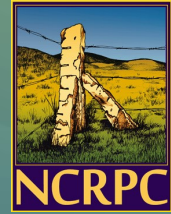


NCRPC NEWS

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 have questions or concerns, please reach out to Executive Director Emily Benedick at 785-738-2218 or executivedirector@ncrpc.org.

Contact Us

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Beloit, KS 67420 | 785-738-2218
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[facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit](https://www.facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit)

If you have a story idea or would like to update your address, contact us at: communications@ncrpc.org.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chair: Tom Claussen, *Mitchell County*
Vice Chair: Vacant
Secretary/Treasurer: Vicki Steffens, *Appointed Position*
Ellen Barber, *Marshall County Partnership for Growth*
Greg Bender, *Ellsworth County*
Craig Chamberlin, *Dickinson County*
Ron Copple, *Cloud County*
Kelly Gourley, *Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation*
Luke Mahin, *Republic County Economic Development*
D.D. Malmberg, *Ottawa County*
Raleigh Ordoyne, *Washington County*
Aaron Peck, *City of Salina*
Keith Roe, *Jewell County*
Stacie Schmidt, *City of Ellsworth*
Hannah Stambaugh, *Saline County*
David Thurlow, *Clay County*

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY IN NCK

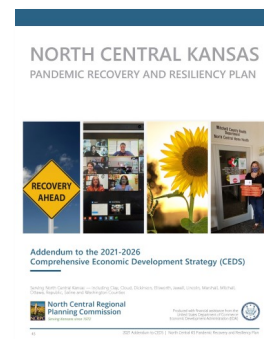
PLAN GIVES INSIGHT INTO BUILDING FUTURE CAPACITY IN THE REGION

Earlier this year the NCRPC hosted round table discussions with stakeholders in its 12-county service area to determine ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussions focused on the concept of resiliency. What would limit the region's ability to bounce back from hardships? What would position the region for future success? What specific aspects of the region are vulnerable? In addition, participants were asked what they felt were the biggest keys to economic development of the region. Economic resilience defined for purposes of the discussions was the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness. The description also included an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change.

Contracted consultant Deb Ohlde facilitated these discussions and compiled the data into the North Central Kansas Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan. It contains a look at the diverse effects of the COVID pandemic and ideas for building future resiliency in the region. Development of this plan was made possible, in part, through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant awarded to the NCRPC.

At the conclusion of the discussions, 63 individuals were interviewed who lived or worked throughout the entire 12-county region. Multiple sectors of the economy were represented. The NCRPC also conducted a regional



Scan the code to view the report:



survey during a similar timeframe to collect information on resiliency and the impacts of COVID-19.

Survey responses and discussion feedback both documented concerns in three primary areas:

- 1 Housing
- 2 Childcare
- 3 Workforce

Round table discussions bought to light several priority projects related to recovery including the need for government employees to have flexible and up-to-date tools to deliver service effectively in a crisis; daycare is critical to growing the workforce and the economy; and quality, affordable housing is lacking overall. Discussions also highlighted future potential challenges including managing and adequately serving immigrants and mental health concerns. Preparing for these will play an important role in building a more resilient region overall.

View the full recovery and resiliency plan at www.ncrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/resiliency2021.pdf.

NEWS BRIEFS

Benedick to Step Down

NCRPC Executive Director Emily Benedick has announced plans to step down from her position effective January 2022. Benedick has been with the organization since 2015 and has been

Executive Director since March 2020.

Benedick stated, "It is bittersweet to announce my resignation from the NCRPC. I have

greatly enjoyed the relationships I have formed throughout my career with the organization. I feel very fortunate to continue my work in community development serving as the Mitchell County Community Development Director."

To ensure a smooth transition, a search process is currently underway and is being led by the NCRPC Executive Board.



