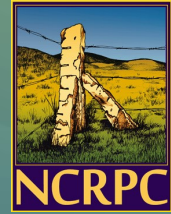


# NCRPC NEWS

An update from the North Central Regional Planning Commission



## ABOUT US

### Serving Kansans since 1972

#### Our Mission

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

#### Our Vision

Communities in rural Kansas will favor choices that embrace innovation, increase prosperity and demonstrate resilience.

#### Contact Us

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 [facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit](https://facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit)

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

Ellen Barber, *Marshall County Partnership for Growth*  
Karen Brumbaugh, *Ottawa County*  
Craig Chamberlin, *Dickinson County*  
Tom Claussen, *Mitchell County*  
Brian Eilert, *First National Bank of Beloit*  
Mark Fleming, *Jewell County*  
Rod Franz, *City of Salina*  
Bill Garrison, *Cloud County*  
Heather Hartman, *Mitchell County Community Development*  
Patrick Hoffman, *City of Ellsworth*  
Kelly Larson, *Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation*  
Luke Mahin, *Republic County Economic Development*  
Raleigh Ordoyne, *Washington County*  
Kermit Rush, *Ellsworth County*  
Hannah Stambaugh, *Saline County*  
David Thurlow, *Clay County*

## An Update on NCRPC Operations

The North Central Regional Planning Commission is working hard to ensure current programs continue to operate as seamlessly as possible during this uncertain time. Like many businesses and organizations, our staff is working remotely.

If you are seeking assistance while our office is closed and are not sure who to contact, please email us at [ncrpcteam@nckcn.com](mailto:ncrpcteam@nckcn.com) and the appropriate person will be in touch. Thank you for your patience as we do

our part to keep North Central Kansas safe and healthy!

Recognizing the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on individuals and businesses in the region, we have created a resource page that will continue to be updated as additional resources become available. The NCRPC will continue to be a partner in the region as we tackle the challenges that lie ahead. Resource Page: [www.ncrpc.org/resources-in-response-to-covid-19/](http://www.ncrpc.org/resources-in-response-to-covid-19/)

## Benedick Named Executive Director

The North Central Regional Planning Commission Executive Board has named Emily Benedick as the organization's new Executive Director.

She will succeed Doug McKinney, who last year announced plans to step down from his position this spring. McKinney began with the North Central Regional Planning Commission in 1986 and has been Executive Director since 2008. McKinney and Benedick will collaborate to lead the organization until McKinney's last day on May 1.

Benedick has been with North Central Regional Planning Commission since 2015 and was named Assistant Director in 2018. A native of the Saint Louis, Missouri, area, Emily graduated with a master's degree in landscape architecture from Kansas State University.



Emily Benedick

"I am excited and honored to be named the next NCRPC Executive Director," Benedick said. "As an organization, we have been

advancing rural Kansas since 1972 thanks to the passion and hard work of the executive directors before me. I am eager to explore what new opportunities we can bring to North Central Kansas, as well as continue to ensure our current program offerings thrive."

Benedick will be just the fifth executive director in the nearly 50 years since the organization was formed.

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# Reflections on Transitions, 34 Years with Organization

By Doug McKinney, dmckinney@nckcn.com

As many of you know by now, I am stepping down as Executive Director of the North Central Regional Planning Commission soon. It is time to place more focus on ailing family members and other important matters.

Transitions in life take us to new adventures and new challenges. It is not always the precise path we have embarked on. But, per the ancient author Jeremiah, it can mean God's plans are to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a productive future. As of May 2, 2020, that is where my faith and hope will be directed after 34 years here at North Central Regional Planning Commission.

My career with the NCRPC began in 1986 when the organization was like a distressed teen and ceases when it is quite mature and riding a tall wave for



Doug McKinney

purposeful activities as well as staff, beneficiary and board member engagement. Working here has enriched my knowledge of a sense of place,

value of communities and the rich blessings God provides us all.

My appreciation is strong for this three and half decade opportunity. From the Emergency Aid Center in Salina to Russell Stover negotiations to seeing a rural water district supply water to households previously having to truck it in — the memories of making a difference abound. I am grateful for John Cyr for having faith and coaxing me west away from going

to Missouri, for my wife for willingly putting down roots here, for cities and counties and local leadership working with NCRPC all these years, for the many dedicated colleagues, for supportive and engaged board members, and for legislators and officials at the state and federal levels supporting what great value NCRPC and its affiliates bring to Kansas.

I am confident that North Central Regional Planning Commission will continue to thrive through collaboration and partnerships. The NCRPC staff is top notch. The organization will continue to inform, help resolve unfunded mandates, improve housing, support training of first responders, enhance businesses, build out infrastructure and broadband, and inspire a vast community of believers as to the benefits of rural Kansas.

## Rural Voices Winners Announced

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 2019-2020 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Jake Toole, a senior at Washington County High School, and Julisa Wolf, a senior at Ell-Saline High School, submitted the winning entries in this year's contest. Each will receive a cash award of \$850. The contest awards are named in honor of John Cyr who served for 22 years as the NCRPC Executive Director. Since 2006, NCRPC has awarded more than \$24,000 through the Rural Voices Youth Contest.

Students had the option to submit an original essay or video reflective of this year's contest theme of "Rural Kansas...Rural by Choice." High school seniors in the 12-county NCRPC service area were eligible to participate.

"Sponsoring the contest is one way for our organization to encourage students to reflect on the many positive qualities of rural Kansas as they get ready to enter the next phase of life," Doug McKinney said. "We are always impressed by the ideas presented in these entries."

