



## RURALVOICES YOUTH CONTEST WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED

Two high school seniors from North Central Kansas will each receive a cash award of \$850 for submitting a top entry in the Sixth Annual RuralVoices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Aspen Davis, a senior at Beloit Junior/Senior High School, won the written category while Jennifer Kruse, a senior at Hanover High School, won the video category. The students are both 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 also are published on the [Eye on Kansas Online Magazine](#), which is a NCRPC sister site.

The contest theme varies each year. The 2011-2012 theme was "Rural Kansas...Creating a Culture for Entrepreneurs."

"Each year the competition has remained strong," Lori Thielen, NCRPC Contest Coordinator, says. "It was evident to our judges that these two students in particular put a lot of thought, time and effort into their entries."



Aspen Davis

Kruse says creating her entry helped her to think differently about entrepreneurs.

"This entry had significance for me because farmers are entrepreneurial by nature. My parents do not farm, but they were both raised on farms," Kruse says. "I

had not thought about entrepreneurship very much before working on this video, but while I was working on ideas I realized how many entrepreneurs lived and worked in my hometown of Hanover alone."

Davis spent time researching what it takes to be an entrepreneur by visiting with several business owners in her hometown of Beloit.

"Before writing this scholarship, I just saw lots of different businesses; I didn't think about what goes into making the businesses and the community successful,"

Davis says. "You need a well-rounded community with people willing to work hard and work together."

To view the top entries or to learn more about the contest, visit [www.eyeonkansas.org/ruralvoices](http://www.eyeonkansas.org/ruralvoices).



Jennifer Kruse

## New CDBG Grants Announced and Awarded Across the Region

Several communities received good news after the first of the year that they will have funding to help with a variety of improvement projects. The funds will come from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The City of Clyde will receive \$377,000 for a housing rehabilitation grant. The city will provide matching funds of \$2,000.

The City of Concordia will receive \$341,800 for a housing rehabilitation grant. The city will provide matching funds of \$2,000.

The City of Glen Elder will receive \$400,000 for a housing rehabilitation grant. The city will match with \$2,000.

The City of Wilson will receive \$400,000 for a housing rehabilitation grant. The city will match with \$2,000.

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### Leadership :: NCRPC Executive Board

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## Changes Made in the CDBG Housing Program

The CDBG Housing Annual Competition Round for FY 2013 will be noticeably different from the past. The biggest change is that all communities will be required to complete a Housing Assessment. A Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) is available on the CDBG website.

"The goal of the HAT is to assure local commitment," Linda Hunsicker, Kansas Department of Commerce CDBG Administrator, says. "It also helps a community to learn specific strengths and weaknesses in its housing."

Applicants will be encouraged to use the information and data gathered through the assessment process to help them determine housing improvement goals and objectives to resolve their housing issues.

Another change is the option to attend a meeting of the Housing Interagency Advisory Committee (HIAC). Its purpose is to provide guidance to communities seeking funding for housing projects. In addition, local leverage will become part of the housing point system.

Additional details will be available at the Kansas Department of Commerce Application Workshop on April 17 in Hutchinson.

The HAT tool may be viewed at <http://kansascommerce.com/index.aspx?NID=127>. Contact the NCRPC with questions or for project development assistance.

## Variety Keeps Clay County ED Director Busy

It's safe to say that no two days are the same for an economic development director and that variety from day-to-day is one of the things Lori Huber, Director of the Clay County Economic Development Group, loves most about her job.

Huber began her job in Clay County on July 5, 2011 but is no stranger to economic development.

"Right out of college I worked in economic development in Jefferson County, Nebraska, and loved that job," Huber says. "It's great to get back into it."

Huber lives in Morrowville, about 42 miles from her job's home base in Clay Center. She also previously worked for the Northeast Community Action Program, Inc. and KSDS, Inc.

In her first weeks on the job, Huber says she spent the majority of her time out in the businesses and visited all of the towns in the county. During the business visits she conducted a survey and looked for commonalities. She now spends more time in the office following up with various businesses and projects.

"I found that several businesses are looking to transition in the next five to seven years," Huber says. "That's important to know and we've since brought in a consultant to talk about transitioning."

Strategic planning was also done soon after Huber started work.

"A big challenge in this job is that different people consider different

things to be economic development," Huber says. "We did a strategic plan with our board and other county representatives and came up with three main focus areas. A lot of the things I do on a daily basis deal with these focus areas."

