

NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Two Selected as Rural Voices Winners

Two high school seniors in North Central Kansas are being recognized with the John R. Cyr Rural Voices Award for submitting the top entries in the 2014-2015 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Madeline Moore, a senior at Marysville High School, was awarded first place and Aaron England, a senior at Abilene High School, was awarded second place. Both



Madeline Moore

students participated in the written category of the contest and will receive a cash award of \$850 and publication on the EyeonKansas.org site, which is a NCRPC affiliate.

The awards are named in honor of John 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. This

year's theme was "Rural Kansas... Opportunity."

Moore says the contest helped her realize the need to preserve rural Kansas for future generations.



Aaron England

to work in rural Kansas after completing the HVAC Program at NCK Tech.

Deb Ohlde, NCRPC Assistant Director, says it is refreshing to hear the youth perspective each year.

"It helps us conceptualize the perspective of the next generation and we benefit from hearing their positive outlook on the future," Ohlde says.

To view the top entries, visit www.eyeonkansas.org and click on the "RuralVoices" link. ■

"I love living in rural Kansas after moving from a large city," Moore says.

England says living in rural Kansas has helped shape his plans for the future. He wants

Webinar Focuses on Rural Narrative

Rewriting the Rural Narrative was the focus of a webinar sponsored by CommunityMatters® and Citizen's Institute on Rural Design™ last fall. The session was led by Ben Winchester, Research Fellow for the University of Minnesota Extension, Center for Community Vitality.

"Brain drain" dominates the conversation about rural population change. Yet many rural counties are, experiencing "brain gains" as newcomers age 30 to 49 move in.

The webinar recording is now available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=97P4QSp0zCc. ■

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ABOUT US

Our Mission

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

Our Vision

By 2024, communities in rural Kansas will favor choices that embrace innovation, increase prosperity and demonstrate resilience.

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Strategic Doing Offers an Innovative Solution to Do More

North Central Regional Planning Commission is a member of the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations (KARDO). An on-going role of KARDO is to provide training for regional organizations in order to bolster their capacities so they can better deliver community development services and further the betterment of rural and micropolitan Kansas.

A current undertaking of the NCRPC comes out of KARDO. It involves the introduction of Strategic Doing to communities, organizations and businesses in the region. Strategic Doing simply put is 'Doing More Together.' It is about new ways of dealing with the challenges of thinking ahead, adapting, taking action and completing the jobs that are in process.

The world is more complex than ever given the reliance upon technology, an unpredictable economic environment, and unstable political relationships amongst other reasons. In consideration of such issues, how can



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

is what Strategic Doing is about. NCRPC widely publicized the delivery of this concept to the region in February. Then, it hosted an event to introduce the framework in a workshop March 11 near Clay Center. From that initial learning, NCRPC is preparing to take the message deeper into the region where it can be applied to specific circumstances.

The end result is for those who participate to be more apt in asset

an entity or a person get a firm grasp on their future challenges and be prepared for what is around the next curve?

Networks, collaborations, and personal relationships all aid in helping us get from point A to point B. That



Scott Hutcheson, Senior Associate with the Purdue Center for Regional Development, presents at the Strategic Doing Workshop March 11 at Life's Finer Moment's Lodge.

mapping, networking, idea investigating and seeking answers for long-term solutions to problems. NCRPC remains here to help with your collaborative efforts just as it has been since 1972. More information on Strategic Doing can be found on the web at the Purdue Center for Regional Development at strategicdoing.net. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 - Topeka

Thursday, April 23, 2015 - Russell
Annual CDBG Application Workshops
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Email: cvotaw@kansascommerce.com

Thursday, April 23, 2015

Young Professionals Summit
Salina Bicentennial Center
www.ypkansas.com

Upcoming Funding Deadlines

May 1, 2015

Community Service Tax Credit
Program Applications Due
kansascommerce.com/csp

June 1, 2015

New Round of FY2015 CDBG
Funding Applications Due
kansascommerce.com/cdbg

CDBG Projects Awarded in Region

The Kansas Department of Commerce recently announced awards through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program that will provide funding to support community improvement projects. One city and one county in the region will benefit from those recent awards.

The City of Frankfort will receive \$300,000 for a housing rehabilitation and demolition project. The funds will be used to rehabilitate eight homes and demolish nine unoccupied units. A local match of \$20,400 is being provided from a combination of weatherization and city funds. The City of Frankfort has a population of 695 and is located in Marshall County.

Republic County will receive \$343,000 for a bridge replacement project. The county is providing a local match of \$108,846 and the Kansas

Department of Transportation is providing the remaining match of \$1,425,154. The project will allow the county to demolish and reconstruct a large bridge located south and west of the City of Republic that spans the Republican River. The bridge provides access from Hwy 36 to the City of Republic and also serves the area of the Pawnee Indian Village.

A CDBG FY 2016 Application Workshop will be offered in two locations in April. See the Upcoming Events section for details. Funding is available in the areas of Community Facilities, Water & Sewer, Housing, Commercial Rehabilitation, Urgent Need, Economic Development and KAN STEP.

Contact the NCRPC to discuss your project or to request application assistance. ■

Engle Joins NCRPC Executive Board

Gail Engle joined the NCRPC Executive Board of Directors in 2015. He has served on the Cloud County Board of Commissioners since 2009.

