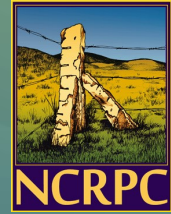


# NCRPC NEWS

An update from the North Central Regional Planning Commission



## ABOUT US

### Our Mission

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

### Our Commitment

At the NCRPC, we are committed to giving our member Cities and Counties the best service possible. If you ever feel we are not putting our best foot forward, please reach out to Emily Benedick, Executive Director, at [executivedirector@ncrpc.org](mailto:executivedirector@ncrpc.org) or 785-738-2218. Your feedback is always welcome!

### Contact Us

109 N. Mill, PO Box 565  
Beloit, KS 67420 | 785-738-2218  
[www.ncrpc.org](http://www.ncrpc.org)



[facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit](https://www.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 Bank of Beloit*  
Mark Fleming, *Jewell County*  
Rod Franz, *City of Salina*  
Bill Garrison, *Cloud County*  
Heather Hartman, *Mitchell County Community Development*  
Kelly Larson, *Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation*  
Luke Mahin, *Republic County Economic Development*  
Raleigh Ordoyne, *Washington County*  
Kermit Rush, *Ellsworth County*  
Stacie Schmidt, *City of Ellsworth*  
Hannah Stambaugh, *Saline County*  
David Thurlow, *Clay County*

## Innovation Stimulus Program Seeks to Support Region's Manufacturers

North Central Kansas manufacturers and entrepreneurs that have been negatively impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible to apply for free services as part of a new Innovation Stimulus Program.

The program is a partnership between the Technology Development Institute, or TDI, at Kansas State University and the NCRPC. The Innovation Stimulus Program provides no cost commercialization and engineering services to projects that will have a positive economic impact in the region.

"Technology Development Institute has the understanding, technical capacity, and expertise to assist our region's manufacturers as they seek to pivot in response to COVID-19 impacts," NCRPC Executive Director Emily Benedick said. "We are excited about this partnership."

Eligible project examples for the Innovation Stimulus Program include design, engineering or prototyping services, intellectual property research,

customer and/or market research, marketing assistance, and other technical support as needed.

Applications are now being accepted and will be available until all funding has been allocated. The maximum amount of service awarded to any one project is \$20,000 and there is no minimum amount.

Funding for the new program is made possible through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's CARES program. Technology Development Institute is a unit in the College of Engineering at Kansas State University and is designated as a U.S. Economic Development Administration University Center. The NCRPC is designated as an Economic Development District by U.S. Economic Development Administration for a 12-county region in North Central Kansas.

To learn more and apply, visit  
[www.k-state.edu/tdi](http://www.k-state.edu/tdi)





## New Leadership Training Scholarship Announced

Cultivating leadership is an important part of ensuring a strong future in North Central Kansas.

A newly created leadership scholarship will make it possible for NCRPC to sponsor an individual each year to attend the “Your Leadership Edge” training program offered by the Kansas Leadership Center, Wichita.

The NCRPC Executive Board of Directors officially created the McKinney Leadership Scholarship in April 2020. It is named in honor of Doug McKinney, who was NCRPC Executive Director for 12 years and passionate about leadership during his 34-year tenure with the organization. McKinney retired as executive director in May.

The scholarship will be awarded to an individual living and/or working in the NCRPC 12-county service area who has shown commitment to improving their community or work place. Preference will be given to those serving local government or non-profits and those who do not have the option of being sponsored by their employer.

“We are thrilled that the board created this opportunity in Doug’s honor,” NCRPC Executive Director Emily Benedick said. “This will allow us to help support those who are pushing to better their communities and the region.”

To apply, visit [www.ncrpc.org/leadershipscholarship](http://www.ncrpc.org/leadershipscholarship). The deadline is November 2.

# IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

## OCTOBER MARKS ENERGY ACTION MONTH, WEATHERIZATION DAY

Residents living in an apartment complex in Ness City have enjoyed increased comfort and energy efficiency thanks to improvements made possible through the Weatherization Assistance Program.

At the time of the work, many of the units in the Wheatview Apartment Complex were rented to elderly tenants. The 30-unit complex has four floors and was built in 1978. This multi-family complex is one of the largest weatherization projects the NCRPC has administered in its 41-years of providing weatherization assistance.

The program allowed for the installation of air sealing measures, energy efficient refrigerators, ventilation fans, carbon monoxide detectors, as well as LED light bulbs throughout the apartments. In addition, the old and leaky Packaged Terminal Air Conditioner (PTAC) units were replaced or repaired as needed. The apartment complex made additional upgrades in the common areas including a new heat pump and LED lighting.

Weatherization helps reduce energy costs for households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes.



Weatherization assistance improvements at this multi-family apartment complex in Ness City increased comfort and energy efficiency for its tenants. *(Courtesy Photo)*

Through weatherization improvements and upgrades, households save on average \$283 or more every year. The Weatherization Assistance Program is offered at no charge to income-eligible families. The NCRPC administers the program for 41 Kansas counties.

October marks Energy Action Month and October 30 is recognized as Weatherization Day across the nation each year. To learn simple choices for energy efficiency, visit [www.energystar.gov/campaign/waysToSave](http://www.energystar.gov/campaign/waysToSave).

To apply for weatherization assistance, visit [www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization](http://www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization)

## MEET THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Rod Franz, Salina City Commissioner, joined the NCRPC Executive Board in January. Franz served for 20 years as Director of Finance for the City of Salina before retiring in 2016. Prior to moving to Salina, he was Clerk/Director of Administration in Arkansas City, Kansas.

