



## COMMUNITIES INVESTING IN HEALTH, WELLNESS PROJECTS

Health and wellness is often at the forefront of people's minds, and now many communities are getting on board and investing in health components to enhance the quality of life of its residents.

NCRPC Community Development Specialist Mandy Fincham says adding health components into communities can have an impact on the local economy and be attractive for young professionals and families. She attended a 2013 Obesity Summit put on by KDHE and the Kansas Governor's Council on Fitness. A 2014 Obesity Summit is being planned, but a date has not been set.

"All communities, whether they have 100 or 100,000 people, have the chance of putting something in their community to add value," Fincham says.

Many communities in North Central Kansas are working to do just that by adding walking paths, biking trails, park amenities, aquatic centers, or offering group exercise classes at a local school gym.

In Wilson a new city park has been developed over the past five years. It features a large wooden play fort, an infant/toddler play set, a shelter with restrooms, and a splash pad. A community garden is also being developed. The local PRIDE group raised funds and coordinated

construction, much of which was done by volunteer labor. In 2008 the city received a grant from the Small Communities Improvement Program (SCIP) of \$106,250 to purchase materials and playground equipment. Additional local fundraising took place and the city put in money to complete the splash pad.

The park is located near the downtown. Two dilapidated houses were demolished and the empty lots cleared to prep the site.

"The community was lacking modern play facilities and the existing equipment was located on the north edge of town, which wasn't convenient for many families with young children," David Criswell, PRIDE member and former Mayor, says.

Criswell says progress was slow and they could only do so much as they raised the money, but it's been successful. The splash pad officially opened in August 2013.

"People had always said Wilson needed a pool, but we felt like a splash pad was a really positive alternative," Criswell says. "It was very popular last summer after it opened."



Wilson's PRIDE Park is located near the downtown. The computerized splash pad has 15 different water features.

Courtesy Photo

The City of Abilene, in partnership with the Health and Wellness Coalition of Dickinson County, has been working to develop the Abilene Cowboy Trail, a 6-mile trail around town for biking and walking. David Dillner, City Manager, says they have taken a multi-year phased approach with the project.

The city several years ago completed an Abilene Parks Master Plan  
*(Continued on page 2)*

### Leadership : NCRPC Executive Board

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## Peterson Joins NCRPC

The NCRPC welcomed Amanda Peterson to its staff in February as receptionist/accounts receivable clerk. In her role, she is the first point of contact for the office and she handles a variety



Amanda Peterson

of functions including Internet account setup and assistance.

Originally from the James-town area, Peterson graduated from Concordia High School. She received an Associates in Applied Science from Salina Area Technical College and a Bachelors in Business Management from Tabor College in Hillsboro. While attending college full time, she also worked at least 30 hours a week at an Ampride station as a cashier.

Peterson currently lives in Hunter. In her spare time, Amanda enjoys reading and spending time with her younger sister, Rachele, which includes attending many 4-H and sporting events. Amanda says she is excited about her new job.

"Since starting, I have felt extremely welcomed and comfortable at work," Peterson says. "I feel this is a great place for me to work at and grow as an individual."

*(Continued from page 1)*

and also completed an assessment funded from the Safe Routes to School program. Now the city is trying to implement the route using existing resources as much as possible. The locally-funded Residential and Commercial Sidewalk Rehabilitation Program is being considered to help develop and improve sidewalks in the trail area.

Dillner says the benefits of the trail are numerous. They are considering how it can be used as an alternative transportation system for out of town visitors that could enhance economic development, such as linking the Eisenhower Center to downtown. Other benefits include providing a healthy and safe mode of alternative transportation, connecting the schools, and being attractive for relocation purposes.

"Families look for amenities like this when they're considering relocating and large communities have been doing this for a long time," Dillner says. "It's time for small communities to do the same thing."

In Concordia, two projects are currently underway that have the potential to enhance the health and wellness of its residents. The first is a new community playground at City Park. With the help of private donations and a couple of small local grants, more than \$170,000 has been raised to install the new playground. Ashley McMillan, Executive Director of CloudCorp, serves on the project steering committee and says that approximately 500 volunteers from the community plan to construct the facility in April.

Concordia is also in the process of developing a walking trail and bike path west of US Highway 81. Construction of a dam on 21st Street will begin soon. The trail is planned around development in the dam area and is designed to be a safe place for residents to walk or bike. Ultimately, the goal is to connect the trail to the downtown central business district. The city received a large, private donation for the trail development and has applied for the remaining necessary funding through the Transportation Alternatives Program, which will be announced in June.

"The leadership is concerned about the quality of life of people here," McMillan says. "These projects will add to the whole package to make it more attractive for people to live here."

While funding is typically an obstacle that communities must consider when planning a project, Fincham has some advice.

"Larger chain stores usually have small grant programs for community projects," Fincham says. "Also look for partnerships on a project and check with local banks, utility companies and local foundations."

### Health Funding Resources\*

[Sunflower Foundation](#)

[Kansas Health Foundation](#)

[BCBSKS Foundation](#)

[Robert Wood Johnson](#)

[Foundation](#)

[Kansas Department of Wildlife,](#)

[Parks and Tourism](#)

\*This is not an exhaustive list, but is provided to give ideas.

## looking ahead : Meetings, Deadlines, and More

**Thursday, March 27, 2014**

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

**Kansas Rural Opportunities  
Conference**

April 9-10, 2014  
Dodge City, KS

Deadline to Register: April 2

[www.kansascommerce.com/ROC](http://www.kansascommerce.com/ROC)

**CDBG Annual Application Workshop**

April 17, 2014  
Lyons, KS

Deadline to Register: April 8  
785-296-3610



**Contact Us:  
North Central Regional  
Planning Commission (NCRPC)**

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[www.ncrpc.org](http://www.ncrpc.org)

Send newsletter suggestions to  
lthielen@nckcn.com.

