

NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional Planning Commission
Serving Kansans Since 1972

Dec. 2010/Jan. 2011
www.ncrpc.org

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Upcoming Events

Thursday, Jan. 27, 2 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 24, 2 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting

PLANNING KEY TO SUCCESS FOR FUNDING

The new year is an opportunity for cities and counties to plan for the future.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is one potential source of funding available for communities to help carry out necessary improvement projects. The annual competition includes the funding categories of Housing, Community Facilities, Water & Sewer, and KAN STEP. While CDBG deadlines are months away, NCRPC Assistant Director Deb Ohlde says early planning often leads to better projects.

"When we are involved early we can help a community with a mini strategic plan to start broadly and define what is the best project and what needs to be done first," Ohlde says.

Other funding sources such as that offered through the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) and the USDA Rural Development (RD) also require early planning.

"Even though there is not a deadline for these, there is now an issue with not being at the head of the line whereas in the past this rarely occurred," says Ohlde.

The first step when considering funding sources is determining eligibility. In the case of the

"The community leaders are not looking at the completion of one project as the end of the work to be done, but as just another piece in the development of the Barnes community." {Gloria Moore, Barnes Treasurer }

CDBG program, this may include conducting a low-moderate-income (LMI) survey. Next, consider if matching funds are available or if your community is willing to use a finance instrument to get the match.

NCRPC Housing Director Carol Torkelson says additional steps are necessary for communities considering applying for a CDBG housing rehabilitation grant, making an earlier start even more critical.

"We can start early by helping define a target area, providing pre-applications, and rating homes," Torkelson says.

Frankfort City Clerk Melody Tommer says Frankfort had a CDBG housing rehabilitation/demolition grant in 2006 and a CDBG project to repair streets in 2008. On its own, Frankfort also has constructed a new playground and is currently working toward a new pool.

"I don't think the planning ever stops," Tommer says.

The City of Barnes also has achieved success through planning and perseverance. Barnes has

had two CDBG housing rehabilitation/demolition grants. A CDBG grant for a new water distribution system is in process. These projects are in addition to other combined efforts of the city, local organizations and businesses, and many volunteers.

Gloria Moore, City Treasurer, says Barnes applied several times before being awarded any CDBG grants.

"The city will fund the match for the new grant with bonds," Moore says. "Without the grant, the cost for the new water distribution system would have been near impossible for the City of 162 residents to assume."

Moore says the community continues to make plans for the future.

"The community leaders are not looking at the completion of one project as the end of the work to be done, but as just another piece in the development of the Barnes community," Moore says.

For more information about the funding programs discussed or to request assistance with developing a project, contact the NCRPC office.



GRANT PROGRAM ENCOURAGES COMMUNITY HEALTH

A new year often brings with it goals of improved health and physical fitness. From now until February 1, communities that are currently enrolled in the Kansas PRIDE Program and/or are planning to enroll in it have a chance to apply for up to \$3,000 in grant funding to help youth and adults work together to encourage health-promoting physical activity.

The "Get It—Do It" grants are a collaboration between the Kansas PRIDE program, the School of Family Studies and Human Services at Kansas State University and K-State Research and Extension. This is the fourth year the grants have been available.

Applications that involve partnerships with schools or youth organizations such as 4-H clubs, FFA, Scouts, and FCCLA in their applications will be given special consideration.

Awards for the "Get It—Do It" program will be announced in early March. For more information, visit www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu.

FROM THE DIRECTOR: SUPPORTING EACH OTHER IS STILL KEY FOR RURAL AMERICA

In order to achieve success we in rural America need to work together and support each other says the grandmother of a grocery store owner in Pomeroy, Iowa, population 701. I neglected to mention the store owner was only 19 years of age when he purchased it a year and a half ago. It was his third such acquisition.

As volatile and unsettling as 2010 was for parts of the United States and world, it is good to learn of promising stories such as that of the Pomeroy Grocery. New businesses also are burgeoning in the Counties of Republic, Marshall, Clay and Ellsworth, as well. Generation Y-ers have a lot of energy. Experienced adults may also be willing to relocate back home. Are we inviting of young adults, and others for that matter, to establish enterprises in our communities? They may simply need a boost of confidence, or just a little more capital to invest in business undertakings. Referring them to the Small Business Development Center for



Doug McKinney is the NCRPC Executive Director.

guidance is also a good idea. Regulators have tied the hands of traditional small town lenders so tight they are not able to be as helpful as we may want them to be. Communities must be open and supportive.

North Central Kansans have much to be thankful for regarding the quality of life and quality of human and creation-produced products. A number of employers are again in a workforce enhancement mode. Many counties in the area have as high as 96% employment levels, which are some of the highest in Kansas. Of course, most of this section experiences

underemployment and is penalized through various federal programs as a result. Early 2011 indicators of national and local unemployment rates moving lower are also good signs. However, recent layoffs at Abilene-based Duckwall-ALCO are directly related to hesitant consumer spending in rural portions of the Midwest. According to regional planning counterparts in rural areas of Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin, generally they have been hard hit by the economic downturn and as a result are seeing less consumer confidence. This has sharply impacted ALCO and other small community retailers. Kansas is being affected as a result. How will we react?

The NCRPC works with six (6) Kansas Homeland Security regions. Each has interest in engaging service providers and equipment suppliers with a major presence in Kansas. That is something for all of us to personally consider.

We at the NCRPC are looking forward to working with you in this New Year.

ONLINE JOURNAL FEATURES VET ISSUE

Since 2005 the NCRPC has helped sponsor websites with specific audiences in mind. One of these is the Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy (OJRRP).

In October, the OJRRP launched a special issue on its site (ojrrp.org).

