



NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

New Economic Innovation Center Begins Work in Northwest Kansas

Increasing economic opportunities, enhancing the quality of life, and reversing the population decline within Northwest Kansas are the primary long-term goals of the newly formed Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc. (NWKEICI).

The NWKEICI, headquartered in Norton, Kansas, was formed as a result of an initiative of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Logan, Kansas, in January. Of the Hansen Foundation's 26 Northwest Kansas counties, eight are also part of the NCRPC primary service area — including Cloud, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, and Saline counties.

Scott Sproul began as the organization's President and CEO in March and a board of five members was established. Sproul was most recently the Executive Director of Norton City/County Economic Development.

"Our primary focus is to be a supporting arm for economic development agencies within the region and to assist businesses in their pursuit of growth, retention and recruitment of key employees for their businesses," Sproul says.

Time is being spent researching community needs and assessing how the NWKEICI can be most effective.

"In the meetings around the region, the number one issue we continually see is, 'How do we access

the skilled labor or talent pool to add value to an existing company or community?'" We also see the great need for succession planning of businesses in the near future. The ability to access the talent pool has been challenging to overcome, but we are addressing that issue through our Career and Business Pipeline that is currently in the developmental stage," Sproul says.

According to Sproul, the organization is also working toward the implementation of a program that will help integrate the leaders of communities into powerful programs relating to Business Mentorship and Business Concierge concepts. He says more details will be released next spring.

While the organization is young, Sproul is optimistic about the future.

"I am excited about the opportunities we are starting to see in the region and the willingness for people to collaborate for the success of the region," Sproul says.

The organization is in the process of developing its marketing plan, which will be focused around the programming and assistance they will provide to the area.

The NWKEICI headquarters is in the renovated Heaton Building at 112 S. Kansas, Suite 313, Norton, Kansas. For more information or to contact the staff, call 785-874-5150 or email office@nwkeici.org. ■

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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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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NCRPC/NCKCN Hosted Bi-Annual Banquet in Abilene

National Bio and Agro-defense Facility, or NBAF, Liaison, Dr. Ron Trewyn, was the featured speaker at the NCRPC Bi-Annual Banquet on November 3 in Abilene. The NCRPC also hosted the banquet on behalf of its not-for-profit affiliate, North Central Kansas Community Network Co. (NCKCN).

Approximately 110 people took part in the event, which was located at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene.

NBAF is under construction on Kansas State University's Manhattan campus and is adjacent to the university's Biosecurity Research Institute. Trewyn works with the university president and others inside and outside the institution to facilitate and leverage NBAF-related opportunities for the university, the region and the state. Manhattan was selected as the location for NBAF after a three-year site selection process. Trewyn credits that success to having a great consortium and many dedicated partners.

The facility is expected to be fully operational by 2023. The \$1.25 billion NBAF is creating a significant number of construction jobs and will eventually have about 400 permanent employees. Trewyn says the facility is also expected to attract private biotechnology companies, professionals and support infrastructure, which could extend into communities in the region outside of Manhattan.

"There are going to be a lot of opportunities moving forward with NBAF," Trewyn says.

For more information about NBAF, visit www.k-state.edu/nbaf. ■



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The November 3 event took place at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene.

Certified Asbestos Inspections Available Through NCRPC

The NCRPC offers Certified Asbestos Inspections to governmental entities and private property owners.

"Cities need to know that by rule they should have commercial buildings inspected prior to demolition," Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director, says. "We have an inspector on staff who is accredited to do asbestos inspections."

In Kansas, the asbestos program is operated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Bureau of Air. Regulations are in place in Kansas to help protect the public and workers from exposure to

asbestos fibers during removal, renovation and demolition of commercial and public buildings. In certain circumstances, residential properties fall under these regulations as well. If in question, contact KDHE or the NCRPC for guidance on how to proceed. As a result, prior to demolition, all commercial, industrial and some residential buildings must be inspected by a qualified asbestos inspector.

The cost of asbestos inspections vary based on the structure and how many samples must be taken.

"Each unit is unique and has different sampling requirements," Torkelson says. "This is a service we

are able to offer that is available for a city or property owner's own protection."

Many building products contain asbestos because of its strength, durability and resistance to heat. Its uses are widespread and could be present in just about any structure. For demolition, a notification form must be submitted to KDHE at least 10 business days prior to the start of work — even if asbestos is not found in the inspection.