## Ensuring a Reliable Water Supply Takes Planning

## Two Winners Named in Rural Voices Contest

Water is a precious resource. In 2011 and 2012 and in much of the summer and fall of 2013, many communities and water systems in Kansas were impacted by water source ailments. Albeit less of a concern during this winter, many of these disturbances could redevelop or worsen if precipitation levels remain inadequate and if an unexpected rise in surface temperatures couples with increased water consumption again this spring.

In reviewing the latest United States Drought Monitor this week, most of the area west of US Highway 81 is in the severe drought sector. Much of the rest of the state is abnormally dry.

The uneasiness about water resources prevails across the state for economic reasons as well. Taking it for granted means peril. Acting on it can mean current and long-term future needs will be attended to. The Governor and cabinet members from five agencies are engaging nearly every geographic sector in Kansas regarding this subject. In March alone, 36 forums will occur on the Vision for the Future of Wa-



Doug McKinney is NCRPC Executive Director.

ter in Kansas. Additionally, the Kansas Rural Water Association annual conference will feature this subject in late March in Wichita. You are a user of water. You are a stakeholder and it is in your best interest to participate in this process.

Early each year is an ideal time to plan and be ready for worst-case scenarios. Update conservation plans, talk to neighbors about mutual aid in times of crisis and listen to success stories of others who have positively dealt with emergency circumstances.

Jewell and Chapman have done so in recent memory.

NCRPC staff can assist in many water system improvement aspects just as it

has in Jewell and Chapman and is doing so in Beverly, Delphos, Cuba, and Belleville. The NCRPC also remains involved with regional health preparedness and regional Homeland Security Council fiscal management across Kansas.

Remember, if you pray for rain, at times it will come via severe thunderstorms. God does answer some prayers but possibly in ways we are not expecting.

*The Kansas Water Office and the 50-Year Vision:*  
[www.kwo.org/50-Year\\_Vision/50-Year\\_Vision.htm](http://www.kwo.org/50-Year_Vision/50-Year_Vision.htm)  
*Drought Monitor Gauge:*  
[droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?KS](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?KS)

Two high school seniors are being recognized with the John R. Cyr Rural Voices Award for submitting the top entries in the 2013-2014 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Kristin McGatlin, a senior at Linn High School, won first place in the written category. Erica Jones, a senior at Bennington High School, won first place in the video category.

Each will receive a cash award of \$850 and have their entry published on the [Eye on Kansas Online Magazine](#), which is a NCRPC affiliate.

The awards are named in honor of Cyr who served for 22 years as the NCRPC Executive Director. The contest has been offered annually since 2006. High school seniors in the 12-county NCRPC service area were eligible to participate by submitting an original essay or video reflective of the contest theme. The theme was "Rural Kansas...An Investment Worth Making."

Jones says creating her video was a learning experience.

"I was surprised at how much my small town had to offer, and it was interesting to think about what could be done to make Bennington even better," Jones says.

To view the top entries or to learn more about the contest, [visit www.eyeonkansas.org](http://www.eyeonkansas.org) and click on the "RuralVoices" link. Details for the 2014-2015 contest will be announced this fall.



Kristin McGatlin



Erica Jones

Courtesy Photo

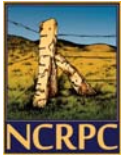
Courtesy Photo

## New Roofing Legislation in Effect in Kansas

The Kansas Roofing Registration Act was enacted by the Kansas Legislature. Under the provision of this law, on or after July 1, 2013, every "roofing contractor" must obtain a registration certificate from the Kansas Attorney General in order to legally provide commercial or residential roofing services for a fee in

Kansas. It applies to all roofing work done in Kansas and will be monitored for compliance in projects that receive CDBG funds. Certificates are valid for one year.

For more information or to view the current contractor registry, visit [ag.ks.gov/in-your-corner-kansas/resources/roofing-registration](http://ag.ks.gov/in-your-corner-kansas/resources/roofing-registration).



## North Central Regional Planning Commission

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## business updates

## New Counseling Services Business Opens

Hopeful Beginnings Counseling Services, LLC opened its doors in October to provide residents of Mitchell County and the surrounding areas with therapy services.

Lyda Fincham, a Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist (LCMFT), owns the business that is located in Beloit.

Counseling services are provided for families, couples, children, and individuals struggling with such issues as depression, anxiety, conflict, divorce adjustment, behavioral issues, and parenting issues.

Fincham has worked in the industry for five years and most recently worked as an outpatient counselor with Pawnee Mental Health Services, Concordia/Beloit. She has

received special training for working with individuals suffering from trauma related symptoms and is currently working on a play therapy certificate. The new office space includes an area specifically designed to work with children that features a two-way mirror, which is helpful

for observing a therapy session.

“At Hopeful Beginnings my mission is to give families, children, couples and individuals hope for a healthy future by helping them discover their inner strengths to solve their own problems,” Fincham says.

Business planning services were provided by Linda Sutton, Director of the NCK Small Business Development Center. For more information, visit [www.ncksbdc.com](http://www.ncksbdc.com).



Play therapy is one of the services offered at Hopeful Beginnings Counseling Services located at 113 E. Main in Beloit.

The project was made possible with funding from the Central National Bank/NCK Business Development Loan Fund 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 [dpeters@nckcn.com](mailto:dpeters@nckcn.com).