The areas of focus were 1) business retention and expansion, 2) recruitment and 3) marketing.

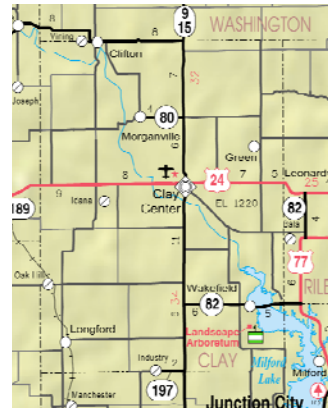
Another challenge has been working on an airport industrial park project for a possible business location. According to Huber, questions on land ownership, flood areas, and working

with the FAA slowed progress, but the project is moving forward.

The Clay County Economic Development Group, which has a board of directors comprised of 16 individuals, is set up as a 501(c)6 non-profit. It receives financial support from Clay County (60%), Clay Center (20%) and membership from public and private individuals and organizations (20%). The Clay County Economic Development Group utilizes a small county funded loan for gap financing up to \$50,000 and a new business start-up grant of up to \$2,500. A local bank review process must occur first with a recommendation for support.

On the job Huber has the chance to work with a variety of people in the county as well as outside service providers, all of which she values.

"A fair amount of what I do is connecting people," Huber says. "I love the variety and meeting the people."



Map of Clay County

## looking ahead : Dates, Meetings, and Deadlines

### Thursday, March 29

Executive Board Meeting  
Beloit Main Office, 2 p.m.

### Tuesday, April 17

Kansas Department of Commerce  
CDBG Application Workshop  
Hutchinson, KS

### Thursday, April 26

Executive Board Field Trip  
Bourbon Trucking, Jewell, KS

### Thursday, May 31

Executive Board Meeting  
Beloit Main Office, 2 p.m.

Note: There will be no Executive Board meeting in the month of June.

Your ideas are welcome! Have something interesting to share with our readers? Send suggestions to Lori at [ltthielen@nckcn.com](mailto:ltthielen@nckcn.com).

A significant amount of energy is exerted in the competition arena this time of year. Legislative appropriations are being decided, high school basketball playoffs have completed, scholar events and geography bees have occurred and, of course, March Madness is underway.

In my opinion, a lot of energy also is exerted by NCRPC staff in their support of community betterment in the region. Attending governing body meetings and providing project development expertise to banks, businesses, cities, counties and special districts are among the many services offered since 1974.

This time of year is active as many projects recently have been approved for funding and further development. Moreover, new projects are being considered and public discussion is stirring relevant to next steps. Now rather than later is when stakeholders must convene and take stock of their needs more than wants and plan for the future. It may be 2013 or 2014 before formal action is taken and dollars are expended. However, looking ahead and collaborating with others is key to survive in this global economy.



Doug McKinney is  
NCRPC Director.

Concordia may have not garnered the Spirit AeroSystems expansion, but it was not due to the lack of regional cooperation. Advanced Manufacturing Institute research can attest to the value of business to business and community collaboration. Other opportunities will venture this direction. Working together will make them realities. The same collective triumph can occur in a small community project as well as a county-wide undertaking.

Other organizational news involves executive branch and legislative deliberation on the Rural Business Development Tax Credit program. At present, no re-appropriation has occurred despite the support by Kansas Commerce, regions, project beneficiaries and donors. Congressional review is also occurring on the popular Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program. Your citizen input is strongly encouraged.

Finally, congratulations to Aspen Davis and Jennifer Kruse, recent winners of our John R. Cyr Rural Voices Contest. Their ideas for rural Kansas are worth considering. Ponder further at the [www.eyeonkansas.org](http://www.eyeonkansas.org) website.

*(CDBG — Continued from page 1)*

The City of Blue Rapids will receive \$140,000 for replacing or rebuilding the city's storm sewer. The city will match with \$123,660.

The City of Courtland will receive \$223,629 for street reconstruction. The city will provide matching funds of \$223,629.

The City of Assaria will receive \$500,000 for a wastewater project. The city will match with \$497,020.

The City of Barnard will receive \$162,060 for a water project. The city will match with \$108,040.

The City of Belleville will receive \$500,000 for a water project. The city will match with \$571,800.

The City of Culver will receive \$386,000 for a water project. The city will match with \$480,000.

