

NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Strategic Plan Updated for Region

A multi-year strategic planning process that included collaboration among partners and stakeholders has resulted in the completion of the most recent strategic plan for the region.

The plan is formally known as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS for short. A CEDS is updated every five years and is also a prerequisite for Federal designation as an Economic Development District. The NCRPC Economic Development District includes 12 counties in North Central Kansas and 83 member cities.

A 2018 CEDS survey of individuals who live or work in the region indicate there are many positive attributes in North Central Kansas on which to build. The “word cloud” image below represents responses to the following question: What makes North Central Kansas unique? More survey results are included in the 2019 CEDS.

Through the planning process, NCRPC identified five main visions critical to the success of North Central Kansas:

- 1 Regional Collaboration
- 2 Economic Prosperity through Innovation
- 3 Superior Physical Assets
- 4 Passionate Leadership from Empowered Citizens
- 5 Exceptional Quality of Place

The NCRPC appreciates the many partners — cities, counties, nonprofit organizations, banks, businesses, educators, current and past board members, and all leaders and citizens — who participated in this process to plan and strategize for a stronger North Central Kansas.

To learn more or to view the latest CEDS, visit www.ncrpc.org/about/abouttheregion/ceds/. ■

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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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This word cloud visually represents November 2018 survey responses to the following questions: What makes North Central Kansas unique? How can we capitalize on that?

Two High School Seniors Win Rural Voices Youth Contest

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 2018-2019 Rural Voices Youth Contest.

Students had the option to submit an original essay or video reflective of the contest theme — “Rural Kansas...My Community.” McKenzie Shippy, a senior at Herington High School, was awarded first place in the video category. Kara Eilert, a senior at St. John’s Catholic High School, Beloit, was awarded first place in the written category. Both students will receive a cash award of \$850.

The awards are named in honor of John Cyr who served for 22 years as the NCRPC Executive Director. High school seniors in the 12-county NCRPC service area were eligible to participate. NCRPC has sponsored the contest annually since 2006 and has awarded more than \$22,000 to seniors from across the region.

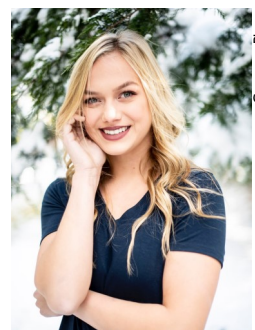
“The contest theme this year allowed high school seniors to reflect

on their community and the value it has in their lives,” NCRPC Executive Director Doug McKinney said. “Community culture, whether it is a specific

place or an overall feeling in a broader area, is important. Knowing how a community works and its strengths and opportunities is also important.”



Kara Eilert



McKenzie Shippy

Both students say they enjoyed participating in the Rural Voices contest.

“I loved the opportunity to be creative showing Kansas how my community has shaped me into who I am,” Shippy said. “This video was my way of giving back to Herington and Woodbine for all the support they have given me.”

“To me, rural Kansas is home, so I was very excited about the opportunity to write about what rural Kansas means to me and share my thoughts on how we can strive to keep our communities sought after places for individuals to call home,” Eilert said.

To view the top entries or to learn more about the contest, visit www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices. Details for the 2019-2020 contest will be announced in the fall. ■

“Community, from the dictionary, is defined as a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. Does this definition hold true in all communities? Probably not, so ask yourself what you are doing or can do to improve the outlook people have on your town.”

— Excerpt from Kara Eilert’s essay

Communities to Receive Funding for Improvement Projects

Several NCRPC member cities were recently awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to help complete a variety of community improvement projects. The CDBG program is administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The City of Assaria was awarded \$433,840 to make water distribution improvements. The city will provide \$433,840 in matching funds it secured from the Kansas Department of Health & Environment.

The City of Beloit was awarded \$300,000 for housing rehabilitation

and demolition. A local match of \$41,000 is being provided.

The City of Frankfort was awarded \$265,656 to complete a street project. USDA Rural Development will contribute \$265,657 in matching funds.

The City of Greenleaf was awarded \$300,000 for housing rehabilitation and demolition. A local match of \$10,750 is being provided.

The City of Tipton was awarded \$101,665 to complete a storm drainage project. A local match of \$101,665 is being provided.

The City of Washington was awarded \$600,000 to make water

distribution improvements. The city will provide \$7,668,350 in matching funds through loan and grant funding it secured through USDA Rural Development.

To be awarded CDBG funds for a project, local government units must meet at least one of three program objectives: benefit low and moderate-income persons; prevent or eliminate slums and blight; or resolve an urgent need where local resources are not available to do so.

