

NCRPC NEWS

North Central Regional Planning Commission
Serving Kansans Since 1972

October/November 2011
www.ncrpc.org

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Rod Thompson

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Todd Tuttle

Upcoming Events

Thursday, December 1

Executive Board Meeting

Holiday Reduced Office Hours

Our offices will be closed

November 24-25 and

December 26-30. Best wishes
for the upcoming holidays.

TAX CREDIT FUNDING ASSISTS JEWELL BUSINESS WITH PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Bourbon Trucking, founded by LeRoy Bourbon in 1997 in Jewell, began transporting commodities and goods with a single truck and a set of trailers. Since then LeRoy's son, Eric, has joined the company and it has grown significantly.

Bourbon Trucking uses "pup trailers" to maximize load capacity. The axle spacing on these trailers provides the ability to haul an additional 5,500 pounds of materials — increasing profitability. However, they found it difficult to locate these trailers in good condition and they had ideas to improve the design.

Bourbon Trailers was founded to design and manufacture a new line of pup trailers.

In 2010, Bourbon Trucking, with the assistance of NCRPC, connected with Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI) at Kansas State University. AMI put forth a proposal for services that would assist the company in the development and commercialization of its new product line including engineering support to redesign the hopper base of the new Bourbon Pup Trailer and assistance with business development, marketing and sales support for the product and company.

The Bourbon's turned to the North Central Kansas Rural Business Development Tax Credit Program (NCK RBDC) for financial assistance to purchase marketing time and business plan development from AMI.

Eric says the tax credit investment and connecting with AMI was a huge boost in getting Bourbon Trailers launched.

"We probably wouldn't have otherwise had the funds to access the knowledge and engineering services that AMI provided,"

Eric says. "It also helped us free up enough money that we were able to hire another person to work directly with AMI on the project."

The newly designed trailer is now in Bourbon Trucking's own fleet and they will complete new show trailers to go out for display soon.

The company plans to display its new trailers at the Northern Ag Expo in Fargo, the Nebraska Power Farming Show and the World Ag Expo in California in the next few months.

The company has grown to the point of now having 35 employees.

"If the Ag shows go as well as we think they'll go, then we'll be looking to hire even more," Eric says.

For more about the company, visit

www.bourbontrucking.com.



The state-of-the-art Bourbon Trucking & Trailers facility in which the Bourbon Pup Trailers are being manufactured is new after a 2008 tornado leveled its former facilities. (Courtesy Photo)

TAX CREDITS STILL AVAILABLE

State income tax credits for the 2011 tax year are available through the NCRPC and its non-profit affiliate, North Central Kansas Community Network Co. (NCKCN). The credits are valued at 75% with funding donated to NCKCN in exchange for the credits being used for rural development activities. To learn more visit www.ncrpc.org/services/economic.html.



WASTE TIRE GRANT PROGRAM DEADLINE NEAR

Applications for the FY 2012 KDHE Waste Tire Grant Program will be available starting December 1. The deadline to apply is January 15, 2012.

This grant program provides financial assistance to local units of government to purchase tire-derived products made from recycled waste tires including playground cover, athletic field surfacing, mulching products, and molded or extruded rubber products made from recycled waste tires. This competitive grant program provides up to 50% of the cost of the products.

The Waste Tire Grant Program is a solid waste diversion program developed by legislation in State Fiscal Year 2004. Legislation in 2007 allowed funds from the *Waste Tire Fee Fund* to be used towards the purchase of waste tire-derived products. The Waste Tire Fee Fund generates income from a twenty-five cent excise tax on all new tires sold in Kansas.

For additional information, visit http://kdheks.gov/waste/about_grants.html.