The City of Delphos will receive \$500,000 for a water project. Matching funds will be \$1,816,396.

The City of Green will receive \$278,000 for a water project. The city will match with \$179,050.

Dickinson County will receive \$182,000 for a wastewater project for Dickinson County Sewer District No. 3. Matching funds will be \$897,637.

Congratulations to these communities. It is time to begin planning for FY 2013 CDBG Annual Competition Rounds. Contact the NCRPC for project planning assistance.

The Public Water Supply System GIS Mapping Assistance Program is designed to promote modern mapping of public water supply systems in Kansas. Mapping of water supply infrastructure provides a number of benefits, including the capacity to more accurately respond to facility locate requests (such as Kansas One Call). System operations and maintenance also benefit from more easily locating problems, completing repairs, and scheduling maintenance.

The GIS Mapping Assistance Program, funded through the Clean Drinking Water Fee Fund, provides grant funding to public water suppliers for assistance with GIS mapping projects that meet the program parameters. The Clean Drinking Water Fee Fund provides a source of funding for technical assistance to public water supply systems across the state.

The decision to map a system is determined by the governing body of the public water supply system. The program is voluntary and provides assistance to qualifying systems to map public water supply infrastructure. To receive funding, a mapping proposal must be submitted to the Kansas Water Office (KWO). Application forms are available at the KWO website. [http://www.kwo.org/projects\\_programs/Projects\\_Programs.htm](http://www.kwo.org/projects_programs/Projects_Programs.htm)

The agency contact is Tina Rajala. She can be reached at [Tina.Rajala@kwo.ks.gov](mailto:Tina.Rajala@kwo.ks.gov) or by phone at 1-888-526-9283.

No funding will be available until July 1, 2012. Applications are funded in order of receipt. In the past decade, 114 grant projects have been completed.

The NCRPC can assist with the mapping proposal as can the North Central Kansas Technical College (NCKTC) Geographic Information System Department. NCKTC also can assist with the full mapping process. For assistance, contact the NCRPC at 785-738-2218 or the NCKTC at 785-738-9082.



## New Convenience Store Constructed in Marysville has Fuel, Food and Retail

When Dave Lyhane was considering constructing and operating a new convenience store in Marysville, there was no fueling station for 22 miles to the north and 11 miles south of Marysville. An available prime location on the south side of US Highways 36 and 77 on the west end of town made the idea all the more enticing — as did the potential to create 22 new jobs in the Marysville community.

After nearly two years of planning, construction of the 8,000 square foot complex began in April 2011. The Trails 'n Rails convenience store opened in December 2011. Retail and office lease space is attached and the spaces are now leased to Daylight Donuts and Copeland Insurance.

Several tons of native limestone was used on the construction.

The new convenience store is open 24 hours per day 7 days per week and offers Valero brand petroleum products at its four gas pumps. Diesel fuel also is available. The store carries a large assortment of necessities, snacks, beverages, and grocery items. It also offers Wi-Fi Internet access and a place to eat and watch TV.

“Vendors and travelers tell me weekly that they have been in

hundreds of convenience stores and have never seen anything this nice,” Lyhane says.

Lynn Mayer, President of Citizens State Bank of Marysville, says US Highway 77 links Manhattan, Kansas, with Lincoln, Nebraska, — two growth areas that have increased traffic on this stretch of highway. Previously

there was nowhere to purchase food/fuel for the public between Wymore, Nebraska, to the north and Blue Rapids, Kansas, to the south.

“For this reason and in order to serve the western Marysville and Marshall County areas, this was a very desirable location to construct a convenience store,” Mayer says.

The majority of the fast food restaurants in Marysville are located on East US Highway 36. Trails 'n Rails now offers fresh hot food at their western Marysville location including chicken, fish, barbecued meats, pizza and more. Indoor seating can accommodate 38 and plans are to



The Trails 'n Rails convenience store is located on US Highways 36 and 77 on the west end of Marysville.

add seating for another 25 outside. Delivery also is offered.

“One of our biggest hits has been the addition of our smoker where we smoke up to 300 pounds of meat at one time,” Lyhane says.

This project was made possible with funding from the Citizens State Bank of Marysville, Blue Valley Tele-Communications/USDA, Marysville Main Street Program, NCK Business Development Fund, StartUp Kansas, and investment by the owner.

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