To learn more about NCRPC's asbestos inspection services or to request a bid, contact Carol Torkelson at 785-738-2218 or email her at ctorkelson@nckcn.com. ■

New SBDC County Assignments in Region

Counties in North Central Kansas have new contacts for assistance from the Kansas Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Within the primary NCRPC service area, four counties — including Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, and Mitchell — are now assigned to the SBDC at Fort Hays State University (FHSU). Rick Feltenberger was named director of the Hays center in July. Call 785-628-5615 or email rkfaltenberger2@fhsu.edu for assistance.

The remaining counties in the NCRPC primary service area — including Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Marshall, Ottawa, Republic, Saline and Washington — are now assigned to the SBDC at Washburn University-Manhattan Area Chamber of

Commerce (MACC) Region. The office is located at the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce. Laurie Pieper was named adviser at the MACC Outreach Center in September. Call 785-587-9917 or email laurie.pieper@washburn.edu for assistance.

The SBDC provides assistance for existing small businesses or individuals interested in starting a business. Each center provides advising at no cost and access to free and low-cost training both online and at a variety of locations. In addition to meeting in person, advisers are able to connect via phone, video chat, and email.

For more information about the Kansas SBDC, visit the website at www.kansassbdc.net. ■

Program Assists Second-Stage Businesses

A select number of second-stage Kansas businesses may be eligible to receive assistance through the Kansas Economic Gardening Program.

NetWork Kansas manages the program and received a grant from the Kauffman Foundation this summer that will be used to subsidize the cost of economic gardening engagements for up to 24 Kansas second-stage businesses. The slots are available on a first-come, first-served

basis. To utilize the program, businesses will need to be referred by a NetWork Kansas partner. The NCRPC is a partner.

Economic gardening connects business owners with a team of trained research analysts to provide up to 36 hours of research on a strategic topic. A pilot of the program first launched in 2010. For more information and to see the full criteria, visit <http://bit.ly/2cDcrhu>. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

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

Holiday Reduced Office Hours

The NCRPC offices will be closed November 24-25 and December 26-30. Normal business hours will resume Tuesday, January 3, 2017.

Remaining FY 2017 CDBG Funding Deadlines

KAN STEP - Feb. 15, 2017
Economic Development - Open Window from Jan 1-Dec. 10, 2016

For a full list of upcoming events, visit www.ncrpc.org/news/events/. A list of funding sources and deadlines are available at www.ncrpc.org/funding/.

NEWS BRIEFS

Capital Improvement Planning Updates

The NCRPC will host a Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Workshop in winter 2017. Additional details will be announced soon. An online Capital Improvement Planning survey will also be distributed in the near future with results to be shared at the workshop.

A Capital Improvement Plan guides the long-term expenditures that are placed in each annual budget and it helps a city/county determine the level of funds that need to be placed in the capital improvement account each year to fund future improvements and maintenance. Cities and counties who effectively plan for these expenses find themselves with a “rainy day fund” when expensive infrastructure and equipment must be replaced or rebuilt.

More workshop details will be available soon. Watch your inbox for a survey invitation. ■

NCKCN Challenges Customers to Donate

NCKCN is challenging its customers to share the warmth this fall and winter by donating winter hats, gloves and scarves. A \$5 credit will be given on one NCKCN bill to customers who donate at least two items. Customers may drop off their donations at the NCRPC/NCKCN Main Office at 109 N. Mill Street, Beloit, through December 15. The collected items will be distributed throughout the NCKCN service area. ■



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

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New Casual Dining, Sports Grill Now Open in Concordia

A new restaurant in downtown Concordia featuring a sports bar and grill opened this fall in time for the college football and NFL seasons.

Easy G Sports Grill is located in a fully renovated building at 107 W. 6th Street in downtown Concordia, just across from a newly developed outdoor entertainment venue called Broadway Plaza. The restaurant offers unique burgers and wings, wraps, sandwiches, and salads. It also features 23 televisions throughout the building — providing customers with an opportunity to enjoy numerous televised sporting events.

The business is owned by Ty and Heather Gennette, Chad and Malinda Sallman, and Tom Gennette. Ty manages the day-to-day operations of the business, Chad continues to

operate his family business — Sallman Builder's LLC, and Tom continues his employment as Recreation Director for the City of Concordia.



Easy G Sports Grill is open from 11 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday. The business has 10 full-time and 20 part-time employees.

The project was made possible with funding from Cloud Corp's "Get in The Cloud" Grant Program, Elk State Bank, NCKCN Four Rivers Loan Fund, StartUp Kansas, and investment by the owners.

For more information about the financing programs used, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business



Courtesy Photo

Easy G Sports Grill is located at 107 W. 6th Street in downtown Concordia.

Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or email dpeters@nckcn.com. For more about the business, call 785-262-4099 or find them on Facebook. ■