For more information, visit www.kansascommerce.com/cdbg or contact the NCRPC office to discuss project needs. ■

New LMI Percentages Take Effect in April

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program requires that each CDBG funded activity must either benefit low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons (at least 51% LMI), prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or resolve an urgent need where local resources are not available to do so.

Many CDBG projects benefit LMI persons. If a community does not automatically qualify at 51% LMI based on Census data, it must survey to determine if the service area of a proposed activity meets the LMI criteria.

In February, HUD released new LMI percentages. The effective date for the new data is April 1. That release has created changes for some cities in the region.

“More than a dozen cities now qualify LMI from the Census

numbers, which means they no longer would have to survey to apply for CDBG funding,” NCRPC Assistant Director Emily Benedick said.



Any cities that have completed a LMI survey since 2012 can use those surveys until the 2020 Census numbers are released, which may be 2022.

For communities considering a project that could involve CDBG funds, Benedick has advice.

“The first step is to call our office to discuss if their project would be CDBG eligible,” Benedick said. “Then we can help them determine if they need to complete an LMI survey and help in that process.” ■

Exercise Simulates Point of Dispensing Clinic for Local Health Department Participants

Representatives of 13 county health departments that make up the North Central Kansas Public Health Initiative (NCKPHI) Region participated in a Point of Dispensing Clinic exercise on January 30.

A Point of Dispensing site may provide antibiotics, antivirals, or vaccines to the public during a health emergency. The recent exercise, which took place at the NCRPC office in Beloit, helped participants visualize and practice the process of setting up and operating a Point of Dispensing Clinic. It also put into practice each county’s Mass Dispensing Standard Operating Guides.

The mission of the NCKPHI is to develop a rural regional public health system to improve and protect the



The NCRPC Meeting room was set up to simulate a Point of Dispensing clinic for the January 30 NCKPHI Exercise.

health of their communities. The NCRPC provides administrative, fiscal and support services of the regional public health emergency preparedness and response grant. Sherry Angell serves as the program coordinator. ■

NCRPC Videos Produced

Two videos have been created to help explain the services NCRPC provides through its main program areas.

“We hope the videos will be an effective tool for communicating about the diverse services of the organization,” NCRPC Executive Director Doug McKinney said.

The short, animated videos are designed to give an overview of the NCRPC in a simple format. To view the videos, visit www.youtube.com/user/nckrpc.



Shown above is one frame from the new NCRPC videos.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 28, 2019
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Beloit Office, 2 p.m.

Thursday, April 18, 2019
FY 2020 CDBG Annual Application Workshop
Tony’s Pizza Events Center
Salina, KS, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Workshop is free, but advance registration is required. Deadline to register is Monday, April 8, 2019.
www.kansascommerce.com/cdbg

Thursday, April 25, 2019
NCRPC Executive Board Field Trip
Ottawa County

Find more on the web »

Events: www.ncrpc.org/news/events
Funding sources and deadlines:
www.ncrpc.org/funding



NCK Home Ownership Pilot Program Had Positive Results

Helping make home ownership more affordable was one goal of the NCK Home Ownership Pilot Program that assisted home buyers this past year in Cloud and Mitchell counties.

The program officially launched in April 2018. It assisted home buyers with down payment and closing cost assistance in the purchase of 26 homes — 16 in Mitchell County and 10 in Cloud County. The total value was \$3.2 million, with \$260,900 coming from the pilot program.

Primary objectives of the pilot program were to help make home ownership more affordable, be a catalyst for first time home buyers, benefit employers in recruiting and retaining employees, reduce employee time spent commuting to work, and

market the program to alumni considering a move to live closer to friends and family.

An award from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation of Logan, Kansas, assisted in the creation of the loan and grant pool. NCRPC provided program administration led by Debra Peters, NCRPC Program Manager.

Of the home buyers who used the NCK Home Ownership Pilot Program, 39% bought their first home, 31% took a new job in the last year, and 25% moved from outside of the NCRPC 12-county service area. Nearly 60% of the home buyers reported graduating from a high school located in the NCRPC region. In addition, 25 children were either new to the local schools or will be entering school within the next five years.



“One goal of the pilot project was to test whether the use of a housing incentive would be a catalyst for

people to stake roots in our region and we were pleased with the results,” Peters said. “The two biggest impacts we saw were with employment and schools.”

The results of this project will be used to launch an updated version of the pilot program in Ellsworth and Lincoln counties, pending funding. Future plans include the development of a regional home ownership program. ■