



NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Two Selected as Rural Voices Winners

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 2016-2017 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Riley Doebele, a senior at Hanover High School, was awarded first place in the written category and Isabella Hartman, a senior at St. John's Catholic High School, Beloit, was awarded first place in the video category. Both students will receive a cash award of \$850.



Riley Doebele

Courtesy Photo



Isabella Hartman

Courtesy Photo

counties of Clay, Cloud, 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 was "Rural Kansas... Why it Matters." A record number of entries were received.

"The contest has become a tradition we look forward to sponsoring each year," Doug McKinney, NCRPC Executive Director, says. "It's great hearing the ideas of youth from our region."

To view the top entries or to learn more about the contest, visit www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices. The next contest deadline will be November 15, 2017. Further details will be announced in September. ■

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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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Communities Awarded CDBG Funds

Four North Central Kansas communities will receive funding to help complete 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 Blue Rapids will receive \$82,890 for a water meter replacement project. The city will contribute \$82,890 from local funds and force account labor.

The City of Clyde will receive \$252,000 for a wastewater

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NCK Farm and Food Policy Council Formed in Region

North Central Regional Planning Commission has just initiated a Farm and Food Policy Council for the region. It encompasses all 12 counties and consists of a variety of expertise.

It serves a wide area and will help bolster connections between producers and customers, vendors and marketers. Other strengths include the incentives it can take advantage of via programs and various collaborations.

The council members have interest in working toward common goals and they have passion and positivity regarding the economic betterment of the region and the health benefits this undertaking may offer.

A food policy council such as the NCK unit can provide more local food availability and educate the public about positive foods habits and decisions. It will address markets and the collaborative efforts to help producers reach wider audiences. A grand opportunity is to bring producers together in an effort to export fresh produce beyond the region in which it originates. In general, the council hopes to add



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

value to the agricultural sector of the region all the while bettering the health of consumers.

Individuals serving on the council include Greg Renter, producer, NCK Aware team member, and former superintendent of schools; Jennifer Simmelink, Farmer/Rancher; Ashley Svaty, Post Rock Extension Agent; Gaylene Zier-Ryan, Registered Dietician; Deanna Betts, USD 240 Program Coordinator; Brenda Gutierrez, Salina Area United Way and Live Well Saline County; Lance Nobert, Elk State Bank and Loveland



The NCK Farm and Food Policy Council met February 24. Pictured are (back row from left) Aaron Floresch, Lance Nobert, Greg Renter, Ashley Svaty, (front row) Brenda Gutierrez, Gaylene Zier-Ryan, Jennifer Simmelink, and Ellen Barber. Not pictured are Julie Roller, Kelsey Hatesohl, Deanna Butts and Chris Janssen.

Farms; Chris Janssen, C and C High Tunnels; Kelsey Hatesohl, River Valley Extension Horticulturalist; Aaron Floresch, Ray's Apple Market; Ellen Barber, Marshall County Partnership for Growth; and Julie Roller, Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The group met officially for the first time on February 24 and will convene again March 31. Interest in local food systems is growing and it will be exciting to see what develops in the coming months. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 30, 2017
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Beloit Office, 2 p.m.

April 4 and April 5, 2017
Lead-Safe Work Practices Training in Hays and Beloit. RSVP by March 31.
www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/contractor-opportunities/

April 11 and April 13, 2017
FY 2018 CDBG Annual Application Workshops in Newton and Topeka.
www.kansascommerce.com/cdbg

More on the web »
Events: www.ncrpc.org/news/events
Funding sources and deadlines:
www.ncrpc.org/funding

CDBG Program

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improvement project. The city will contribute \$252,000 in matching funds from local funds and the KDHE Revolving Loan Fund.

The City of Mankato will receive \$300,000 for a housing rehabilitation and demolition project. A local match of \$7,500 is being provided from a combination of weatherization and city funds.

The City of Waterville will receive \$199,788 for a water drainage improvement project. The city will contribute \$199,788 in matching funds.

For communities considering applying for funding in the fall, early preparation and planning is important. The Department of Commerce is hosting its annual Application Workshop for FY 2018 in two locations in April. See the Upcoming Events section for details. Funding is available in the categories of Community Improvement, Housing, Urgent Need, Commercial Rehabilitation, and Economic Development. Contact Emily Benedick or Nichole McDaniel at the NCRPC to discuss your project needs or request application assistance. ■

Garrison Rejoins Executive Board

Bill Garrison has rejoined the NCRPC Executive Board, a position that he previously held from 2005 to 2008. He also serves on the Cloud County Board of Commissioners.

