

# NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

## Bulk Solids Innovation Center Opens

The Kansas State University Bulk Solids Innovation Center, located in north Salina, celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony May 14, 2015. Construction on the facility began in July 2014.

The NCRPC was one of the collaborating partners on the project, which was built with funding from federal, state, city, major industry and regional sources.

Additionally, considerable equipment donations were made by local and national suppliers.

The nearly 13,000-square-foot facility will be used to study and develop the understanding of bulk solids materials handling,

in turn enhancing the businesses that use these materials or manufacture the systems that convey, store and dispense them. Bulk solids include loose, dry commodities like sugar, coffee beans, pet foods, minerals, pigments and recycled plastics that account for more than 80 percent of items transported around the world.

This university-level research center is the only one of its kind in North America. K-State will be the key tenant in the center, along with two local companies, Vortex Valves and Coperion K-Tron. The primary partners in this endeavor are Kansas State University, the Salina Chamber of

Commerce, Salina Economic Development Corporation, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, Kansas Department of Commerce, City of Salina, NCRPC affiliate NCKCN, and several other private companies.

Overall, the project cost is about \$4.7 million, including \$2.5 million in equipment donations.



Collaborators on the Kansas State University Bulk Solids Innovation Center took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony on May 14.



Todd Smith, general manager of Coperion K-Tron, one of the anchor tenants, led a tour of the facility for City of Salina officials May 11.

About 30 jobs in local industry and university research are expected to be created as a result of this facility.

For more information, visit the website at [bulk-solids.k-state.edu](http://bulk-solids.k-state.edu). ■

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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.

### Contact Us

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# Guest View Point: Reflections on the Regional System

*We are pleased to have a guest column from John Cyr, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations (KARDO). Cyr worked for the NCRPC for 34 years, 22 of which he spent as its Executive Director, fully retiring from the organization in December 2014. In this issue, Cyr discusses his observations of the regional system over the years.*

Thirty-five years ago this coming September I entered the world of regional planning for the first time, not fully realizing, and certainly not understanding, the significance of that world being relatively new. It was a period of loud controversy, for many saw such organizations as an unwanted layer of government if not a move by non-elected forces to supersede the powers of local government itself. They definitely did not consider the regional structure as a potential rural development tool.

Regional commissions in the 1970s and early 1980s were like-minded operations centered on aggregating regional data, producing regional plans, and reviewing infrastructure projects submitted by member governments. The system was all about developing a cooperative environment that avoided costly duplication of effort. Boards set the agenda and staff responded to its demands. Funding for operations came primarily from membership dues and a Kansas Department of Economic Development (KDED) administered federal program (HUD 701) matched with state money.

That radically changed in 1982. Supply-side economic theory introduced at the national level led to the elimination of federal programs like HUD 701. Unfortunately, state funding for planning was tied to that program; so once it vanished, so too went the Kansas funds. The result was the loss of direct state support for regional endeavors as well as the removal of “Planning” as a component of KDED’s revised Community Development Division.



John Cyr served as NCRPC Executive Director for 22 years.

The 1980s proved to be a period of uneasy transition. With no guiding authority, limited as it was to begin with, the organizations lost their central focus and became driven more by board sanctioned staff resourcefulness than by board direction. It was a time devoted to seeking out service opportunities and transforming staff capabilities. Some, like the NCRPC, became contract agents for programs (e.g. weatherization) administered by the state. For most, however, grant writing and grant administration became fee-for-service mainstays.

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“What the future holds is totally dependent upon the flexibility and imagination of regional staff and the boards they serve.”  
— John Cyr

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Working relationships with federal level agencies, such as the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA), developed over time. Many regions created their own revolving loan programs, tapping EDA, HUD and USDA in so doing. The combined effect of these actions moved the organizations out of the sole realm of government service and into one that included business service.

By the 1990s the regional planning system had evolved into a disjointed group of individual organizations that identified with different funding agencies, each offering a range of like-kind specialized services but each not necessarily possessing the same degree of competency. This disparity grew on

into the 2000s, helped along by the fact most drifted into a passive mode of operation, choosing to live off walk-in traffic rather than seeking out new opportunities for additional growth. This practice worked so long as each organization was able to package grants and loans enough to generate sufficient fees and interest to cover costs. Shortfalls meant loss of staff and their associated capabilities.

Serendipitous opportunity and the willingness to take a risk played a role in strengthening some operations, however. The North Central Kansas Community Network (NCKCN) is a prime example as is the Comprehensive Housing Development Organization (CHDO) established by Northwest Kansas Regional Planning & Development. These entities are stand alone nonprofit companies satellite to the parent regional organizations. Established to address a defined need, they have the added value of producing and receiving secondary sources of capital the parent can then use to leverage other resources as well as underwrite a variety of projects so long as those projects benefit the audience targeted by the nonprofit itself.

