2024 QUARTER 2 NEWSLETTER

NCRPC NEWS

An update from the North Central Regional Planning Commission

Two High School Seniors Selected to Receive Rural Voices Contest Awards

Two recent high school graduates, Thaddeus Donley and Noah Goss, have been selected as this year's recipients of the John R. Cyr Rural Voices Award in the 2023-2024 Rural Voices Youth Contest. The award is named in honor of John R. Cyr, who served as the Executive Director for the North Central Regional Planning Commission for 22 years. Thaddeus Donley graduated from Donley Ranch Schoolhouse in rural Ellsworth County. Noah Goss is a graduate of Ellsworth High School. Both students submitted winning entries in this year's contest.

The NCRPC has sponsored the contest since 2006 and has awarded over $30,000 to graduates from the region. High school seniors from the 12-county NCRPC service area were asked to share their perspectives on the contest theme, "Rural Kansas… Success Through Innovation," by submitting either an essay or video reflecting this theme.

"We were pleased to honor this year's recipients of the John R. Cyr Rural Voices Award," said NCRPC Executive Director John Shea. "It is inspiring to hear what participants say about the region and rural Kansas each year – and this year was no exception."

Donley plans to attend Kansas State University, majoring in Animal Science and Industry. Additionally, he will continue to work towards obtaining a private pilot's license. His entry discussed his real estate investing and lawn mowing businesses.

Thaddeus Donley

"The theme was important to me because it made me realize my own story of success through innovation in rural Kansas," Donley said.

Noah Goss

Goss will attend Lake Land College in Mattoon, Illinois, to pursue an associate degree in Agriculture while being a livestock judging team member.

"Living in rural Kansas has played a significant role in shaping me into the person I am today, and I would not trade living in a small community for anything," Goss said. "By seeing innovation within my community and other communities in North Central Kansas, it is inspiring to see the effort put into preserving small towns and their ways of life."

Details for the next Rural Voices Youth Contest will be announced in the Fall and entries will be due February 1, 2025.

To view this year's winning entries or to learn more about the contest, visit **www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices**.

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ABOUT US

Our primary service area includes 12 counties and 83 cities in North Central Kansas.

OUR MISSION

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

CONTACT US

North Central Regional Planning Commission
109 N. Mill, PO Box 565
Beloit, KS 67420 | 785-738-2218

facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit

www.ncrpc.org

If you have a story idea or would like to update your address, email us at: communications@ncrpc.org

Grant Provided Free Training to Develop Remote Work Skills

Washington County Resident One of Several to Complete Remote Work Certification Program

Remote work presents both opportunities and challenges for individuals and organizations. NCRPC received a grant that, over the past year, has helped in developing the skills required to work remotely effectively.

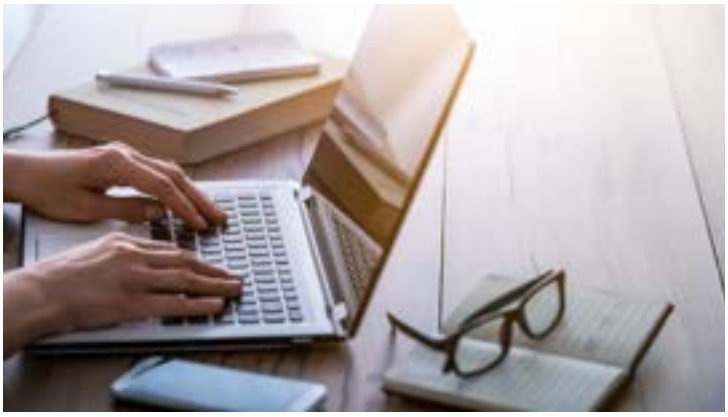
The NetWorked for Change Community Solutions Grant aimed to enhance the ability of individuals to earn a higher level of income and businesses to utilize remote work as one solution to workforce issues. The project established a network for remote workers in the region by providing education to 20 individuals through the Utah State University Remote Online Initiative. A partnership with K-State Research and Extension and the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development leveraged other support materials to enhance capacity to support remote work in the future and build parts of the project that could carry on after the end of the grant.

The grant offered scholarships for month-long online classes that offered certification as a remote work professional or remote work leader.

One of the scholarship recipients was Annie Yungeberg, a resident of Washington, Kansas, who balances her busy life with a family of four with her professional life, which includes work in a physical location and remote work. Annie and her husband both took the course.

"I signed up for the remote work training as free education seemed like a no-brainer. The future is getting more digital and remote every day. While we are very happy with our current jobs, it never hurts to be a bit more prepared for an unpredictable future," Yungeberg said.

Annie has been working part-time remotely for 10 years. She found some new things in the course and some were a review.



Washington County resident Annie Yungeberg completed the remote work certification program made possible through a NetWorked for Change Community Solutions Grant this past year. *(Courtesy Photo)*

"It was beneficial, especially with networking and trying out different online tools and platforms," Yungeberg said.

Annie is a full-time preschool teacher in Washington County. She also works one day per week with an afterschool program called Infinity for students in grades 7-12. In addition, she works about two hours per day with her remote job.

"Initially, working remote was a way to have a part-time income without having to leave my house. Now, I work hours that fit better with my schedule but still manage to bring in a part-time income," Yungeberg said. "Remote work is an exciting world, and I was encouraged by the fact that the Community Solutions grant opened that world to more people."

