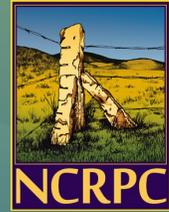


NCRPC NEWS

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 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



[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*
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INCREASING CONNECTIVITY

NCKCN EXTENDING HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS IN RURAL AREAS

NCKCN, a broadband internet service network covering North Central Kansas, is extending its high-speed wireless internet to pockets of unserved and underserved broadband areas in four North Central Kansas counties. NCKCN is a 501(c)3 affiliate of the NCRPC.

“The need for high speed, high quality broadband internet affects the most critical aspects of our rural counties,” NCKCN System Administrator Todd Tuttle said. “Educational institutions, economic development and commerce, population growth and medical services all rely heavily on every resident or household having access to reliable internet services.”

The expansion project includes portions of Cloud, Jewell, Mitchell and Republic counties. It will increase internet connectivity for rural residents and businesses in areas where accessing quality high speed internet is difficult. NCKCN is building a hybrid fiber-wireless solution to provide customers with fast, affordable, low latency internet access with no data caps. To see a map of the newest available coverage areas, visit www.nckcn.com/coverage.

NCKCN is collaborating with Cunningham Telephone & Cable (CTC) to extend broadband to these underserved areas by leveraging CTC’s neighboring fiber network. NCKCN and CTC are both local North Central Kansas companies that have a long history of providing internet solutions for the region.

The new service offers internet speeds of up to 50x10Mbps to residents and up to 50x50Mbps to businesses.



Expansion of high speed wireless internet is underway in four North Central Kansas counties and will be completed by the end of December.

New customers in the expansion area who sign up for service will receive free installation and a wireless router. This project is an extension of NCKCN’s proven fixed wireless deployment, which it has offered since the early 2000s.

“The rise of COVID-19 has made it more apparent than ever that residents in our region need access to high speed internet,” Tuttle said. “We are pleased

(See **NCKCN** on page 2)

KEEP 5 IN KANSAS

Updated Kansas wealth transfer study shows opportunity for local charitable giving

A recently updated study on the transfer of wealth in Kansas presents an opportunity to communities of all sizes for local charitable giving.

The Center for Economic Development and Business Research, part of the W. Frank Barton School of Business at Wichita State University, first completed a transfer of wealth study for Kansas in 2007 and updated it in 2012 and 2019. This study estimated future intergenerational wealth transfer for each county in Kansas. The transfer of wealth is an estimate of the household estate wealth transferred from the current generation to the next.

The most recent study indicates the following:

- \$67.7 billion will be transferred from one generation to the next in the state of Kansas from 2020 to 2025.



A little planning. A big impact.

- \$3.4 billion or 5 percent could be preserved in community foundation endowments.
- \$1.2 trillion will be transferred in the state within the next 50 years (2020 to 2070).

The Keep 5 in Kansas initiative is one tool the Kansas Association of Community Foundations (KACF) uses to promote the importance of planned, charitable giving to local community foundation endowments. The concept is that by capturing a portion of the

wealth being transferred — just 5% of an estate — will go a long way toward helping to ensure a community’s future. This can provide communities with a permanent source of endowed funding to support local projects such as economic development, local non-profits, schools, churches, public beautification and other community needs.

“Kansas community foundations are leading an effort to ensure the state’s transfer of wealth is preserved and invested in communities across Kansas,” Svetlana Hutfles, KACF Executive Director, said.

To find your local community foundation, visit kansascfs.org/contactLocal.cfm.

To learn more about the updated transfer of wealth study or Keep 5 in Kansas, visit kansascfs.org/transfer-wealth.cfm.

MEET THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Stacie Schmidt joined the NCRPC Executive Board in July. She is an “Ellsworthian” at heart with a passion for the community where she was born and raised. Stacie is an active advocate for the community as past president of both the Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ellsworth Childcare & Learning Center, board member of Ellsworth Cowtown Days, facilitator of Leadership Ellsworth County, and founder of NexGen Ellsworth County. She currently also serves as a board member for the Ellsworth County Medical Center.

Schmidt has been Executive Director for Ellsworth County Economic Development since 2017. Stacie says she appreciates the



Stacie Schmidt

resources of colleagues in the industry and partnerships with agencies such as NCRPC, NetWork Kansas, the Northwest

Kansas Economic Innovation Center, and the Small Business Development Center. Her previous experience is in hospitality and real estate title work.

Stacie keeps busy with her two children and also enjoys reading, spending time with family and friends, and working on marketing materials for her side business, Schmidt Family Designs.

NCKCN

(Continued from page 1)

to expand our services to help meet that need.”

The expansion project is already underway and will be completed by the end of December.

This project is made possible, in part, through a Connectivity Emergency Response Grant, which was created to address the increased need for internet connectivity in Kansas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding was awarded as part of the state’s Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Economic Development and Connectivity grant application process made available from federal CARES Act funding.

To learn more or sign up for service, call NCKCN at 785-738-2218 or visit www.nckcn.com.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

CITY OF HOPE IMPROVES WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Having a safe and dependable water system is necessary for any community. The City of Hope recently completed a project to improve its water distribution system that will benefit current and future residents for many years.

