



NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Strategic Planning Survey in Process

The NCRPC is asking those who live or work in North Central Kansas to take a short survey that will help shape the future of the region and the organization. The following 12 counties are included: Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Washington.

The survey is part of a multi-year strategic planning process that is currently underway. The results will help develop a 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region. A CEDS is a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process and document that engages community leaders, private sector

NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU



Help shape the future of North Central Kansas! Join the strategic planning process currently underway by taking a short survey. Survey ends November 30.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/ncksstrategy

partners, and other stakeholders in planning for the future. The CEDS is also a prerequisite for Federal designation as an Economic Development District.

The survey is available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ncksstrategy>. It will end November 30.

For more information about the CEDS or the strategic planning process, contact [Doug McKinney](#) or [Emily Benedick](#) at the NCRPC. ■

Leadership a Focus of NCRPC Banquet

Kansas Leadership Center President and CEO Ed O'Malley was the featured speaker at the NCRPC-NCKCN Banquet on November 9 at Life's Finer Moments Lodge just south of Clay Center.

NCRPC joins with affiliate North Central Kansas Community Network Co. (NCKCN) to host the event every other year in various locations around the region. This year's format was a noon luncheon.

O'Malley shared the history of the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) and



Ed O'Malley gave the keynote address at the NCRPC/NCKCN Banquet.

discussed the role of leadership in communities.

"The key to a healthy community is the presence of leadership," O'Malley said.

A concise definition of leadership he shared was mobilizing

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Hannah Stambaugh, Saline County

David Thurlow, Clay County

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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Program Helps Lower Household Energy Costs

Colder weather has arrived and one Smith County resident is appreciating the energy efficiency improvements made to her home through the Weatherization Assistance Program.

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps reduce energy



Weatherization Works

costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety.

Measures that were installed in the Smith County home include a new 95% mobile home forced air furnace, insulation, windows, LED light bulbs, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, venting to the exterior a dryer vent and exhaust fan, as well as various air sealing measures. According to the client, there has been a significant difference in the comfort of her home as well as the cost of utilities since weatherization was completed.

The NCRPC administers the Weatherization Assistance Program for 42 Kansas counties. Since 1979, more than 14,500 homes have received assistance through NCRPC.

Eligibility for the program is based solely on income. Funding for this program is provided by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). To learn more about the program or how to apply, visit www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization/. ■

Investing in Youth Important for Future

Investing in youth is happening all across the region. I salute the efforts in Republic County and Saline County and the youth entrepreneurship programs they are unveiling in late November. Lincoln County has provided some youth leadership training. Many other locations have initiatives to intentionally engage and invest in youth. One recent example I had the opportunity to participate in was the Career Day in Clay County on November 14. It was a huge success.

You never know what is on the mind of a young person—what their hopes and dreams are until they are asked in a small group setting. About a dozen of 300 I talked with had their own business. They all make use of social media to market their services.

Energizing others was a theme of the dialogue with Ed O'Malley of the Kansas Leadership Center at the recent NCRPC and NCKCN bi-annual banquet at Life's Finer Moments Lodge near Clay Center. The youth at the previously mentioned forums are energized by what they experience and have the opportunity to express.

Banquet

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others to solve tough problems. Making progress, he says, will require working across factions and engaging unusual voices.

“Engaging those who usually aren't at the table adds energy into the process,” O'Malley said.

He also challenged those attending to think differently about their communities. “Instead of thinking about what concerns you most, how about what is your greatest aspiration?” O'Malley said.

He shared that many Kansans will receive KLC training this year and

VIEWPOINT



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

Teaming with a mentorship group can also energize them. The world we live in is full of successful collaborations that blossom from a single idea being flushed out amongst a few others who help it grow.

According to Forbes Magazine, young persons need a safe environment in which they can thrive and fail at attempts to learn and experiment with innovations. Having others alongside them is vital in that realm. Moreover, often we as older adults do not convey the opportunities that can be explored right here in this region given the technologies and technical trainings available.

Please ponder how we can better prepare the next generation for what is around the next corner in life so they can return to help our communities survive *and* thrive. ■

they would like help to reach more people to continue efforts to transform the civic culture of the state.

