



WORK CONTINUES TOWARD GOAL OF SHARED USE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN INCUBATOR PROJECT IN SALINA

The benefits of a commercial kitchen incubator have been apparent to Phyll Klima, Salina Downtown, Inc. Executive Director, for several years. When Project OPEN, an entrepreneur education and development program in Saline County, identified about 40 entrepreneurs interested in starting a food-related business, it was proof that developing a commercial kitchen incubator was an initiative worth working toward.

Now in its third year, Project OPEN is funded, staffed and administered by seven partnering organizations: North Central Kansas Small Business Development Center, Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, City of Salina, Salina Economic Development Incentive Council, NetWork Kansas, North Central Regional Planning Commission and Salina Downtown, Inc. (SDI). The SDI is providing leadership, matching funds, administration, and staffing for the commercial kitchen incubator initiative.

“The primary obstacle for entry into food business is the expense of a commercial kitchen,” Klima says. “With guidance from the National Business Incubator Association, SDI has been developing the shared use commercial kitchen project where

entrepreneurs can lease shared space at a reasonable hourly rate.”

The SDI conducted local direct market research and held public meetings about the development of a shared use commercial kitchen incubator and, through that process, identified an additional need for regional specialty crop producers to be able to make and sell value-added products through a year-round retail market. As a result, the “Planet to Plate It” project was conceived and the SDI was awarded a grant from the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program for \$70,500.

The project objectives focus on unique local specialty crop value-added products, local food promotion, grower education, and greater public access to local specialty crop foods.

Klima says that the project will help bridge a gap that currently exists.

“Many specialty crop farmers in the region have limited access to year-round retail markets and many rely only on seasonal farmers’ markets,”

Klima says. “This project will increase the competitiveness of specialty crops and create a resilient year-round local market.”

Wikimedia Commons



SDI has begun building additional partnerships to provide expertise for the project and has contacted several specialty crop producers in the Salina area. “We are seeking additional input from area producers,” Klima says.

Klima says that any producer of food for human consumption in the NCRPC service area that is interested in the project is encouraged to contact the SDI at 785-825-0535.

While SDI is continuing to seek additional funding partners for the establishment of the kitchen, Klima does expect that with the funding that already has been secured a kitchen will be started this year.

“If we secure the additional funding, the project can be expanded to include the catering and “pop-up” restaurant component on the wish list of many entrepreneurs,” Klima says.

For more on the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, visit www.ksda.gov/kansas_agriculture/content/281.

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CDBG Income Surveys Required for All This Year

Communities applying for funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program annual application rounds this fall will be required to conduct a low-to-moderate income (LMI) survey to document LMI status.

To receive CDBG funds, a project must meet at least one of the following federally mandated criteria:

- The project benefits low- and moderate-income individuals.
- The project removes or prevents slum or blight condition.
- The project eliminates an urgent need created by a disaster when local funds are unavailable.

Typically communities that are not deemed 51% LMI through Census data must survey to determine if the service area of a proposed activity meets the LMI national objectives criteria. This year is unique because the 2010 Census data is not yet available. Currently only surveys are eligible for the fall application rounds. Communities cannot use old 2000 Census data or old surveys to qualify.

"We were hoping to receive the 2010 Census data before application deadlines," Debbie Beck, CDBG Administrator, says. "We have been told that surveys will still be good after the new Census data comes out."

Contact the NCRPC at 785-738-2218 with questions.

Moderate Income Housing Program to Begin

After hosting five public hearings across the state during the month of June, the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) is expected to release its final Kansas Moderate Income Housing (MIH) Request for Proposals (RFP) on July 20.

The new program aims to help cities and counties develop housing and infrastructure in rural areas.

The KHRC is a public corporation that administers federal and state housing programs on behalf of the State of Kansas. KHRC anticipates releasing approximately \$2.75 million from the State Housing Trust Fund (SHTF) through the MIH RFP. The draft RFP states the need for the program as follows:

"Kansas communities and employers have stressed a growing need for affordable moderate income housing (MIH) defined for purposes of this RFP as housing for households between 60 and 150 percent of HUD's

state non-metro area media income. MIH is vital for economic development, yet difficult to achieve given that most federal housing programs serve a lower income bracket, and market supply is limited due to high development costs, low appraisals, and tight lending conditions."

