



# NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

## Early Surveying Helps Communities Plan

Completion of an income survey can help cities and counties determine whether they are eligible to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for various improvement projects.

“Knowing that information opens more opportunities that can help in your decision making and project planning,” Jayne Lehman, Linn City Clerk, says.

To be eligible for CDBG funding, one of three national objectives of the program must be met by the awarded funds: Benefit to low-and moderate-income (51% LMI) persons, prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or resolution of an urgent need where local resources are not available to do so.

Communities applying for water/sewer or community facilities projects through the CDBG Annual Competitive Round typically must meet the LMI objective. Communities not deemed 51% LMI through Census data must survey to determine if the service area of a proposed activity meets the LMI criteria.

The City of Linn submitted a CDBG application this fall, but completed the LMI survey in 2016. Lehman said this was the third LMI survey she has been involved with since becoming city clerk in 2000.

“Our council felt that the only way we could accomplish any big project was to apply for grant funding, so we wanted to know if we were LMI qualified,” Lehman said.

NCRPC Community Development Representative Emily Benedick says surveys can be completed early and without a specific project in mind. This early planning may position a community to take advantage of special funding rounds that may be announced with short deadlines.

“If a survey is completed ahead of time, there is more time for a community to focus on their application and the project planning,” Benedick says.

A simple first step is to learn your community’s LMI status according to the Census by contacting NCRPC Community Development Representatives [Emily Benedick](#) or [Nichole McDaniel](#). If a survey is required to determine eligibility, they can break down the process and assist in getting you started.

NCRPC member cities and counties receive this service, as well as tabulation of the final surveys, at no charge; however, the city or county is responsible for the upfront investment of mailing out surveys when applicable.

If a community has completed a survey in the past but it was done before 2012, it is no longer relevant. Surveys done now are good until the next Census data is released, which may be 2022.

Contact the NCRPC for assistance or look under “Surveys” on the web at [www.kansascommerce.gov/127/Annual-Competitive-Round/index.aspx?NID=127](http://www.kansascommerce.gov/127/Annual-Competitive-Round/index.aspx?NID=127). ■

## 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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# NCK Food Council Receives Funding for Food Assessment

The North Central Kansas Food Council has received a \$20,000 grant from the Kansas Alliance for Wellness to complete a regional assessment. The assessment will compile information on access to local foods in the region, as well as the overall health of communities.

“This grant is designed to allow communities to determine the changes to their local food system that make the most sense for them,” said Missty Lechner, Advocacy Project Director for the American Heart Association. “These changes could be anything from healthy food guidelines in public places like parks, to financing projects to attract local grocers that sell healthy, locally grown foods. That is what’s so great about this grant. The community decides which type of policies or changes they want to make to increase access to



healthy, Kansas-grown food options,” said Lechner.

The North Central Kansas Food Council is

committed to advocating for enhanced quality of life for all residents through sustainable access to regional produced food options, economic opportunity, and educational resources. The counties included are Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Washington. The NCRPC is the project sponsor.

The North Central Kansas Food Council was formed in 2017 as an initiative of the NCRPC and Live Well Saline County and is assisted by Advancing Rural Prosperity, Inc.

(ARPI) through its joint partnership with the NCRPC to advance food system development in North Central Kansas. The Council will be working in collaboration with consultants Kolia Souza and ARPI to complete the regional food system assessment.

To learn more about the North Central Kansas Food Council or how you can get involved, like them on [Facebook](#) or visit [www.ncrpc.org/nckfoodcouncil](http://www.ncrpc.org/nckfoodcouncil).

The Kansas Alliance for Wellness (KAW) is a statewide network of communities, organizations and individuals that are committed to improving the health of Kansans by creating healthy food and beverage environments. This project began in July 2013 and is led by the American Heart Association. For more information, visit their website at [www.kansasallianceforwellness.com](http://www.kansasallianceforwellness.com). ■

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, December 7, 2017**

**Thursday, January 25, 2018**

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

**Wednesday, February 21, 2018**

**CDBG Grantee Workshop**

For FY 2018 Grantees

(Award announcements anticipated in January 2018)

Kansas Highway Patrol Training Center  
Salina, KS

**Holiday Reduced Office Hours**

The NCRPC offices will be closed November 23-24 and December 25-January 1. Normal business hours will resume Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

**More on the web »**

Events: [www.ncrpc.org/news/events](http://www.ncrpc.org/news/events)

Funding sources and deadlines:

[www.ncrpc.org/funding](http://www.ncrpc.org/funding)

## Working to Make a Difference Each Day

Consider the words of an anonymous poet: “One song can spark a moment; one flower can wake a dream. One tree can start a forest; one bird can herald spring. One smile helps a stranger or a friend; one handshake lifts a soul. One star can guide a lonely ship at sea; one word can frame a goal. One vote can change a nation; one sunbeam lights a room. One laugh can raise our spirits; one touch can show you care. One voice can speak wisdom; one life can make a difference.” It is up to us to do so!

North Central Regional Planning Commission and affiliate NCKCN are working to make a difference each day through various endeavors— from non-profit Internet service provisions to low-interest business loans to encouraging more small business development center access

and working on university enterprise pursuits.