In the past, Gail was manager of the Concordia cable system for more than 20 years and also worked as a system technician for Cebridge and Cunningham. He serves on a number of local boards including the Chemical Dependency Board, Juvenile Dependency Board, and the Cloud County Solid Waste and E-Waste Committees.



Gail Engle

Gail attended Denver Technical College and served in the U.S. Navy specializing in electronics. Gail and his wife, Jan, live in Concordia.

He enjoys golfing, hunting, and fishing. We welcome Gail and thank all board members for their service.

Research Dispels Myths about Youth

Research compiled by Craig Schroeder, Senior Fellow with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship discusses five myths about young people and the future of rural communities. A portion of the original article is reprinted here with permission. The data comes from surveys that have been completed with more than 40,000 middle school to high school age youth across rural America and in Victoria Australia over the past decade. For the full text of the article, visit <http://bit.ly/18HCYWZ>.

1 Myth: Young people don't appreciate rural communities.

Forty-six percent (46%) of rural youth surveyed rate their hometown as an above average to excellent place to live as a young person.

2 Myth: Youth don't want to be involved in their community.

Young people from rural communities participating in focus groups commonly express frustration that they are not asked for their input on important community decisions and are interested in being involved in community activities.

3 Myth: Youth don't want to come back to rural communities.

Right at half (50%) of rural youth surveyed nationally indicate that they picture themselves living in their hometown area in the future.

Consistently, the reasons provided for this desire is connection to family and a perspective that their hometown is a good place to raise a family.

4 Myth: There are no career opportunities in rural communities for young people.

For rural youth indicating that they do not picture themselves living in their hometown in the future, the most common responses are a perceived lack of local career opportunities and that they can make more money elsewhere. Interestingly, a common concern expressed by rural business owners is that there are not enough skilled workers, especially in technical fields, available to help them to grow their businesses.

5 Myth: Rural communities cannot do anything about youth outmigration trends.

The results experienced by rural communities engaged with young people over the past decade clearly indicate that out-migration is not an inevitable situation. ■

Commerce Adds FY 2015 CDBG Funding Round

The CDBG program through the Kansas Department of Commerce will have an additional funding round in FY 2015.

The primary type of activities that are eligible for funding are sidewalks, community storm shelters, playground equipment and city owned park improvements or combinations of these items. Applications will be accepted until June 1, 2015.

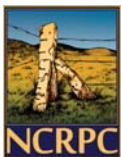
Grant requests may not exceed \$350,000 or \$2,000 per beneficiary. The minimum is \$100,000. Applicants must provide a 10% cash match. Contact the NCRPC for questions or application assistance. ■

Kansas Humanities Council Provides Funding

Funding to support the development and implementation of public humanities projects across the state is available through the Kansas Humanities Council.

Grant funding regularly supports a variety of projects including the research and development of new museum exhibitions, oral history projects, short and full-length documentary films, special speaker series, reader's theater events, the preservation of important artifacts, photographs and documents, radio programs, film and book discussions, lectures, podcasts, and other methods that can help Kansans connect with ideas, strengthen our sense of place, and build community.

For more information, visit kansashumanities.org/kansas-grants. ■



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Lincoln Business Moves to Newly Renovated Building

Keever Auto and Ag found the perfect home to locate and grow its business — the former Lincoln High School Annex in Lincoln, Kansas.

The business first opened in 2013 and temporarily rented a space before moving to its new location at 113 W. College Avenue last July. Local landlords Travis and Kathy Schwerdtfager renovated the building to create a state-of-the-art mechanic shop in which Elijah and Lara Keever could operate their business.

“Moving allowed us to design and organize the building how we needed for an auto shop,” Elijah says. “We were able to get better equipment and we now have multiple lifts, a parts counter and ample parking.”

Services include general automotive repair and light agriculture mechanic work. The business also stocks and

sells parts. Elijah says they focus on providing customer service.

“We pick up vehicles for people and make service calls around the area,” Elijah says.

The business provides vital services to the community and surrounding area and also employs two full-time and two part-time employees.

“Business is going well,” Elijah says. “We are very busy and hope to add another full-time technician soon.”

This project was made possible with funding from the Bank of Tescott, the Four Rivers Down Payment Assistance Loan Program, and investment by the owners.

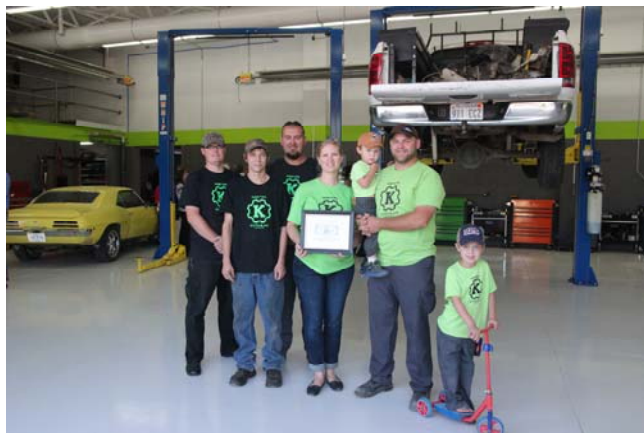


Photo Courtesy of Lincoln Sentinel-Republican

Keever Auto and Ag owners Elijah and Lara Keever are pictured with their children and three of their employees in their new shop located at 113 W. College Avenue, Lincoln.

For more information about the financing program used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or dpeters@nckn.com. To contact the business, call 785-524-5135 or visit the Keever Auto and Ag Facebook page. ■