

NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Rural Voices Contest Winners Named

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 2015-2016 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Gehrig Geissinger, a senior at Abilene High School, was awarded first place and Maura Kennedy, a senior at Frankfort High School, was awarded second place. Both 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.



Gehrig Geissinger

Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Washington — were eligible to participate by submitting an original essay or video reflective of the contest theme. This year's theme



Maura Kennedy

was “Rural Kansas...My Legacy.”

Geissinger, who plans to attend the University of Kansas, says the contest caused him to reflect on his roots.

“In looking back, I really saw how deeply I had been influenced by my rural Kansas legacy and that, despite growing up as a city boy, the country life had made me who I am today and who people will remember me as,” Geissinger says.

Kennedy, who plans to attend Kansas State University, says the contest topic was important to her.

“Writing down my legacy helped me to put into perspective what I accomplished in high school,” Kennedy says. “It also made me realize how I was impacted by my rural community.”

To view the winning entries, visit www.eyeonkansas.org and click on the “RuralVoices” link. The NCRPC Executive Board has chosen “Rural Kansas...Why it Matters” to be the 2016-2017 contest theme. Additional details will be available this fall. ■

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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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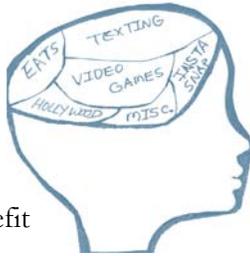
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Engaging Youth Can Make a Big Difference in Communities

How do you engage young persons and young adults? It is a challenge and takes a concerted effort.

There is a lot going on inside the mind of a young person as I've illustrated in this graphic. A few ways to benefit youth and their communities is to involve them in genuine decision making, to interact with and provide coaching by mentors, to enable them to teach adults in a variety of matters, and to provide opportunities to help them connect with the community, its businesses and organizations.



Most of us see some local impacts from Scouts, 4-H and Student Councils. I know of at least one community in the region that engages youth with senior citizens by having young persons provide hands on training on effective usage of

VIEWPOINT



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

technology. Other places invite young drivers to deliver Meals on Wheels on a regular basis. That pays big dividends. Yet another rewards young persons who donate blood or volunteer at Red Cross blood drives. Nothing like saving a few lives to help a young donor feel valued. Park improvement considerations involving the opinions of those who use them most is a fabulous idea. Keep your ears and eyes tuned to the extra special youth engagements in Clay Center in 2016 and 2017. Great things are bound to happen as a result.

Since 2006, NCRPC has especially invited the perspectives of senior high

seniors via the Rural Voices Contest. Congratulations to the students who wrote the winning essays this year. These are worthy of your examination at www.eyeonkansas.org.

Additionally, the NCRPC has helped bring speakers to local schools to engage, encourage and inspire young people. These individuals include former Kansas State Wildcat Quarterback Collin Klein, former University of Kansas basketball player Wayne Simien and, just this past month, former NFL and Kansas State Wildcat football player Kevin Lockett.

If our teens and young adults are not included in the conversations and decisions made on their behalf, they may not consider rural Kansas when they make their employment and resident decisions. Engaging our youth and investing in them can make a big difference in their lives as well as in their communities. Thanks for your efforts in this realm. ■

New CDBG Projects Awarded; Preparation Encouraged

Three North Central Kansas communities will receive funding to help complete a variety of improvement projects. The funding comes from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The City of Miltonvale will receive \$500,000 to improve its water distribution system. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment will provide \$510,134 in matching funds.

The City of Lincoln Center will receive \$400,000 for an electrical generation upgrade project. The city will contribute \$507,000 in matching funds.

The City of Minneapolis will receive \$286,000 for a housing rehabilitation and demolition project. The city will contribute \$7,500 in matching funds.

Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, says early preparation is important for communities that may be considering applying for a housing rehabilitation project this fall.

“In addition to beginning the Housing Assessment Tool, community clean up is key,” Torkelson says. “It’s also important to work with local contractors to ensure they hold all the certifications necessary to work in the program.”

Linda Hunsicker, Kansas Department of Commerce CDBG

Specialist, agrees that the appearance of a community and availability of local contractors certified to work in the CDBG program are two of the key items the Department of Commerce evaluates during its site visits to communities that have applied for housing funding. Hunsicker says some of the downfalls for communities tend to be untagged cars and vacant lots with overgrown trees and bushes.