The deadline to submit proposals under this RFP will be Friday, August 31, 2012. While proposals for loans and grants will be accepted, emphasis is expected to be placed on loans.

NCRPC Housing Director Carol Torkelson attended a public hearing on the program and says it has potential to fill a void in the region.

"I think the keys that we heard is that the program offers flexibility and that probably the biggest criteria will be documenting and showing need and having leverage committed to a project," Torkelson says.

To view the draft RFP, visit www.kshousingcorp.org.

NCRPC 40th Anniversary to be Celebrated

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, October 23 to attend the NCRPC Banquet that will celebrate 40 years of service to the region.

The event will be at the Webster Conference Center, just north of Salina at the I-70 Ohio Street Exit.

"We are looking forward to an evening of celebration with local elected and state elected officials, financial leaders, chamber of commerce and development officials, non-profit entities and anyone with a general interest in the region," Doug McKinney, NCRPC Executive Director, says.

David Adkins, CEO of National Council of State Governments based in Lexington, Kentucky, will be the guest speaker. Originally from Chase County, Kansas, David has been Vice Chancellor for External Affairs at The University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, founding executive director of the Community Foundation of Johnson County, and a partner in a Kansas City-based law firm. He also served a decade in the Kansas State Legislature.

Further information and reservation details will be announced soon.

looking ahead : Dates, Meetings, and Deadlines

Thursday, August 30, 2012

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

Thursday, September 13, 2012

Great Plains Capital Conference
Wichita, KS
For more: www.greatplainscc.com

Thursday, September 27, 2012

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

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

NCRPC Banquet Celebrating 40 Years
Webster Conference Center, Salina,
KS (North of I-70 Ohio Exit)

Thursday, December 6, 2012

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

Your ideas are welcome! Have something interesting to share with our readers? Send suggestions to Lori Thielen at lthielen@nckcn.com.

There is an age-old parenting strategy that still works. If you want to get your child to try and love new or different foods, let them grow them (or at least buy them at the store or farmer's market), pick out the recipe and prepare it in the kitchen. The push for local food markets plays into this strategy by encouraging people to eat food that is grown close to home.

I have a 13-year old son who grows and sells gooseberries. Our family enjoys their tart, sort-of-like-rhubarb taste, but we can't eat all that our bushes produce. This little business venture has introduced him to a unique food item, taught him about value-added production (he rinses them, sorts them and removes the stems before he freezes them in pie-size quantities), and has allowed some people in our area to purchase a hard to find fruit from a local source.

Locally grown foods are increasing in popularity in metropolitan areas where many people lack the space or background to "garden" and also in our rural areas where many families are one-generation removed from the traditional idea that every family has a garden. Local food doesn't only mean fresh produce. Our family recently purchased a side of beef from a local producer. We were looking for cuts that are sometimes hard to find and also a consistent quality.

Twilya L'Ecuyer of rural Morrowville operates L'Ecuyer Gardens. Her operation is part of the family's larger traditional farming operation. She markets fresh produce and starter plants to grow your own food and flowers. Her plants are prized because the varieties do well in our location and are chosen for quality. They look heartier and healthier when you buy them and have been well-cared for until you take them home. You can visit her website at lecyuergardens.locallygrown.net or

find her on Facebook by searching for L'Ecuyer Gardens or read her blog at www.localharvest.org. She delivers to homes or offices on multiple routes each week. For more information on other sources of local food, check out www.buyfreshnck.com.



Debra Ohlde, Clyde, is NCRPC Assistant Director.

The reasons for going local are varied. Primary to most people is the idea that fresh produce is sold close to home at the peak of flavor. Taste is a huge selling point. Some are concerned about what is in and on their food and are looking for producers that grow organic produce. But for others it provides income to a neighbor family and is another extension of "shopping at home."

Several schools in our area have started gardens and/or are working hard to incorporate more local fresh food into their lunch or snack menus. For schools or families wanting to actually grow something for the first time or at least to introduce children to the concept, there are resources available. Even gardening in small spaces or gardening in containers can yield great results, leaving little room for excuses related to space.