Today’s regional system is but an echo of its past self. What began as a statewide effort to promote cooperation and coordination at the local government level in the 1970s has become a system of independent service providers struggling to build task oriented, collaborative relationships across all spheres of government, education and private enterprise. Each has had to learn how to overcome, if not forego, the hierarchical structure of its past and adapt to a more organic form of operation. None have fully succeeded in doing so.

Social networks that mix and match individual skill sets are the thing of the day. While such networks have always existed in some shape or form, they

**(Continued on page 3)**

## Ellsworth Business Featured on TV



Courtesy Photo

Maico Industries, Inc., Ellsworth, was featured on an episode of the show “How It’s Made” on the Science Channel USA on July 2. The segment, featuring the process for manufacturing a traffic signal pole, was filmed last summer. For more information about the business, visit [www.maicoind.com](http://www.maicoind.com).

## Reflections

### (Continued from page 2)

have been ad hoc and based principally on personal relationships operating beneath a more traditional, top down organizational structure. Now successful organizations do not just rely on staff alone to serve their clientele, they possess the ability to produce task-based teams as needed, drawing upon human and nonhuman resources that may or may not be found within their respective confines alone.

There is a wealth of knowledge and talent embedded in each remaining organization and there is significant need and opportunity to share that talent across regional boundaries. But, there is also an inherent territoriality and aversion to risk or change, some of which is tied to the governmental origins of the system. Most see their organizations as service providers for a fixed geography that is theirs and theirs alone. Organizational capability continues to be vested in staff skill sets with capacity tied to the man-hours available under one umbrella which means not all parts of Kansas are

equally served. The advantage of social networks is acknowledged but not necessarily embraced, and any disruption to the status quo creates immediate problems for individual organizations. Collectively, they have yet to realize the regional system has entered another period of transition.

What the future holds is totally dependent upon the flexibility and imagination of regional staff and the boards they serve. Each entity faces a challenge similar to that confronted in 1982 only today supply-side economic theory is being advanced closer to home and the resulting effects are going to be more immediate – especially in rural areas. Regional organizations must find ways to position themselves to better help their respective local government members and business communities overcome the challenges that await, even if that means they must modify their own operational methods. But if they can respond to this challenge, a stronger regional paradigm will emerge and its clientele will be better served. ■

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

### Thursday, July 30, 2015

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

### Thursday, August 27, 2015

Executive Board Meeting  
Ottawa County Courthouse, 2 p.m.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Summer Offers Chance to Buy Fresh, Local Food



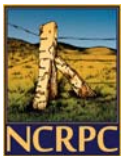
Summer is a great time to find fresh, in-season produce locally. Visiting a farmers’ market is one source for purchasing locally grown foods.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture’s *From the Land of Kansas* program maintains the Central Registration of Farmers’ Markets in the state. In addition to having a variety of resources for Farmers’ Markets, there also is a directory to help locate the markets. To search the directory, visit [fromthelandofkansas.com/explore-from-land-kansas](http://fromthelandofkansas.com/explore-from-land-kansas), then click the Farmers’ Market icon and then “filter.” ■

### Entrepreneurial Workshop to Take Place this Month

A workshop on the Framework for Understanding and Implementing an Entrepreneurial Mindset will take place July 23 at the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce North Annex. It will be based on the concept of the book “Who Owns the Ice House: Eight Life Lessons from an Unlikely Entrepreneur.” The workshop is sponsored by the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations (KARDO), of which the NCRPC is a member. Space is limited, but a wait list is available. For more information, visit [www.ncrpc.org/news/upcoming](http://www.ncrpc.org/news/upcoming). ■





## North Central Regional Planning Commission

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# Business Completes Addition to Increase Production Space

A long-time family-owned business recently completed an addition that doubled the size of its main building and streamlined the company's production process.

Winkel Manufacturing Co., located just north of Glen Elder, started operations in its new addition in late fall 2014.



The business manufactures livestock related equipment including products such as flat beds, panels, gates, bunks, and bale forks for tractors/skid loaders. It also is a Vermeer dealer.

Paul and Dorothy Winkel started the company in 1952 and are still active in the business. The couple has two sons who also are active in the management of the company, Roy and Alan. The business currently employs 20, including the Winkel family.

The project added 12,000 square feet of space to the original 12,000 square foot building that was constructed in 2000.

The addition now allows all manufacturing to be completed under one roof, which has resulted in greater production efficiency, expanded production and increased energy efficiencies. The manufacturing was previously completed in multiple buildings. The addition also included space for a new business office and allowed the company to install two overhead crane systems that have improved work flow.



Winkel Manufacturing Co., located just north of Glen Elder, completed an addition in late 2014 that doubled the size of its main building.

This project was made possible with funding from Central National Bank, NCKCN-Four Rivers Loan Pool, and investment by the owners.

For more about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or [dpeters@nckcn.com](mailto:dpeters@nckcn.com). For more about the business or its products, visit [www.winkelmfg.com](http://www.winkelmfg.com). ■