Born and raised in rural Cloud County, Bill lives near Miltonvale and has been a lifetime farmer/rancher primarily raising cattle, wheat, milo, and soybeans. He also raises registered and certified seed wheat and soybeans. He has been involved with many community activities including the Cloud County Extension Board, 4-H, and was a 17-year member of the USD 334 School Board. He received an



Bill Garrison

Courtesy Photo
accounting degree from Brown Mackie College. Bill and his wife, Fran, have two grown sons, James and Greg, and have five

grandchildren. They were inducted in the Kansas Master Farmer/Kansas Master Farm Homemaker Class of 1999. In his free time, he enjoys deer hunting and many times in the past has exhibited wheat at local fairs. ■

Assistance Available Following CIP Workshops

Approximately 50 people took part in the Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) for Local Government Workshops that were offered in the region last month in Linn and Bennington.

Discussed at the workshop was an 8-Step Capital Improvement Planning Process developed by the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations. Various worksheets and resources were also shared. Capital Improvement Plans act as long term guides that provide a schedule of construction or acquisition of capital improvements and provide a framework for how they will be funded.

The NCRPC is now offering Capital Improvement Planning assistance to communities.



Participants worked through initial steps of the capital improvement planning process at the workshop in Bennington on February 15. Another workshop took place in Linn on February 16.

“We recognize that communities may be at different stages with their Capital Improvement Planning processes,” Emily Benedick, NCRPC Community Development Representative, says. “Some may just need to update their plans while others have never had a plan. We are here to be a resource as we all move forward.”

To request assistance or learn more about the services available, contact the NCRPC. ■

NCK-WiFi Continues to Expand in the Region

[NCK-WiFi](#), which is provided by North Central Kansas Community Network, Co. (NCKCN) and Cunningham Telephone & Cable (CTC), is growing. NCKCN is an affiliate of the NCRPC.



NCK-WiFi has launched several new “hotspots” across North Central Kansas and is currently available in 11 areas located within five communities including Beloit, Concordia, Glen Elder, Jewell, and Mankato. More locations are coming soon.

A unique opportunity that NCK-WiFi provides is the Marketplace, which allows businesses to advertise using the latest technologies. Advertising in the NCK-WiFi Marketplace reaches hundreds of potential customers as they connect up to any one of the hotspot locations. For more information about advertising, visit www.nck-wifi.com/marketplace/advertise/start-here.php. ■

CIP Survey Remains Open

The North Central Kansas Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Survey deadline has been extended. Your feedback is valuable in helping to determine the wants and needs within the region. Thanks to everyone who has already completed the survey. If completing it online is not an option, contact the NCRPC and we will mail a copy to you or your council/board. The survey is available at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/nckkansacip. ■



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

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New Program Offers One-Time Grants to Businesses

NetWork Kansas, through a partnership with the Kansas Department of Commerce, is offering a one-time opportunity for 20 businesses to receive a \$5,000 grant through a new JumpStart Kansas Entrepreneurs Program.

A business must also be accessing/applying for one of the other NetWork Kansas programs, such as StartUp Kansas, to be eligible for the additional JumpStart Kansas funding.

Only NetWork Kansas resource partners can access its programs. The NCRPC Business Finance Program is a NetWork Kansas resource partner and is available to assist businesses access this new JumpStart funding opportunity in conjunction with applying for a new StartUp Kansas loan request. The NCRPC has

JumpStart KANSAS ENTREPRENEURS

funding programs that can be used as qualifying match including the NCRPC Revolving Loan Fund and the NCKCN Four Rivers Loan Pool.

Applications are processed on a first come first served basis. The program will end when 20 grants have been approved or at the end of the current fiscal year on June 30, 2017.

To be eligible for JumpStart Kansas, businesses must meet **one** or more of the following:

- 1.) Unique entrepreneurial concepts or ideas, company growth opportunities or startups.
- 2.) Product or service must be innovative. Examples include a new

idea, device, method or application of a better solution.

3.) Demonstrates significant local impact related to one or more of the following areas: a.) Improves quality of life for a specific demographic and/or geographical area; b.) High potential impact in the areas of healthcare, technology, internet availability, and/or agriculture.

4.) Geographical areas that are considered Frontier Communities or communities with populations less than 1,000.

For more information about this program or other funding opportunities, contact Debra Peters, NCRPC Business Finance Director, at 785-738-2218 or visit www.ncrpc.org/services/business. ■