

NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

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www.ncrpc.org

Two Housing Nonprofits Launched

Although specific challenges and opportunities for housing may vary for communities across the region, most would agree that housing is an important issue to address.

The NCRPC has launched two new housing nonprofit organizations to help play a role in meeting the housing needs of communities in the region.

NCK Housing Opportunities, Inc. serves Cloud, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, and Saline Counties. Four Rivers Housing Opportunities, Inc. serves Clay, Dickinson, Marshall, and Washington Counties. Both were formed in May 2018 and are IRS approved 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations.

The purpose of each is the following: “To stabilize population in its designated service area in North Central Kansas through assistance with housing opportunities; to maintain existing housing stock and help prevent further deterioration caused by vacancy; and improve economic conditions that help communities thrive.” Simply put, the mission of each organization is to preserve and strengthen housing in North Central Kansas.

“We keep hearing the need for housing assistance in the region,” Carol Torkelson, NCRPC Housing Director and board treasurer of the new nonprofits said. “We want to

create programs that fulfill the purpose and mission of the nonprofits.”

The NCRPC has introduced pilot home ownership programs over the past year in various locations across the region.

“The pilot home ownership programs are really our first offering to try to address some of the needs,” Debra Peters, NCRPC Home Ownership Program Manager and board secretary of the new nonprofits said. “Housing rehabilitation is the next thing we want to tackle.”

The new housing initiatives began under the business loan pool that Peters manages, but quickly evolved to the point of needing its own oversight committee. The housing advisory committee will grow as additional programming is added.

Doug McKinney, NCRPC Executive Director, is leading the new nonprofits as board president. NCRPC Executive Board Treasurer Brian Eilert also serves on the board of directors of the new nonprofits.

Currently Four Rivers Housing Opportunities, Inc. offers a Marysville Home Ownership Pilot Program and the NCK Housing Opportunities, Inc. recently expanded its NCK Home Ownership Pilot Program (see article on page 4). For more information on either program, visit www.ncrpc.org/services/homeownership. ■



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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Sense of Purpose Important in Advancing Rural Kansas

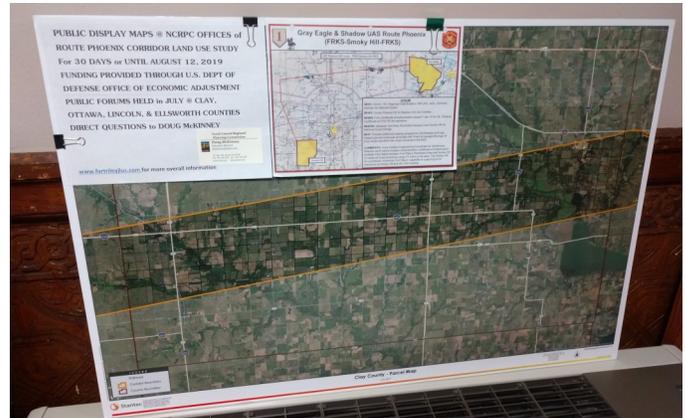
Wow, unemployment is below 4 percent nationally and less than 3 percent in north central Kansas. That is near record lows. The overall number of persons in the workforce is not at record levels, yet productivity remains solid with a reputation in this region for strong, efficient and effective work ethics.

Is it a matter of persons in the workforce having high values and a sense of life purpose? It appears that way. I hope the North Central Regional Planning Commission and its affiliates indicate a sense of solid purpose by following its core mission to advance rural Kansas in service provision.

One recent service has been supporting Fort Riley training of unmanned aircraft systems. NCRPC



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.



NCRPC has been working with jurisdictions in the region related to a proposed unmanned aircraft system corridor of training between Fort Riley and the Smoky Hill Weapons Range. Displays such as the one above were set up in courthouses located in the corridor.

facilitated forums this month in four counties as part of its land use study for the UAS corridor from Wakefield to Ellsworth. Great input, feedback and general dialogue resulted.

Other facets of the organization are extra active as well with a plethora of housing assistance, community development activities and homeland security trainings. Safe journeys. ■

NCK-WiFi Continues to Expand Locations

A new NCK-WiFi hotspot was added this summer at the Jamestown city park/ baseball fields — bringing the number of NCK-WiFi locations to 16 distributed throughout 7 cities. Plans are underway to continue expanding the network throughout North Central Kansas.

This summer NCK-WiFi is also being made available at many



events including the Cloud County Fair in Concordia, Mitchell County Fair in Beloit, the NCK Free Fair in Belleville, and Belleville 150th Celebration.

NCK-WiFi is a free Internet service provided by Cunningham Telephone & Cable (CTC) and NCKCN, a NCRPC affiliate. To learn more about NCK-WiFi and the locations currently available, visit www.nck-wifi.com. ■

Rural Listening Tour to Include NC Kansas Stop

A Rural Listening Tour conducted by the Office of Rural Prosperity and Kansas Lt. Gov. Lynn Rogers will make an official stop in the region in Concordia on August 1 at 5:30 p.m. at Cloud County Community College Room 258. The meeting is one of 12 happening across the state. According to the Governor's office, the tour is intended to foster new ways to help rural Kansas communities by hearing from residents.