Franz is a graduate of Emporia State University with a degree in public affairs/administration and Wichita State University with a master’s degree in urban affairs.



Rod Franz

He has been involved in his community having served as a Salina Arts & Humanities Commissioner and a volunteer at the Salina Animal Shelter among other

activities. Rod was also a founding member of the Kansas Government Finance Officers Association.

# RURAL REFLECTIONS

## DOES RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION MEAN THE END OF SMALL TOWNS? NOT NECESSARILY, SAYS FORMER INTERN

BY EMILY RENO

In the summer of 2018, I had the privilege to serve as North Central Regional Planning Commission's summer intern. At the end of the summer I wrote about the tremendous impact that the internship had on me - not only of my view of how happiness could be achieved in a small town, but how it was one of the only times in my life where I didn't have the 'fear of missing out' for not being in some exotic location instead.

Many people I met were hopeful that I would move to North Central Kansas permanently after my internship, but my path had already been set on the big city - Minneapolis, pop. 425,403 - to complete my Master of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Minnesota. The culture shock was real. So was the overwhelming anxiety and stress from working three part-time jobs and full-time course load. I will never forget the first day I drove out of the city - four months after moving there - and bursting into tears seeing the horizon. Miles and miles of cornfields and the open sky were apparently a much greater part of my sense of belonging than I realized.

It was at that moment that I knew my interest and passion for working in



Emily Reno was a Dane Hansen Community Intern at the NCRPC in 2018. She worked with the NCK Food Council.

rural communities around issues of food and agriculture wasn't just a pipe dream. The time I spent working in North Central Kansas was a pivotal moment in the trajectory of my career endeavors. I sought out part-time work through research with farmers in Greater Minnesota while going to school, and worked for a start-up that bridges the urban-rural divide by empowering rural constituents to develop a vision of a sustainable future for themselves. The experiences have taught me that regardless of our geographic biases, we are all just people, and that we deserve to live a dignified life.

After graduating in May of this year, I packed up my bags to become an apprentice at Lida Farm, where we grow and sell vegetables on five acres through CSA shares. I live fifteen



Fresh produce from early in the season at the Lida Farm stand in Minnesota, which operates on the honor system. (Courtesy Photo)

minutes outside of Pelican Rapids, the nearest town, pop. 2500, and I could not be happier. I have found a new home here, but despite the fact that I no longer live in Kansas, I think this message is important to share: A young person's decision to move to or attend school in an urban setting does not preclude them from choosing to return, or to move to a rural community elsewhere. If you feel as though you've just lost your child or a loved one to the 'big city,' I urge you to not lose hope. There are many of us out there longing to return, and many more of us who will dedicate their lives to making their small town the best it can be. I know I will.

# RURAL VOICES CONTEST

## HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS INVITED TO COMPETE FOR CASH PRIZES

High school seniors in North Central Kansas are invited to compete for a chance to win \$850 by submitting a written essay or short video in the 2020-2021 Rural Voices Youth Contest.

Entries should reflect this year's theme — "Rural Kansas... Tomorrow's Possibilities." The top two entries will receive a cash award of \$850 and those students will be recognized with the John R. Cyr Rural Voices Award. The award is named in honor of Cyr who served for 22 years as NCRPC



Executive Director. Any senior in high school who lives in or attends a school in the 12-county NCRPC service area is eligible to enter the contest.

The deadline to submit an entry is December 1, 2020. To learn more, visit [www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices](http://www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices).

## EVENTS & DEADLINES

Thursday, October 29, 2020\*  
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting  
Beloit Office and via Zoom, 2 p.m.

Thursday, December 3, 2020\*  
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting  
Beloit Office and via Zoom, 2 p.m.

\*Note: Given the uncertainties of scheduling events at this time, please check the website for the latest information.

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

Funding sources and deadlines:

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



## North Central Regional Planning Commission

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# COVID-19 RECOVERY

## CITIES, COUNTIES WORKING TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND MEET LOCAL RECOVERY NEEDS

As the region continues to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, cities and counties have been busy responding to their local community needs and seeking resources to support their residents and businesses.

A total of 16 cities and counties in North Central Kansas were awarded funds from the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Response Supplement (CDBG-CV) program in June and July. Grants were available in two categories — Economic Development and Meal Programs. All awards in North Central Kansas are for Economic Development with two cities also receiving Meal Program grant funding. The Economic Development grants provide communities with funding to help local



businesses retain jobs for low-to-moderate income people by covering working capital expenses such as inventory, wages and utilities. The CDBG-CV awards are part of the state's allocation from the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Counties also received SPARK funding through the state's CARES Act allocation. The State of Kansas implemented a SPARK team

(Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas) to help oversee the distribution of these relief funds for COVID response and recovery efforts. Counties were allocated SPARK funds based on a formula that takes into account population, virus impacts and unemployment rates.

NCRPC staff are working with some of the region's cities and counties to provide administration assistance for both funding programs.

Resources continue to change rapidly. For current information on COVID-19 resources available in the region, visit our resources page: [www.ncrpc.org/resources-in-response-to-covid-19](http://www.ncrpc.org/resources-in-response-to-covid-19). For current information on COVID-19 in Kansas, visit [covid.ks.gov](http://covid.ks.gov).