Like many rural communities across Kansas, the City of Hope was faced with an aging water distribution system. The original system in Hope was made up of cast iron pipe that was installed in 1916. Improvements had been made over the years as needed. However, maintenance was becoming increasingly difficult and expensive due to the age and condition of the system. Line breaks were frequent and water loss high.

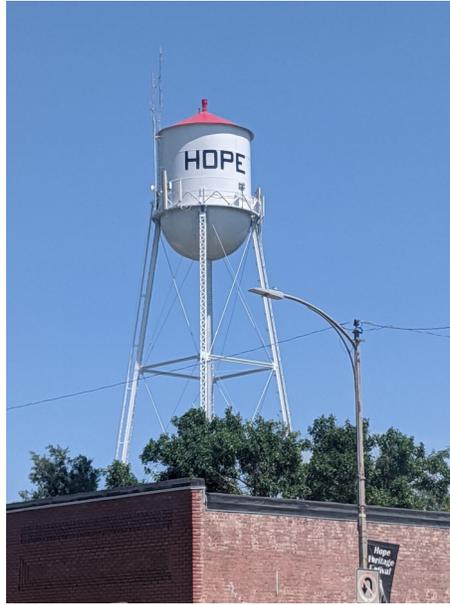
Recognizing the substantial cost involved with replacing the existing cast iron water mains, the city explored possibilities for funding assistance. In 2018, the city was awarded a \$600,000 grant through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The CDBG program is administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce. The city also provided a substantial project match of nearly \$1.2 million, which it secured through a USDA Rural Development loan.

“Infrastructure is a very important component to any community.”

— Larry Ryff, City of Hope Mayor

The project included the installation of approximately 23,200 lineal feet of new PVC water mains, 5,600 lineal feet of water service lines, as well as new valves, fire hydrants, and an updated metering system. Water tower painting and upgrades were also completed.

NCRPC staff provided project planning assistance, grant writing, and administration. Other key partners involved with the project include



A project to improve the water distribution system in the southern Dickinson County City of Hope was completed earlier this year. New waterlines were installed and the water tower was painted and repaired.

general contractor J & K Construction LLC and project engineer BG Consultants, Inc.

Since project completion earlier this year, the city has experienced lower water loss and fewer issues. “It has been a positive change and it was way overdue,” Mayor Larry Ryff said. “The community seems very thankful and happy that there has been less interruptions with the new system.”

Ryff has advice for other communities considering options for their own water improvement projects. “You definitely need determination and patience with the process,” Ryff said. “Infrastructure is a very important component to any community.”

For more information about the funding sources used for this project or to discuss a project funding need, contact the NCRPC Community Development staff.

There are many great things happening in North Central Kansas communities. Periodically we feature projects from around the region to share ways communities have solved challenges.

NEWS BRIEFS

Beck Joins NCRPC Staff

We are pleased to announce that Brianne Beck has joined the NCRPC as a community development representative. A lifelong resident of Mitchell County, Brianne earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration from Fort Hays State University. As part of the community planning and development team, she will be providing support to cities, counties and non-profit organizations



Brianne Beck

in North Central Kansas through a variety of services including grant writing and project management.

She joins the organization with more than 10 years of experience in accounting and customer service and more than 14 years of experience in coordinating services for individuals related to independent living skills training. Brianne looks forward to working with North Central Kansas communities.

Brianne and her husband, Brett, keep busy with their two children. She also enjoys camping, kayaking, sewing, and home improvement projects.

EVENTS & DEADLINES

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

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

www.ncrpc.org/news/events



North Central Regional Planning Commission

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NCK BUSINESS RELIEF LOAN PROGRAM

LOAN FUND AVAILABLE TO HELP NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS BUSINESSES

A new NCK Business Relief Loan Program is now available to assist North Central Kansas businesses adversely impacted by COVID-19.

The U.S. Department of Commerce through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) will provide \$1.1 million of funds, which will be administered by the North Central Regional Planning Commission.

The new program provides loans on favorable terms to businesses for response and recovery needs due to the COVID-19 crisis. For-profit businesses in Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Washington counties are eligible for the program. Loan funds may be used for operating capital/inventory and asset purchases needed to pivot



operations/increase productivity. Funding requests for the program are being accepted on qualified applications on a first come, first served basis until funds are exhausted or the program ends on December 31, 2021.

Funding for the new program comes from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. To qualify for the 2020 EDA funding, North Central Regional Planning Commission needed to have a history of operating a successful fund, which it met as a result of receiving similar EDA loan funding in 1990. The

original fund began with \$667,000 and has grown to nearly \$1 million today.

The loan fund will become a permanent tool to assist businesses in North Central Kansas and will not be COVID-specific in the future.

“The NCK Business Relief Loan Program will help provide support to businesses still being impacted by the pandemic,” NCRPC Business Finance Director Debra Peters said. “In addition, our region will benefit from this fund for many years.”

To learn more about the NCK Business Relief Loan Program, contact Debra Peters at 785-738-2218 or businessfinance@ncrpc.org or visit www.ncrpc.org/services/nckbusinessrelief.