Emily Benedick

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 an original essay or short video in the 2021-2022 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Entries should reflect this year's theme — "Rural Kansas... Tomorrow's Leaders." The top two entries will receive a cash award of \$850. Any senior in high school who lives in or attends a school in the 12-county NCRPC service area is eligible to participate. Entries are due February 1, 2022. Learn more at www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices.

REDUCING ENERGY COSTS

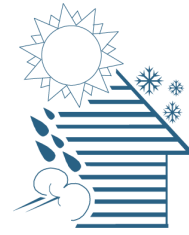
WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE CLIENT SEES DROP IN UTILITY USAGE

BY NCRPC WEATHERIZATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

At the age of 94, Delora wanted one thing: to leave a decent home to her children when she passed away. Improvements made to her home through the Weatherization Assistance Program may help make that possible.

Previously, the client was worried about flooding in the basement each time it rained and how drafty the original windows had become. Thanks to the Weatherization Assistance Program, the home received 1,148 sq ft of attic insulation, 2,078 sq ft of wall insulation, 558 sq ft of band joist and foundation insulation, and vapor barrier. The foundation cracks were repaired, a missing chunk of concrete was filled in, and her gutters were cleaned out, all causes of the basement flooding issue. A large amount of infiltration and air sealing was also provided.

Though she has not seen a large decrease in her electric bill, the gas bill



has decreased and through the winter months she did not have to set her thermostat as high as in the past. Of the inspector and the

contracting crew, she said "They were all good workers, and didn't stop until the job was done!"

Last month marked Energy Efficiency Month and October 30th was recognized as Weatherization Day across the nation. Weatherization helps reduce energy costs for households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes. Eligibility for the program is based solely on income.

The NCRPC administers the program for 41 Kansas counties. To see the maximum income guidelines or to learn more about the program, visit www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization/.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

PHOTOS HIGHLIGHT PRIDE, COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

In the September newsletter we put out a call for photos of community events that have occurred since 2019 such as 150th celebrations, annual festivals, and more – and our readers answered!

Vision 5 of the [North Central Kansas Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) is "Exceptional

Quality of Place." Community gatherings often provide unique experiences that contribute to quality of life in the region. Whether it is beginning a new tradition or celebrating 150 years of history, we salute the communities and volunteers who help make these events happen. Thank you to all who submitted photos. See more at www.ncrpc.org/celebrating-community.



The Linn Picnic demolition derby on July 11, 2020 was captured by drone. The picnic is an annual summer event in Linn, Kansas, and includes the derby, kids' games, and a number of other events. (Photo by Eli Thalmann, submitted by Dan Thalmann)

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

HISTORIC MITCHELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE UNDERGOES RESTORATION

Construction of the Mitchell County Courthouse was completed in 1901 at a cost of \$38,310. An exterior restoration project to repair and restore mortar joints completed in July 2021 came in at a cost of just over \$147,000.

“Some people have lived in the county all their lives and do not remember a cleaning as thorough as what was recently done,” Tom Claussen, Chair of the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners, said. “I guess you could say it was due — but that is not bad for 100-plus years.”

Claussen took an active interest in the restoration of the county courthouse when he first took office in 2010. Between his commissioner duties and his role on the K-State Research and Extension Post Rock District board at the time, he estimates he was walking into the courthouse 2 to 3 days a week. Over time, he noticed issues with the mortar. “You could stick your hand in cracks in some places and it was pretty unsightly when you got closer to the building,” Claussen said.

The Mitchell County Board of Commissioners applied twice for grant funding through the Kansas Historical Society Heritage Trust Fund Program and were turned down both times. Ultimately, the county used the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program instead.

The Kansas State Tax Credit is equal to 25 percent of qualifying expenses incurred during a qualified project on a qualified building. The Mitchell County

Courthouse was first listed on the National Register of Historical Places on November 23, 1977, making it a qualified historic structure for the program. Stone work was the chief aspect of the improvement effort. All work was carefully done to preserve the history of the building including using period-correct mortar mix and keeping with the original trowel design.