"This special issue brought together more than a dozen articles addressing the factors influencing rural veterinary medicine," Dr. Thomas Gould, OJRRP Executive Editor, says.



Gould also is an associate professor at Kansas State University, the Publisher for OJRRP. More than 40 individuals from across the nation make up the OJRRP's Editorial Board.

NCRPC STAFF REPRESENTED AT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Three NCRPC staff members, along with seven other Mitchell County community leaders, attended the Kansas Community Leadership Initiative Summit November 8-10, 2010 in Wichita. The Leadership Summit is for leadership class members, board members and alumni. Mandy Fincham, NCRPC Community Development Specialist, and Pepper Roberg, NCRPC Office Manager, are alumni and were part of Leadership Mitchell County Class X (2009-2010). Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, serves on the Leadership Mitchell County Board and was a part of Class IX (2008-2009).

This summit, the only of its kind in the nation, was developed by the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC). The Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) established the KLC in 2007 through a 10-year, \$30 million investment to cultivate and promote civic leadership in Kansas.

More than 220 leaders attended the summit. Participants were divided into seven small groups to allow greater interaction.

"It was an awesome opportunity to network with other leaders from around the state," says Fincham.

In the small groups, a no nonsense approach was used. Two facilitators asked probing questions that were designed to make participants uncomfortable, but also to dig deep to find helpful answers and to spark change in oneself and environment.



The group representing Leadership Mitchell County at the KLC Leadership Summit included three NCRPC staff members.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED:

- Leadership is an activity, not a position or authority.
- Each of us has the opportunity to exercise leadership at any time in any situation.
- The risks of exercising leadership are both personal and professional.
- Making progress requires us to do what is needed in the situation rather than what is wanted or is comfortable for others or ourselves.
- Our own defaults, how we would usually or unconsciously react or intervene in a situation, can be significant barriers to making progress on the issues we care about.

For more information about the KLC or its programs, visit www.kansasleadershipcenter.org.

The summit taught four competencies for civic leadership. The first is to **diagnose the situation**. Participants were taught to dig deep beneath the issue and uncover the real competing values at hand. What are all the interpretations of the situation? What are the technical elements (known solutions that can be reliably applied) and the adaptive elements (problems that resist easy solutions and new learning is needed)?

Once the situation is diagnosed, a leader then must **energize others**. A leader must connect interests and help people work together by inspiring them to make progress. Who are the factions and how can they work together? What is the purpose and how can one infuse their work with the purpose?

Once people are energized, the next competency is to **manage self**. Exercising civic leadership effectively

means knowing yourself enough to understand your strengths and weaknesses. This might involve challenging your assumptions on the topic. One must identify their capabilities, vulnerabilities and triggers. How do others perceive your role in this system? Can you experiment beyond your comfort zone?

The final competency is to **intervene skillfully**. One must start with a personal intervention. Make conscious choices. Hold relentlessly to the purpose so everyone is focused on the topic at hand. Finally, speak from the heart.

How to handle a problem is a major part of being a leader. Most of the work at the summit was centered around these competencies, which can be applied to any situation.

"We also learned there are many levels of civic leadership," says Torkelson.

Civic leadership can be roles in clubs, schools, churches or local government.

"The summit was empowering and inspiring," Fincham says. "Specifically for the NCRPC staff, we work with city and county officials every day to help them with funding projects and other problems in their community. By gaining the tools of the four competencies and theories and principles of civic leadership, we will be more efficient and helpful in our various capacities."

Ed Mosley, KLC CEO, charged participants to have a purpose, not to just "be busy."

SOLOMON STORE TRANSITIONS TO NEXT GENERATION

A second generation of the Bush family now owns Bush's Market, a grocery store with roots in Solomon dating back to 1950.

Virgil and Nancy Bush have retired and sold the business to their son, Kenny, and daughter-in-law, Ann. The building was constructed in 1950 as a grocery store. The elder Bush's operated the business for 40 years.

In addition to groceries, several services have been added over the years to cater to the customer and make the business successful. Some of these additions include "to go" lunches Monday through Friday, fresh-cut and special order meats, Bush's homemade pork sausage and sandwich spread, custom order party trays, floral arrangements, helium balloons, custom order gift baskets, and catered lunches for business meetings.

Kenny Bush had served as the store's assistant



Bush's Market, located along U.S. Highway 40 in Solomon is one of the community's longest continuing businesses.

manager since 2005. Kenny first worked in the store as a seventh grader after his family moved to Solomon to operate the business. Kenny and Ann now share management duties and hired their son-in-law, Travis Collie, as assistant manager.

Dennis Riordan, Vice President of the Solomon State Bank, assisted with the business transition and compliments the entire Bush family.

"It takes someone special to successfully operate a business in a small town because of the commitment of time and



A second generation of the Bush family now owns the store. Pictured are (from left) sellers Virgil and Nancy Bush, Dennis Riordan of Solomon State Bank, and owners Ann and Kenny Bush.

energy," Riordan says. "We are fortunate the elder Bushes have stayed and successfully operated the store and now can turn it over to their son and daughter-in-law."

Riordan believes a grocery store is important to this community of just over 1,000 people.

"It's important to a community's economic base," Riordan says.

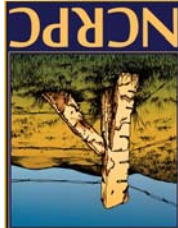
This business purchase was made possible with funding from the Solomon

State Bank, North Central Regional Planning Commission Revolving Loan Fund, a StartUp Kansas Loan, and investment by the owners.

This business transition has allowed the retention of 8 full-time jobs and 8 part-time jobs.

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

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 Online Journal of Rural Research
 and Policy
www.ojrrp.org
 Eye on Kansas
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