O'Malley closed with information about Leadership Transformation Grants and that the KLC can be a resource for local leadership programs. The KLC Leadership Transformation Grant Program provides scholarships to civically engaged organizations from the business, education, faith, government, and nonprofit sectors across Kansas to participate in leadership programs. For more information about KLC, visit kansasleadershipcenter.org. ■

Project Spotlight: Lincoln Power Plant

A basic need of any community is to have steady, reliable electricity. Residents, businesses and visitors all expect and rely upon having electrical power 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

When the City of Lincoln Center was faced with continued problems on its rebuilt electrical power generating engine, the Enterprise, the city knew replacement was the best long-term solution.

The community applied for and was awarded funds from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce to assist with the cost of the electrical generation upgrade project. The project used approximately \$346,000 in CDBG funds. The city contributed nearly \$442,000 in City cash and the issuance of bonds.

The older failing engine was replaced with a newer, more reliable engine that will continue to serve the community for many decades.

According to City of Lincoln Power Plant Foreman Jeff Ahring, it was necessary for the city to upgrade the generator.

“Prior to the project, in the event that one of our other generators should malfunction, we would not have been able to provide the entire community with enough power to the grid, and as a result, we would have to initiate a “rolling blackout” until the issue was repaired,” Ahring said. “With the addition of the generator

this project provided, we are able to provide the power required.”

Now if an incoming utility fails to provide power to the community, the power plant can restore power to the community in a matter of minutes. Ahring also noted the newer engine is



A new generator has improved the reliability of the power supply in the City of Lincoln Center.

“The power plant project has been able to provide the city with confidence that they can provide reliable power to their community.”

— Nichole McDaniel, NCRPC Community Development Representative

a Tier 2, meaning fewer emissions while the engine is producing energy.

NCRPC Community Development Representative Nichole McDaniel

administered the project in Lincoln.

“The City of Lincoln has been great to work with on this as well as past improvement projects,” McDaniel said. “The recent power plant project has been able to provide the city with confidence that they can provide reliable power to their community.” ■

There are many great things happening in North Central Kansas communities. Periodically we plan to feature projects from around the region to share ways communities have solved challenges.

NEWS BRIEFS

Ouellette Recognized for Contributions to Board



Executive Board Chair Tom Claussen (left) presented a certificate of appreciation to Gary Ouellette (right) at a recent board meeting in Beloit.

Outgoing NCRPC Executive Board Member Gary Ouellette, who served as a representative from Washington County since 2013, was recognized for his service to the organization and to the region at the October 25 board meeting. Ouellette was Board Chair for two years.

“We appreciate Gary’s dedication to our organization and the region and wish him well,” NCRPC Executive Director Doug McKinney said. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, December 6, 2018
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Beloit Office, 2 p.m.

Thursday, January 31, 2019
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Beloit Office, 2 p.m.

Holiday Office Hours
The NCRPC offices will be closed December 25-January 1. Normal business hours will resume Wednesday, January 2, 2019.

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



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

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Pilot Home Ownership Program Helps Beloit Home Buyer

Buying a home became feasible a little sooner than planned for one new homeowner thanks to a two-county pilot project of the NCK Home Ownership Program.

The program, which offers down payment and closing cost assistance to home buyers in Cloud and Mitchell counties, launched this Spring. NCRPC Business Finance Director Debra Peters manages the program.

Stephanie Simmons utilized the program to purchase a home in Beloit in July. She has lived in the county for nine years but most recently had been renting. Simmons, who serves as Executive Director of the Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation, says the pilot program was a critical factor in her ability to purchase a home this summer.

“I am a very budget oriented person and don’t make quick or hasty decisions financially,” Simmons said. “I knew I wanted a home that was a forever home for my daughter and I and it just seemed a little out of reach. This program truly helped to make this more feasible and reasonable on my budget.”

Simmons says the transition to home ownership has been positive.

“I feel like I am putting my money to work for me and building equity,” Simmons said. “I also feel like we are more part of a neighborhood that we can be life-long members of—making memories, making our community better, and having our own place.”

Funding requests currently have exceeded the funds available for the pilot project in Cloud and Mitchell



Courtesy Photo

The Pilot NCK Home Ownership Program was a factor in Simmons’ ability to purchase a home this summer.

Counties. The NCRPC also administers a similar program in Marysville. The Marysville Pilot Home Ownership Program will be accepting applications again beginning January 2. The results of the pilots will be used to develop a regional home ownership program to be launched in the future. For more information, contact Debra Peters at dpeters@nckcn.com. ■