“It boils down to good leadership, a sense of pride and community involvement,” Hunsicker says.

For more information about the CDBG program, visit the website at www.kansascommerce.com/cdbg or contact the NCRPC to discuss your project needs with a staff member. ■

Executive Board Welcomes Mahin

Luke Mahin, Republic County Economic Development Director, recently joined the NCRPC Executive Board of Directors.

A native of Courtland, Luke returned to his home town in 2010 to begin working for JenRus Freelance after graduating with a degree



Luke Mahin

in Communications/Advertising from Fort Hays State University (FHSU). That same year, the Republic County Economic Development Corporation's board contracted JenRus to direct their

office duties with Luke and owner Jenny Russell. Luke became the director in 2014 and assists county businesses and communities in accessing local, state and regional resources for business projects or quality of life issues.

Luke also has a degree in Communications from Cloud County Community College (CCCC) and serves on the CCCC Foundation Development Committee. He is a past board member of WeKan! Support (Kansas Sampler Foundation) and is the North Central Kansas Rural Development Council President. In addition, Luke coaches basketball at Pike Valley Junior High and serves on several local committees. ■

Search and Rescue Exercise Uses Resources Purchased with Homeland Security Funding

Approximately 30 members of Task Force 4 participated in a two-day Search and Rescue Exercise in Neodesha, Kansas, October 27 and 28, 2015. Several pieces of equipment used in the exercise were purchased with Homeland Security Program funding. The NCRPC serves as fiscal agent for six regional Homeland Security Councils in Kansas, including the Southeast region where this exercise was held. Task Force 4 can be deployed through the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office for any event that is deemed necessary. ■



Courtesy Photo

The October 2015 Task Force 4 Search and Rescue Exercise provided a realistic scenario that involved a tornado path that traveled through the center of Neodesha, Kansas. The exercise was funded through a Homeland Security grant.

Wagner Joins NCRPC Staff

Chris Wagner has joined the NCRPC staff as weatherization inspector. In this role, he is responsible for inspections for the Weatherization Assistance Program funded by the Department of Energy and Low Income Energy Assistance Program to ensure compliance with program requirements.

Chris is from Beloit and has been involved with a variety of building trades over the last 15 years. He and his wife, Chandra, have a daughter, Trinity, and a son, Zane. In addition to spending time with family, Chris enjoys fishing and automobiles. ■



Chris Wagner

Registration Still Open for CIP Workshop

There is still time to make plans to attend the Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) for Local Government Workshop in Concordia on April 14.

It is highly encouraged that department heads from your city, county, or rural water district attend. The training is sponsored in part by the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations (KARDO) with support from USDA Rural Development. Call 785-738-2218 by April 11 to RSVP. For more information, visit

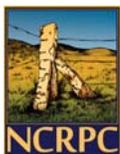
www.ncrpc.org/cipworkshop/. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 31, 2016
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Beloit Office, 2 p.m.

Thursday, April 28, 2016
NCRPC Executive Board Field Trip

Thursday, April 14, 2016
Capital Improvement Planning for Local Government Workshop
803 Valley St., Concordia, KS, 9 a.m.
RSVP by April 11 at 785-738-2218



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

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Hickory Smoked Meats Offered at New Minneapolis Location

Hickory smoked meats have been served to residents in Minneapolis and the surrounding area from FatBoy Heaven's mobile food trailer since 2012. The business now has a permanent restaurant in downtown Minneapolis at 213 N. Concord.

Stan Black and his wife, Pam, opened the restaurant at its new location this month. FatBoy Heaven is open for lunch Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. serving soups, salads, sandwiches and daily specials. The restaurant has extended hours on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and offers additional entrée choices such as ribs.

The business previously operated in Minneapolis two days a week from April through September. Stan also caters various events in the area and

offers smoked meats at Thanksgiving and Christmas. He is looking forward to being able to interact more with his customers at the new location.

"Being able to serve the community all the time is going to be really special," Stan says.

Stan manages the business and Pam will continue her employment as Administrator of the Good Samaritan Home in Minneapolis.

The project was made possible with funding from Citizens State Bank-Minneapolis, the NCK Business Development Loan Fund and investment by the owners. For more information about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or by email at dpeters@nckcn.com.



FatBoy Heaven is open at its new location at 213 N. Concord in downtown Minneapolis.

For more information about FatBoy Heaven, find them on Facebook or call 785-224-5144. ■