To view the winning entries or to learn more about the contest, visit [www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices](http://www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices).

North Central Regional Planning Commission's  
**Rural Voices**  
**YOUTH CONTEST**

## Director

(Continued from page 1)

"We are looking forward to the strategic growth of the North Central Regional Planning Commission under the leadership of Mrs. Benedick," Hannah Stambaugh, NCRPC Board search committee chair, said. "She brings innovative ideas and passion for the organization and the region as a whole that made her an excellent choice to lead the North Central Regional Planning Commission after the retirement of Mr. Doug McKinney."

McKinney leaves behind a legacy of 34 years of service that touched the lives of many Kansas residents.

"Doug will certainly be missed," Stambaugh said. "His contributions to the entire region and state are appreciated. He will always be the biggest advocate for successful communities and economic growth."

# Communities Awarded CDBG Funds for Projects

Several North Central Kansas communities recently learned they will receive grants to help complete a variety of improvement projects. The funding comes from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

NCRPC staff assisted with the following projects and will provide project administration.

The City of Belleville was awarded \$175,000 to purchase a new fire truck. The city will contribute \$175,000 in matching funds.

The City of Chapman was awarded \$600,000 to build a non-discharging wastewater treatment facility. The city will provide \$3,535,794 in matching funds it secured through USDA Rural Development.

The City of Clay Center was awarded \$250,000 on behalf of a local business owner for commercial rehabilitation of a dilapidated downtown building. The local business

owner will provide \$161,757 in matching funds.

The City of Concordia was awarded \$561,660 to make sanitary sewer and storm sewer improvements in the city. The city will contribute \$561,661 in matching funds.

The City of Hanover was awarded \$600,000 for water distribution system improvements. The city will provide \$3,730,247 in matching funds it secured through USDA Rural Development.

The City of Lincoln Center was awarded \$600,000 for water distribution system improvements. The city will provide \$605,961 in matching funds it secured through Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The City of Marysville was awarded \$600,000 to build a new fire station. The city will contribute \$938,448 in matching funds.

The City of Miltonvale was awarded \$35,212 to complete a

demolition project. The city will contribute a total of \$35,213 through local city funds, force account labor and waived landfill fees.

The City of Minneapolis was awarded \$300,000 for housing rehabilitation and demolition. The city will contribute \$13,700 in matching funds.

The City of Solomon was awarded \$600,000 for water distribution system improvements. The city will provide \$1,416,424 in matching funds it secured through Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

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, contact the NCRPC office to discuss project needs or visit [www.kansascommerce.gov/cdbg](http://www.kansascommerce.gov/cdbg).

## Positive Results Continue for Home Ownership Pilot Programs

Financial incentives offered through the NCK Home Ownership Pilot Program's 2019 expansion to Ellsworth and Lincoln counties assisted in the purchase of 10 homes in Ellsworth County, 6 homes in Lincoln County and 1 in Mitchell County.

The program officially expanded to Ellsworth and Lincoln counties in June 2019. It assisted home buyers with down payment and closing cost assistance. The total value of the 17 homes was \$1.4 million, with \$204,000 coming from the pilot program.

The NCRPC administered the program offered by its new housing non-profit, NCK Housing Opportunities, Inc. The non-profit



serves Cloud, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, and Saline Counties. An award from

the Dane G. Hansen Foundation of Logan, Kansas, assisted in the creation of the loan and grant pool, along with a donation from the NCKCN NCK Business Development Fund.

Of the home buyers who used the pilot programs in each county, 41% reported taking a new job in the last 12 months and 44% reported the program was a factor in their decision to take the job. In addition, 64% bought their first

home. Results also indicated that 45% of new residents who moved to their community within the last 12 months were between 30 and 49 years of age. According to research by University of Minnesota Extension Educator Ben Winchester, this average age group is the most likely to move to a rural area.

Similar pilot programs have been completed in the City of Marysville and Cloud and Mitchell Counties. Another pilot began in Dickinson County in March. Additional pilot programs are scheduled to launch in Ottawa and Republic Counties in late April. To learn more, visit [www.ncrpc.org/services/homeownership](http://www.ncrpc.org/services/homeownership).



## North Central Regional Planning Commission

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## NCKCN Expands to New Location

The North Central Kansas Community Network (NCKCN) is expanding! NCKCN now provides its fixed wireless Internet service to residents and businesses in another great rural community: Scandia, KS.

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.

With speeds up to 50Mbps, wireless Internet customers are able to stream movies, watch ball games, play online games, or run a business with ease. Scandia is the tenth location in the growing list of NCKCN wireless Internet communities. Other locations



include Ada, Belleville, Beloit, Clyde, Concordia, Jewell, Lincoln, Mankato and Minneapolis.

NCKCN also offers 16 NCK-WiFi hotspot locations distributed throughout seven communities. NCK-WiFi, is a partnership of NCKCN and Cunningham Telephone & Cable (CTC).

For the latest NCK-WiFi locations, visit [www.nck-wifi.com/about/locations](http://www.nck-wifi.com/about/locations). For more about NCKCN, visit [www.nckcn.com](http://www.nckcn.com).

## REMINDERS



Image Courtesy of [Kansascounts.org](http://Kansascounts.org).

Have you completed the Census? Your participation matters! Fortunately, it has never been easier and more accessible to respond to the census on your own – online, over the phone, or by mail. Go to [my2020Census.gov](http://my2020Census.gov) to respond.

## EVENTS

To view the latest events, visit: [www.ncrpc.org/news/events](http://www.ncrpc.org/news/events)