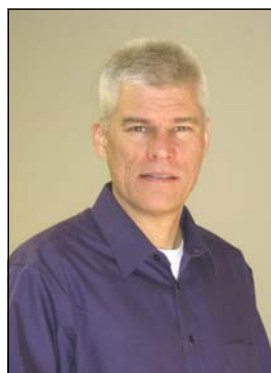
FROM THE DIRECTOR: RURAL AMERICANS TOGETHER CAN OVERCOME CHALLENGES

Waterfalls in Kansas are rare, but those that have sizable flow are tall and powerful, carving channels through limestone. Two impressive ones seen by my family in recent years are the Geary Lake Falls north of Woodbine and the Bourbon Falls near Elsmore in southeast Kansas. Initially impressive are the sight of each of the falls and of course the seemingly endless flow of water.

Equally impressive were the near deafening sounds at the base of the falls. Being at the base of each of these falls was an awe inspiring experience that reminded me how small we are by comparison.

Many rural Kansans and rural Americans may be feeling small when they compare themselves to the large challenges in their path and to the demands of those in metropolitan areas. Postal service closure threats, school consolidations, broadband endangerment are but a few items that have been at the forefront of our minds recently.

A few months ago, Jason Henderson, vice president and Omaha Branch executive with the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, wrote that strong rural real estate markets and commodity values continue to support local tax revenue streams, but rural government would still need to find ways to offset the declines in state and federal intergovernmental transfers. Units of



Doug McKinney is the NCRPC Executive Director.

government have responded by reducing some services, by reluctantly raising mill levies, and even

adjustments to services provided in relation to monetary burdens.

At this time of year when household spending tends to increase, rural residents will have choices to make as to their support of local enterprises and local tax bases or of far away venues.

In general, places and residents in North Central Kansas have much to be thankful for. Harvests have been average and above average in many parts. Hay and wind resources, implements and other products are being exported to other states.

“Collaboration across this region will need to continue in order to create a more efficient service sector for the needs of North Central Kansas.” {Doug McKinney}

decreasing jobs — often by attrition, all the while pursuing efficiency.

Without a doubt fiscal strains are compelling rural regimes to make difficult budget choices. Rural economies are more dependent on Social Security, Medicaid, interest income and other governmental resources in proportion to their more urban entities.

A very poor crop year such as that experienced in southeast Kansas and generally below 38 degrees latitude is taking a toll on the communities located within those regions. Over the next few years, rural governments may have to make

Blessings in human form are also abundant and hope exists for involving our youth and their mentors even more to build an even brighter tomorrow. NCRPC is fortunate to have dedicated staff and a solid executive board of directors to serve the region in many capacities.

To help ease concerns for future rural economies, collaboration across this region will need to continue in order to create a more efficient service sector for the community development needs of North Central Kansas. Individually we are small, but working together we can make a bigger splash.

SALINA AWARDED 'HOME' GRANT FOR REHABILITATION

The City of Salina recently learned it is a recipient of a \$250,000 Homeowner Rehabilitation grant from the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC). The grant, funded by the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program, will help low-income residents make home improvements, bring houses up to code and eliminate other health and safety hazards.

The HOME Program money can be distributed by municipalities through deferred loans that would be repaid only if the home is sold within three years.

Gary Hobbie, Salina's Director of Community and Development Services, says the award is important in meeting the city's goals of upgrading its housing stock.

"This will help increase the livability, energy efficiency and exterior appearance of homes for persons in our 'Area of Change' as designated by our recently approved



A Before and After is shown of a house that was recently rehabilitated with a HOME grant in the region.

Comprehensive Plan," Hobbie says.

The designated Area of Change includes a middle portion of town with older homes and extends to Northern Salina.

"We have become active in the assistance of initiating a new Neighborhood Development Group in Northern Salina," Hobbie says. "The North Side Development Committee has been formed and has worked with city staff to complete two Clean-Up programs and one Fix-up Program. We hope to continue this momentum

through our Area of Change and use the North Salina Group as the incubator model for other community neighborhood revitalization groups."

Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, says the HOME grants have a 25% local match requirement. With this recent award, the City of Salina can expect to rehabilitate approximately 13 homes.