Mid-Continental Restoration Co., Inc. based out of Fort Scott, Kansas, received the bid to do the rehabilitation work. NCRPC staff provided assistance with the project application and administration.

“The contractors were wonderful people to work with and they did a great job,” Claussen said. “Working with NCRPC helped make the process a lot easier too.”

The county now has tax credits to place. For non-profit organizations, local governments, and other property owners that do not have a Kansas state income tax liability, credits may be transferred or sold to other taxpayers.

“We have had a lot of positive comments about the project,” Claussen said. “People are proud of their courthouse wherever they are from because that is where they go to conduct business. We are especially proud of our courthouse and the work that was done.”

Other improvements separate from this project have been made to the courthouse over a period of several years. Within the last 10 years the



Mitchell County utilized the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program for an exterior restoration project on its courthouse this year. (Photo courtesy of Doug McKinney)

county has replaced the windows, fixed the clock on the courthouse tower, lined the gutters to keep them functional, and added split duct heating and cooling systems allowing the removal of window units. A damaging hail storm in 2015 made it necessary to replace the roof of the courthouse. Repaving the parking lot is on the radar for a future improvement project.

For more about the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, visit www.kshs.org/p/state-historic-rehabilitation-tax-credit/14666.

There are many great things happening in North Central Kansas. Project Spotlight shares stories from communities around the region and how they solved challenges.

EVENTS & DEADLINES

NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, December 16, 2021
Via Zoom, 2:00pm

2022 Executive Board meeting dates will be posted once confirmed at www.ncrpc.org/news/events.

Upcoming FREE Training Opportunities for Residents, Businesses, Nonprofits in NCK

- December 1 Make Your Accounting Quick with QuickBooks®
- December 9 Effectively Govern and Strategically Plan
- December 15 Succession Planning – Your Guide to Passing on Your Business
- January 12 Make Your Accounting Quick with QuickBooks®
- January 13 Conducting Assessments for Board and CEO
- January 13 Succession Planning
- January 19 Making "Cents" of Financial Statements
- January 26 Behind Every Successful Business is Great Recordkeeping



Learn More and Register: www.ncrpc.org/resources/trainings/



North Central Regional Planning Commission

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MINNEAPOLIS DENTAL PRACTICE EXPANDS LAB SERVICES

NCK BUSINESS RELIEF LOAN PROGRAM HELPS BUSINESS PIVOT OPERATIONS

When All Smiles Dental Care, LC was forced to close for 6 weeks in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19, Dr. Ashley Swisher had time to focus on a plan to expand lab services for her practice.

Swisher's downtown Minneapolis, Kansas, practice opened in 2010. Innovation has been a priority from the beginning. Pivoting as a result of the pandemic was no exception. The business added a milling machine this year that allows in-office production of crowns, appliances and models, and dentures. The equipment uses digital imaging for fast and efficient patient treatment.

The practice now enjoys a quicker turnaround of some of its lab work. It can also provide lab services to other practices in the area, providing an

additional revenue stream for the business. The expanded new lab is four times the size of the former lab. "We are working toward being able to do all lab services in-house to expedite wait times for customer prostheses," Dr. Ashley Swisher said.

The new equipment and related expansion of lab services was made possible, in part, through assistance from the NCK Business Relief Loan Program that was funded by the EDA CARES Act RLF 2020. Other sources of funds for this project include investment by the owner and Citizens State Bank & Trust Co of Minneapolis.

The practice has 14 full-time employees. One new position was added as a result of the revolving loan fund project to expand lab services and likely another will be added within the next year.



All Smiles Dental Care located in downtown Minneapolis, Kansas, has added equipment and expanded its lab capabilities. (Courtesy Photo)

To learn more about NCRPC Business Finance services, visit www.ncrpc.org/services/business. For more information about the business, visit www.allsmilesks.com.