart Thriftway has consistently expanded and renovated over time to better serve its customers.



Food Mart Thriftway, located at 2311 M Street, has a long history in Belleville. The business was started in April 1953 and moved into a new facility in 1966.

The full line grocery store is open daily and currently offers a bakery, deli, pharmacy, video rental, as well as catering services on a small scale.

The business supplier since 2003 has been Associated Wholesale Grocers, Kansas City, and is known to the public as a Thriftway store. The store brand is Best Choice®.

To view the store website, visit [www.foodmartthriftway.com/](http://www.foodmartthriftway.com/).

This business project was made possible with funding from The Peoples Exchange Bank, the Republic County Development Revolving Loan Fund (RCD) and investment by the owner.

For more information about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director at 785-738-2218 or email [dpeters@nckcn.com](mailto:dpeters@nckcn.com) or visit [www.ncrpc.org/services/](http://www.ncrpc.org/services/)

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North Central Regional Planning Commission  
 109 N. Mill, P.O. Box 565, Beloit, KS 67420  
 Phone: 785-738-2218  
 Fax: 785-738-2185  
[www.ncrpc.org](http://www.ncrpc.org)