Deb Ohlde, NCRPC Assistant Director for Strategic Initiatives, administered the grant project on behalf of the North Central Regional Planning Commission. She has worked in a remote hybrid environment for many years.

"Remote work allows individuals and families to live in our rural area, maintaining a job that they love while being actively involved in our communities," Ohlde said. "Sometimes it's the only way a spouse can find work in their field or that fits the schedules of busy families who may farm or ranch. For others, working from home allows them to be most productive and creative due to a quiet home office and flexibility that allow them to work during their peak hours of productivity."

While the scholarship opportunity has ended, K-State Research and Extension continues to host Remote Work Wednesdays. These webinars are on the first Wednesday of each month at noon. Telecommunications, business leaders, or other experts address key aspects of working remotely or in a hybrid context each month.

To view past webinar recordings or to learn more, visit **https://bit.ly/remoteworkwednesdays**.

For more about Annie's story, check out the Now That's Rural profile released by K-State Research and Extension by visiting the following link: ***https://bit.ly/thatsruralremotework***

Lifetime Public Service Award Nominations Open

Do you know an individual who has made outstanding contributions to their community or citizens of the region? We invite you to nominate them for the biennial NCRPC Lifetime Public Service Award. This award was established in 2022 to recognize exceptional contributions by an individual or organization to the well-being of North Central Kansas over an extended period of time. John Cyr was the recipient of the first award in 2022.

The presentation of the Lifetime Public Service Award will be made at the NCRPC's biennial banquet later this Fall.

To learn more or to make a nomination, go to **www.ncrpc.org/lifetimeserviceaward**. For any questions about the award, please contact NCRPC Executive Director John Shea by calling 785-738-2218 or emailing executivedirector@ncrpc.org.

Webinars Available on Water and Sewer Rates, Wealth Creation

We want to share some helpful resources made available through NCRPC's participation in the U.S. Department of Transportation Thriving Communities Program.

Is your community dealing with challenges related to water and sewer assets and rates? The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) webinar titled "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Underground Infrastructure—How to Afford, Maintain, and Sustain your Community's Water and Wastewater Assets" is a practical resource that could be a valuable starting point.

This webinar, along with another one titled "Building a Wealth Creation Learning Community," can be found on our website at **www.ncrpc.org/resources/community**.

NCRPC Selected to Host Summer Intern

The NCRPC was chosen to host an intern this Summer as part of the FHSU/Dane G. Hansen Internship program. Samantha Berg, a Fort Hays State University student majoring in criminal justice with a minor in agriculture, was selected for the position.

Samantha Berg

During her time with NCRPC, she has primarily assisted with projects in the Housing and Community Development departments.

Regarding her position this summer, Samantha said, "I enjoy learning new things and being open to different opportunities."

Samantha grew up on a farm in the Manhattan area and has a long-term goal of becoming a police officer and working with a K-9 unit.

We appreciate the generous support of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, which has helped make this internship program possible.

MEET *the* TEAM: Katelyn Pahls

We are pleased to announce that Katelyn Pahls has joined the NCRPC as a community development representative. In this role, Katelyn assists member cities, counties, and area non-profits with various community initiatives, including project development and administration.

She grew up in rural Jewell County and is a graduate of Kansas State University with a BA in American Ethnic Studies and a minor in Women's Studies. Katelyn joins the organization with previous experience in office management and banking. She also currently owns a part-time business providing accounting/bookkeeping services.

Katelyn Pahls

Katelyn is a member of the Desire Tobey Sears Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution. When she is not busy with work, she enjoys spending time with her family, hiking, and shopping.

EVENTS & MORE

Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, July 25, 2024
The Farm & The Odd Fellows
Minneapolis, KS

Funding sources and deadlines:
» **www.ncrpc.org/funding**

North Central Regional Planning Commission
109 N. Mill | PO Box 565
Beloit, KS 67420 | www.ncrpc.org

Business Owners Join Forces to Co-Locate in Salina Building

The owners of two successful businesses, Emma Ward Therapy Services and Renewal Therapy, LLC, have joined forces to create 16:10 Ministries, LLC.

Together, they purchased and renovated a vacant commercial building at 121 N. 7th Street in downtown Salina. The improvements to the building included a new roof and making it handicap accessible. In April 2024, they officially opened their businesses in the new location, which is now owned and managed by 16:10 Ministries, LLC.

Ward is a Licensed Clinical Marriage & Family Therapist (LCMFT) with a Master of Science in Family Therapy (MSFT). She has been operating her business for the past six years and has additional experience in business and human resources. Lund is a Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker (LSCSW) with a Master's in Clinical Social Work. She has seven years of experience operating her own business and over 20 years of experience in social work and clinical mental health.

Emma Ward (left) and Lydia Lund (right) collaborated to purchase and renovate a building in downtown Salina, Kansas, located at 121 N. 7th Street to serve as a consolidated space for their therapy service businesses. *(Courtesy Photo)*

Both tenants are grateful for the increased visibility and improved handicap accessibility resulting from the purchase and renovation of the downtown commercial building.

The project was made possible through investments by the owners and assistance from First Bank Kansas of Salina, Salina Project OPEN, and the NCK Business Down Payment Assistance Loan Program, which is offered through the NCRPC Business Finance Program.

For more information about the NCRPC Business Finance program, visit **www.ncrpc.org/services/business**. To learn more about the businesses, you can find them online.