



WILSON SELECTED AS PILOT PROJECT FOR KANSTARTER

The Wilson Czech Opera House is one of four pilot projects selected for the recent launch of Kanstarter, an online crowdfunding site that is designed to match Kansas community projects with those who want to help through donations or volunteerism.

Kanstarter is a project of the We Kan Network (WKN) that was launched on October 23, 2014 by Reflective Group. WKN is a non-profit that works hand in hand with the Inman-based Kansas Sampler Foundation.

Through the help of its Kanstarter project, the Wilson Czech Opera House Board is seeking funds to restore the historic marquee sign that was severely damaged in a fire that destroyed the Czech Opera House in 2009. Restoring the sign is the first phase of the overall goal to convert the 1901 Opera House remains into an outdoor amphitheatre.

“Having our marquee restored is a symbol to us that we must work hard to get the walls restored and the open-air theater completed so we can display the marquee with pride,” Allison Ford, Wilson Czech Opera House Board President, says.

Once the marquee restoration is complete, it will be displayed in a vacant building with large front windows near the opera house until it is hung on the restored front wall.

The Wilson Czech Opera House Board has faced many challenges since the devastating fire five years ago, but Ford says being selected for Kanstarter has helped renew the group’s resolve to convert the remains into the best open-air theater possible.

“We have a strong plan and know exactly what we want,” Ford says.

The group has worked with three well-known architects and engineers including ARUP, DGM Consultants and openhandedesign.

“The Opera House has been known for being the entertainment center of our area and we want to make that happen again,” Ford says.

The fundraising goal for restoring the sign is \$19,620 and will end on December 13, 2014. Ford says a donor has made a pledge of \$8,000 once a \$6,000 match is made.

Wilson was one of 24 communities to submit a project for consideration to be a Kanstarter pilot project.

According to the Kanstarter website, the intent is to do more than simply find money for projects but to also encourage types of projects and have a submission process that will help strengthen and sustain the community. Currently, Kanstarter is



Opera House Revival, Let It Sing!

The Wilson Czech Opera House Board is seeking funds to restore the beauty and nostalgia of our historic marquee sign. After a devastating fire, reconstructing the 1901 opera house remains into an amphitheatre will take ...

Wilson, KS

NEEDS FUNDS

7.1% **\$1,398.00** 23 **Give!**
Pledged Days Left

A sample view of the Wilson project on the Kanstarter website.

showcasing four pilot projects from towns of 1,500 or less. In early 2015, Kansas community projects from cities of all sizes will be eligible. Tax credits from the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Service Tax Credit Program made this project possible. For more information, visit www.kanstarter.com.

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Vice Chair:
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Secretary/Treasurer:
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Executive Board Members:
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Craig Chamberlin, Dickinson Co.
Tom Claussen, Mitchell Co.
Bob Connell, Marshall Co.
Johnita Crawford, Cloud Co.
Dwight Frost, Jewell Co.

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Heather Hartman, Mitchell Co. Comm. Dev.
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Gary Ouellette, Washington Co.
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Disaster Loan Assistance Available for Businesses

A new declaration has been issued for Kansas by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program.

The loans offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by the combined effects of drought and frost that began on January 1, 2014. By law, SBA makes EIDLs available when the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture designates an agricultural disaster. Secretary Vilsack declared this disaster on September 10, 2014. The following counties in North Central Kansas are eligible under this declaration: Clay, Cloud, Jewell, Marshall, Republic and Washington.

The program is for businesses dependent on farmers and ranchers that have suffered agricultural production losses caused by the disaster and businesses directly impacted by the disaster. Many retail/service businesses qualify because the community is dependent on the farmers having income to do business in their stores. Farmers and ranchers are *not* eligible unless the majority of their income is from custom work.

This program offers a direct loan from the government at 4% interest. The maximum loan amount is \$2 million and maximum term is 30 years. The deadline to apply is May 11, 2015.

Questions can be referred to Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or dpeters@nckcn.com.