The City of Salina submitted its application in June and the KHRC did a site visit in mid-August.

"With the HOME program there is a short application to award time,

but communities do need cash to contribute the 25% match," Torkelson says.

The City of Salina has had another HOME grant in the past. In the region, the City of Abilene recently completed one HOME grant, which accomplished the rehabilitation of 12 units. A second HOME grant is currently underway in Abilene. The rehabilitation of approximately 15 units is anticipated with the current project there.

For more information about the HOME program, contact Torkelson at 785-738-2218.

HEALTH THE FOCUS OF VOLUNTEER TEAM IN BELOIT

A group of dedicated volunteers in Beloit have formed a Healthy Community Design Team (HCDDT) with the purpose of promoting healthy lifestyles.

The HCDDT has applied for a \$25,000 planning grant from the Kansas Health Foundation. If awarded, they can apply for additional funding to help implement their plan. A 1:1 local match is required.

The group meets weekly and has a diverse makeup. One of the members is Glenn Rodden, Beloit City Administrator.

"This team fills a vital role that city personnel could not fill because of limited resources," Rodden says.

He says the immediate goal of the HCDDT is to make the city more pedestrian friendly by promoting the construction of walking/bike trails

throughout the city and encourage citizens to integrate walking and biking into their daily lifestyle.

Mandy Fincham, NCRPC Community Development Specialist, volunteers on the HCDDT. While the HCDDT does plan to apply for grants, Fincham says there are low-cost ways that communities can encourage health.

"Once you get the right people together and start

looking, there are a lot of little things that can be done that add up to make a big difference," Fincham says.

For instance, the group promoted Walk or Bike to Work/School Day in October. They also are reviewing city policy items such as tree trimming and dogs to make existing sidewalks safe and inviting.

"There are very simple ideas that any community can adopt," Fincham says.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING CONSTRUCTED IN COURTLAND

When Richard and Melanie Lindberg had the chance to construct a commercial building in downtown Courtland to lease space for a Nex-Tech retail store, they jumped on it. The project quickly expanded to make room for two additional businesses.

The 1,664 square foot building now includes the Nex-Tech Wireless retail store, JenRus Freelance and Ag Marketing Partners.

Richard Lindberg operates a construction business and did much of the work himself with the help of subcontractors. Construction began in early March and businesses were able to move into their new spaces in June. Grand openings took place in late July.

Jenny Russell, owner of JenRus Freelance, previously ran her business from a home office. JenRus Freelance is contracted to direct the Republic County Economic Development activities.

“Having space in this new building has increased visibility with the public,” Russell says. “We also really like the fact that we can be a part of a large impact on the Courtland downtown and the Republic County economy.”

Richard Lindberg says the county’s approval of the Neighborhood Revitalization program was a big help to the project. The building was constructed along Main Street on lots previously owned by the Courtland United Methodist Church.

The Lindbergs, who are from Courtland, were eager to be part of a project to benefit the community.

“The community support has been great,” Richard Lindberg says. “The bank, the people of Courtland, and even the church have all helped this project be successful.”



The new commercial building located at 312/314 Main Street in downtown Courtland is home to three different businesses. (Courtesy Photo)

Mike Johnson of the Swedish-American State Bank says the project has been a win-win for everyone concerned.

“It has benefited through new jobs and a substantial amount of additional traffic in town,” Johnson says.

Richard says he and Melanie are already looking at another possible project that would benefit Courtland.

“We like to benefit the community and also invest in the future of our children

as we look towards our own retirement someday,” Lindberg says.

This project was made possible with funding from the Swedish-American State Bank, the Four Rivers NCKBDF Loan Pool and investment by the owners.

For more information about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Loan Director at 785-738-2218 or email dpeters@nckcn.com or visit www.ncrpc.org/services/business.html.

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www.ojrrp.org
 Eye on Kansas
www.eyeonkanssas.org

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