### VIEWPOINT



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

NCRPC is actively involved in your neighborhoods through assisting weatherization and housing rehabilitation clients as well as helping equip our first

responders, emergency managers, and county health departments. We are also engaged with communities in infrastructure and industrial development, capital improvement planning and nuisance reduction. We do what we can to strengthen places and the people in them. ■

# Engaging Youth a Valuable Investment

After a successful first year of the Career Exploration and Leadership Program for 7-9th grade students in Mitchell County, planning has begun for the summer 2018 program.

“We have students who enjoyed the program so much they are already asking about it for next year,” Heather Hartman, Mitchell County Community Development Director and member of the program planning committee, says.

Hartman says the program was a great way to show students career options close to home.

“Small communities need to realize how important it is to get these kids interested when they are young,” Hartman says. “We were amazed at what was accomplished with very

little investment. It may seem daunting, but I encourage others to jump in and start planning.”

The Mitchell County program was made possible through local support and a small investment from the [Rural Business Development Initiative](#) (Formerly Tax Credits), which the NCRPC administers.

Requests of up to \$1,000 to help support the establishment of youth summer learning/entrepreneurship programs throughout the region will be considered. Contact NCRPC Director [Doug McKinney](#) for more information.

For more lessons learned from Mitchell County’s pilot program, see the full article at [www.ncrpc.org/careerexplorationleadershipprogram](http://www.ncrpc.org/careerexplorationleadershipprogram). ■

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Regional CEDS Planning Process Getting Underway

Work has begun to develop an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for North Central Kansas. A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development that includes goals and objectives for a five-year time period.

Since April, NCRPC has hosted four work sessions to gather input with approximately 60 participating. The focus of the work sessions have been economic development, education, business/banking, and non-profits/government. Additional strategic planning and engaging with stakeholders will continue in 2018. The NCRPC will submit the updated CEDS to EDA in March 2019.

More information and ways you can become involved will be shared throughout the process. ■

### Fab Lab Training Available

A unique training will be offered in Independence, KS February 20-22, 2018. The training—“Community Boot Camp: How to Start a FAB LAB from Ground Zero”—will share experiences of establishing a community fabrication lab (fab lab). The maker space incorporates the hands-on creative experience with the entrepreneurial mindset philosophy using the Ice House Entrepreneurship program to build the community mindset.

For more information, visit [www.fablabicc.org/Community-Boot-Camp-74555.asp](http://www.fablabicc.org/Community-Boot-Camp-74555.asp). ■

## Board Meets at Kansas State Polytechnic



Trent Armbrust, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce and Knowledge Based Economic Development member, presented at the October 26 Board meeting in Salina.

Kansas State Polytechnic hosted the NCRPC Executive Board meeting on October 26 in Salina. Board members received updates on Kansas State Polytechnic programs and Knowledge Based Economic Development (KBED). Guests from the KBED partnership included Trent Armbrust and Lyle Butler from the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce and Kent Glasscock and Rebecca Robinson from the

Kansas State University Institute for Commercialization. NCRPC is a KBED partner through its investment through non-profit affiliate NCKCN. This investment has been made possible with the Rural Business Development Initiative (formerly Tax Credits). Presenting from Kansas State Polytechnic were Kurt Carraway, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Director, and Dr. Kurt Barnhart, Associate Dean of Research. ■



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Regional Planning Commission

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## NCKCN Expands Wireless Service, Wi-Fi Hotspot Locations

North Central Kansas Community Network (NCKCN) is an Internet service provider that was originally formed in 1995 to help connect communities that were underserved by cable or fiber. Today, it continues to adapt and grow to meet the changing technology demands in North Central Kansas. NCKCN is a 501(c)3 non-profit affiliate of the NCRPC.

In April 2017, the small community of Ada was added to the growing list of NCKCN communities. NCKCN now provides Wireless Internet to 9 locations including Ada, Belleville, Beloit, Clyde, Concordia, Jewell, Lincoln, Mankato and Minneapolis.

Michael Draemel, NCKCN Internet Application Technology



Coordinator, says bringing high speed fixed wireless Internet service to this small town is an example of NCKCN fulfilling its original purpose to provide a service where there was a perceived gap.

NCKCN offers NextGen® x4G JET wireless in Ada as well as the other communities it serves.

“We strive to provide the best service available within the region and that starts with researching and testing out the latest and greatest technological advances in the fixed wireless industry prior to making any changes—all while keeping our customers in mind,” Draemel says.

For more than 20 years NCKCN has delivered Internet access and services to thousands of customers in the region. Partnering with Cunningham Telephone & Cable (CTC) from Glen Elder, these services include Fixed Wireless, Cable, Fiber, Email, Web Services and Hosting.

One of the newest NCKCN services was the introduction of NCK-WiFi, which is a partnership of NCKCN and CTC. There are now 13 “hotspot” locations within six North Central Kansas communities with more locations coming soon. For the latest NCK-WiFi locations, visit [nck-wifi.com/about/locations.php](http://nck-wifi.com/about/locations.php). For more about NCKCN, visit [www.nckcn.com](http://www.nckcn.com). ■