There are many gardening and local foods resources available and it would be difficult to provide an exhaustive list. Some additional resources include the Our Local Foods Project of the Kansas Rural Center at ourlocalfoodks.org and K-State Research and Extension at www.ksre.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=24. The popular Kansas Garden Guide also is available to download at www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/s51.pdf.

Regardless of what drives your personal interest in local foods, don't discount the added benefits that may accrue to that area farm or your kids. Gooseberries may not be the next great thing, but the local foods movement might be. I'll see you at a farmer's market this summer.

Funds Available for Community Gardens

Kansas communities with a desire to establish community gardens are eligible to apply for funds from the Kansas Community Gardens Project.

The project, which is a joint initiative of the Kansas Health Foundation and K-State Research and Extension, is intended to provide funding for 60 gardens over the next three years (2012-2014).

The purpose of the project is to inspire the initiation and successful development of more community gardens. Start-up and other community gardens less than three years old and still in the development process will be given preference in funding of up to \$5,000 per garden. The funds can be used for such expenses as tool or other equipment purchases, water line or irrigation equipment and installation, soil improvement, creating raised beds, and to buy seeds.

Applicants will be required to indicate how the gardens will do the following: benefit the community, incorporate environmentally sustainable practices, include project partners from the community, and implement measures to ensure the long-term financial stability of these new community gardens.

In the inaugural year, 24 community garden projects from around the state were chosen for funding. Several of these grant award recipients are located within North Central Kansas including the following: Abilene Community Garden, Abilene; Concordia Community Garden of Hope, Concordia; Healthy Neighbors Community Garden, Belleville; North Campus Community Garden, Beloit; Son Shine Community Garden, Clay Center; and Washington PRIDE Committee Community Garden, Washington.

The application for 2013 grants will be available later this summer and will be due January 15, 2013.

For more information about the project or to learn how to apply, visit the website at www.kansascommunitygardens.org.

Couple Opens New Dining Experience in Ellsworth's Historic Underground

Pretty Boy Floyd's is a new destination dining experience in which customers get to dine six feet under — literally. It is located in the historic underground at 210 North Douglas Avenue in downtown Ellsworth.

Entry to the restaurant is at the original rear ally entrance to the underground. Returning the underground to its natural state has been a work in progress since 2003 when owners Mark and Josie Roerhman purchased the building.

"My initial love for this building came from the basement," Mark says. "It was always our intent to open a restaurant in that space."

Pretty Boy Floyd's, which opened July 5, is an addition to the businesses operated by Roerhman Renaissance LLC at its main location known as the Ellsworth Village Mall featuring a variety of services, food, and retail offerings. The new restaurant occupies the entire lower level of the Ellsworth Village Mall.

The underground's original stone walls, limestone store fronts, wavy glass windows, brick sidewalks, and wood floors remain. One room of the restaurant was a bowling alley and scores dating back to 1907 still remain on the chalkboard walls.



Dining guests enter Pretty Boy Floyd's from the ally at 210 N. Douglas, Ellsworth.



The bar in the underground includes many original features including stone walls.

The restaurant operates Thursday through Saturday evenings beginning at 5 p.m. and serves USDA Certified Angus Beef Steaks. It features a 1920-1940 gangster era theme and there are still plans to incorporate a Model 'A' into the unique décor.

"We were looking for a theme different than western because this building was constructed after the cattle drive days," Mark says. "My middle name is Floyd and also my great-great uncle, Frederick, was a detective in Kansas City during the time of the Pretty Boy Floyd massacre at Union Station."

This is the first business to open to the public and operate in more than 100 years in the historic underground.

"Dealing with a 130-year old building with two feet thick stone walls was a challenge," Mark says. "For instance we had to figure out a way to get the new large equipment down into the kitchen. This wasn't an easy project, but it has been worth it to see our vision come to life."

Reservations can be made by calling 785-472-2183. A website is being developed at pbfloyds.com.

This project was made possible with financing from the owners, First Bank Kansas, and the Smoky Hill Development Corporation Façade Improvement Program offered by the Four Rivers Loan Pool.

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