Dickinson County Barn Featured in Commercial

A 1907 barn near the unincorporated town of Upland in northern Dickinson County was the site chosen by New York film production company, Flex Collective, LLC, to film a made-for-tv commercial featuring Coca Cola and Ford Motors products.

Although filming took place in late May, the barn location was not revealed to the public until September 26 at the annual Barn Fest conference, organized by the Kansas Barn Alliance (KBA) and held at the Brown Memorial Camp near Abilene.

Early last spring, a call went out looking for a Kansas barn preferably in a wheat field to be the possible location of a commercial. The inquiry, directed first to the KBA and then through the Kansas Samper Foundation, generated over 2,500 responses via photo submissions.

Kevin Kirkwood, photographer and owner of Kirkwood Kreations, Lecompton, Kansas, submitted the photo of the barn that was selected. The land around the barn had been farmed by Kirkwood's in-laws decades ago and he thought it fit the criteria being sought. It is now owned by Lonnie Heigle of New Cambria.

Preparing the barn and location for filming was no small task. It took approximately 500 man-hours to

transform the barn. In all, about 100 Kansans participated in fixing the barn, building a driveway through a wheat field, landscaping the area and doing whatever it took to accommodate producers Zach Lowry and Luke Rafferty of Flex Collective, LLC.



On the set of the made-for-tv commercial filmed in a Chapman-area barn by a New York production company in late May. Photo provided courtesy of Kirkwood Kreations, Lecompton, Kansas.

Approximately two hours of footage were shot for the 60-second commercial. Nearly 100 Barn Fest attendees were treated to the first public showing of the commercial-to-be.

Lori Hambright, 2014 Barn Fest coordinator and KBA vice president, says it was a great experience.

“A lot of people were involved in the filming process, many who were local residents that donated hundreds of hours of labor and use of their personal items and property,” Hambright says. “Flex was so impressed by the Kansas hospitality.”

For more about KBA or for resources on restoring barns, visit www.kansasbarnalliance.org.

looking ahead : Meetings, Deadlines, and More

Thursday, December 4, 2014

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

Holiday Reduced Office Schedule

The NCRPC offices will close November 27-28 and at noon on December 24. Normal business hours will resume Monday, January 5, 2015.

Thursday, January 29, 2015

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

Remaining FY 2015 CDBG Grant Deadlines

KAN STEP — Feb. 16, 2015
Economic Development — Open round through Dec. 10, 2014



Contact Us:

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Planning Commission (NCRPC)**

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Send newsletter suggestions to
lthielen@nckcn.com.

viewpoint : Rural Landscape Changing: How are We Responding?

NCRPC Hosts Bi-Annual Banquet in Concordia

It is the season to especially give thanks for each of our blessings, may we count them one by one. One item taken for granted is the blessing of our rural landscape both physical and socioeconomic in nature.

The aspect of Rural America continues to change. Not simply because of recent elections and pending legislation. The rural environs have varied since Native Americans were the most populous race in this region. Between widespread natural disasters, economic



depressions, horse and buggy and automobile inventions, railroad and other transportation sector modifications, and the military callings of our youth, change has been non-stop.

What signs of hope and progress do you see on the horizon? Would there be more progress and less blight if leaders and citizens alike embraced innovative thoughts and spurred on those willing to take on long-term initiatives?

The recent NCRPC bi-annual banquet speaker, Jerrod Westfahl, reminds us how we might want to listen to risk takers and include young adults and youth alongside the wiser elders of our communities in progressive ponderings. Be strategic doers and pursue change. Otherwise, deteriorating conditions are likely.

According to the National Association of Development Organization's research on the subject, there are a few basic reasons persons seek to occupy rural places. One is the

relatively affordable housing. Another is the general moderate pace experienced and secure sense residents and visitors have. The quality of life tends to be higher in such locales. Lastly, strong reasons for desiring to be in Rural America are the strong bonds to friends and family.

Currently NCRPC staff is continuing to assist Mankato, Concordia and Beloit with downtown enhancements. Overall the past decade, a number of positive changes have occurred in these and other county seats in the region. The NCRPC espouses to being attentive to what current and future occupants want. Thus, it aids with quality of life aspects in a reasonable and prudent manner.