The listening tour will cover Republic County and Cloud County communities during the day prior to the public listening session on August 1. Luke Mahin, Republic County Economic Development Director, and Susie Haver, Cloud County Tourism Director are Rural Prosperity Tour co-chairs.

To learn more or to register for the Concordia session, visit www.ruralkanprosper.ks.gov. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Thursday, August 1, 2019

Office of Rural Prosperity Listening Tour
Cloud County Community College Campus
Concordia, KS | 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 22, 2019

NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Ottawa County Courthouse
Minneapolis, KS, 2 p.m.

Thursday, September 26, 2019

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

Find more on the web »

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

Two Communities Awarded CDBG Special Funding for Pool Projects

Two communities in the region were recently awarded funding that will help them replace their city swimming pools.

The funding comes from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce. The latest round of CDBG grants that were awarded to 11 communities across Kansas were part of a special series of funding.

The City of Blue Rapids was awarded \$763,411 to demolish the existing pool and construct a zero-entry swimming pool. The city will use \$508,942 in bonds for matching funds.

The City of Clyde was awarded \$1,000,000 to build a new ADA

bathhouse and construct a zero-entry swimming pool. City employees will demolish the existing structure with force account labor estimated at \$16,620 and \$682,980 in bonds will be used to complete the project.

To be eligible to apply for the CDBG special series, a city had to have a population between 500 and 25,000 and meet the 51% LMI requirements. A minimum match of at least 40% local funds was also required.

The NCRPC assisted with the project development and will provide administration for both projects.

For more information about the CDBG program, visit the website at www.kansascommerce.gov/cdbg or contact the NCRPC community development staff. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

Salina to Host UAS Tech Forum in August

A UAS Tech Forum will be in Salina August 21-22 at the Tony's Pizza Event Center.

The forum will feature three tracks focused on Agriculture, First Responder and Innovation. Attendees will network among their peers, listen to nationally known keynote speakers, watch technology presentations and drone demonstrations.

It is an anchor event for the Unmanned Aerial Systems Cluster Initiative of Oklahoma and Kansas (UASCI). NCRPC, through its non-profit affiliate NCKCN, is an event sponsor. The sponsorship is made possible through funding from the North Central Kansas Rural Business Development Initiative.

For more information about the event or to register, visit www.uascluster.com/pages/techforum2019-home.html. ■

Rural Voices Contest Theme Announced

The NCRPC Executive Board of Directors has selected the theme for the 2019-2020 Rural Voices Youth Contest theme. It is "Rural Kansas...Rural by Choice." The NCRPC has sponsored the contest annually since 2006 and awarded cash prizes to 30 high school seniors representing 16 different schools across the region. Entries from high school seniors for the 2019-2020 school year will begin to be accepted in September. To learn more, visit www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices. ■

NCRPC Welcomes Horn to Staff

North Central Regional Planning Commission is pleased to announce the recent hiring of Amanda Horn as administrative assistant/research assistant. Her duties will involve many aspects of accounts receivables and a first-person engagement for organizational interactions.

Her financial management talents and organizational skills will be utilized in providing support to NCKCN, the 501(c)3 Internet Service Provider operated by the NCRPC, and NCRPC programs including Homeland Security, Community Development, Business Finance and Weatherization.

Amanda attended Hope College, in Holland, Michigan, and Nelson

Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa. She has spent most of her life in South Africa and other parts of the African continent. Amanda enjoys vegetable gardening and, having studied conservation,



Amanda Horn

she is passionate about water catchments and invasive alien plant species. Her husband, Andries, is a South African farmer working with Dennis Lutgen growing native grass seed. They plan to make Beloit, KS, their new home and are excited about getting involved in the community. ■



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

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Home Ownership Program Expands to Two More Counties

A program that seeks to make home ownership more affordable for eligible buyers purchasing a home in Ellsworth and Lincoln counties launched in June.

The two-county pilot project of the NCK Home Ownership Program assists home buyers by reducing the barriers of down payments and closing costs. The program offers a combination of a down payment assistance loan of \$10,000 and closing cost grant of \$2,000 when purchasing a home of \$50,000 or greater in Ellsworth or Lincoln County. Funds are limited and available on a first come, first serve basis.

An award from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation of Logan, Kansas, is being used to assist in the creation of the loan and grant pool.

NCRPC is providing matching funds. Program administration is led by Debra Peters, Program Manager, and Keegan Bailey, Program Coordinator.

“This initiative would not have been possible without assistance from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Ellsworth and Lincoln County banks, Smoky Hill Development Corporation Executive Director Stacie Schmidt, and Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation Executive Director Kelly Larson,” Peters said.

According to Peters, the primary objectives of the pilot program are to reduce the number of homes on the market by making home ownership more affordable, be a catalyst for first time home buyers, benefit employers in recruiting and retaining employees,



potentially reduce time/expense commuting to work, and provide an opportunity for alumni to return to North Central

Kansas and enjoy the convenience of living closer to friends and family.

A similar program was offered in Cloud and Mitchell counties in 2018-2019. Ultimately the goal is to expand the NCK Home Ownership Program to other counties in the NCRPC service area. Another pilot home ownership program is also underway in Marysville. For more information about the program, contact NCRPC or visit www.ncrpc.org/services/homeownership. ■