One encouragement involves listening to youth. Several seniors in high school have recently submitted essays on rural opportunities to the

“What signs of hope and progress do you see on the horizon? Would there be more progress and less blight if leaders and citizens alike embraced innovative thoughts and spurred on those willing to take on long-term initiatives?” ~ Doug McKinney

NCRPC Rural Voices Contest. The most articulate of these entries will be published in EyeOnKansas.org next spring.

This winter the NCRPC will host a water resources forum for knowledge and collaboration purposes. Also in 2015, an excellent strategic doing event will be hosted in the region. This should spark more collaborative activity amongst business, government and general citizenry to better this vast region we call home.

Let us all give thanks for the many blessings that surround us and seek each other to help your community be open doors for positive transformation.

Jerrod Westfahl, attorney and former CEO of PurpleWave.com, was the featured speaker at the NCRPC Bi-Annual Banquet that took place November 6 in Concordia.

Nearly 100 attended the banquet at the recently renovated Valley Rental Center, which was the former Lincoln Elementary Building.

Westfahl presented “Capital, Culture and Change, Oh My! Lessons Learned While Scaling a Local Kansas Business” in which he shared lessons learned by taking PurpleWave.com from a Manhattan-based back room company to a multi-state 80-employee firm that has ranked in the INC magazine's 5000 fastest growing private companies list for four consecutive years.

The primary lessons discussed included risk, focus, persistence/flexibility, people, balance, humility and knowing the “why.” He emphasized that while these lessons were mostly for growth businesses, they can be applied to many aspects of life and even to community and economic development.

Westfahl closed with a challenge for the region to inspire its citizens, encourage and celebrate success and support risk taking.

“New growth can absolutely happen here and now,” Westfahl says.

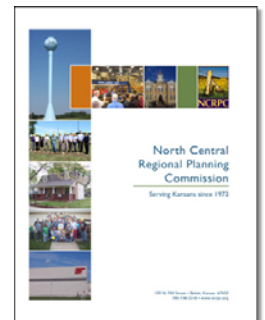
A Bi-Annual Report, which captures a snapshot of NCRPC history, impact, growth and service area, also was distributed at the banquet.

The document is now available on the web at www.ncrpc.org/projects/2014/1411ncrpc42years.html.



Jerrod Westfahl

Courtesy Photo





North Central Regional Planning Commission

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business updates

Citizens State Bank & Trust Co., Lincoln, KS, recently completed a project that injected grant money and 0% interest loan money totaling \$25,000 to individuals, couples, and families enabling them to purchase homes in Lincoln by assisting with down payments and closing costs. This program was made possible through an award of \$25,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank's Joint Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) Program.

Five homes were purchased in Lincoln utilizing this program. The total project cost of the five homes was \$372,103, with \$25,000 coming from the JOBS Program.

The funds were applied toward the purchase price through the applicant(s) obtaining money through the Lincoln Housing Program Closing Cost Grant Program and the Lincoln

Local Bank Assists Homebuyers in Lincoln



This home, located in Lincoln, KS, was purchased utilizing the program.
Courtesy photo reprinted with permission of homeowners.

Housing Down Payment Assistance Loan Program at 0% interest. These programs were exclusively available from the Citizens State Bank & Trust Co., Lincoln, KS.

The program resulted in a leverage of \$14.88 of local funds for each \$1 of program funds. The project resulted in employment impact of six jobs in the City of Lincoln.

The bank contacts who facilitated this program were Debra Kootz and Bree McReynolds-Baetz. Galen Liggett and Steven McReynolds were the loan officers on each individual project. The program was administered by Debra Peters with the NCRPC and its 501(c)3 affiliate, the North Central Kansas Community Network, Co. (NCKCN).

Recaptured funds will become a part of the NCKCN-Four Rivers Down Payment Assistance Loan Program that is available to businesses locating in Lincoln, Lincoln County, and the remaining 11-county NCRPC service area. For more information about this program contact Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or dpeters@nckcn.com.

Article provided courtesy of the Lincoln-Sentinel Newspaper.