



QUARTER 4 2022 NEWSLETTER

# NCRPC NEWS

An update from the North Central Regional Planning Commission

## Banquet Celebrates Past, Looks to Future

NCRPC capped off the year with a 50th Anniversary Banquet on November 10 in Beloit.

Approximately 120 people from throughout the region attended the event, which was also hosted on behalf of affiliate North Central Kansas Community Network, Co. (NCKCN).

One of the evening's highlights was the keynote address by Doug Griffiths, community strategist and author of two best-selling editions of "13 Ways to Kill Your Community." In his presentation, he outlined seven of the 13 ways in which he said communities may undermine their success — sometimes without even knowing it.

- Forget the water – quality and quantity
- Don't attract businesses
- Don't engage youth
- Deceive yourself (Don't assess your community's need or values)
- Live in the past
- Don't cooperate
- Don't take responsibility

He shared brief anecdotes and lessons learned through his work advising and consulting with communities. Regarding engaging youth, he shared that the nature of youth is to go off and explore. The goal is not to keep them from doing that, but to give them a reason to want to return.

"We have to stop being so negative about our communities," Griffiths said. "We also need real engagement. It is not a matter of how you're going to be effective but how you're going to stay relevant."



NCRPC Executive Board Chair Tom Claussen (left) presented John Cyr with the inaugural NCRPC Lifetime Public Service Award.

Griffiths closed by challenging the audience when it comes to taking responsibility. "If we want a solution, we have to go back to community building and helping each other," Griffiths said.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of the inaugural Lifetime Public Service Award to John Cyr. He dedicated his career to the region, much of which was spent as NCRPC Executive Director. He is passionate about rural development and North Central Kansas. The NCRPC Executive Board plans to present an award annually to an individual, group or organization that has been distinguished by contributions to communities in the region over many years.



Keynote speaker Doug Griffiths shared his perspective on community challenges and successes.

## IN THIS ISSUE

50th Anniversary Banquet Celebrates Past, Looks to Future

We are Hiring!

On-the-Job Training Program Provides Opportunity for Workers and Employers

Weatherization Program Helps Decrease Utility Costs for Client

Meet the Staff: Jeren Torkelson

Entries Now Being Accepted for Rural Voices Youth Contest

Salina Business Owner Expands Local Brewery Options

## ABOUT US

Our primary service area includes 12 counties and 83 cities in North Central Kansas.

## OUR MISSION

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

## CONTACT US

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

Learn more about the NCRPC at:  
[www.ncrpc.org](http://www.ncrpc.org)

If you have a story idea or would like to update your address, email us at: [communications@ncrpc.org](mailto:communications@ncrpc.org).

## NEWS BRIEFS



We have openings for two great career opportunities!

**Weatherization Clerk:** This position will work with the Weatherization Assistance Program the NCRPC administers. Primary duties include providing customer service to applicants, processing applications and other documentation, and tracking work completion.

**IT Coordinator:** This position will assist the Systems Administrator with the overall operation, installation and maintenance of the communication networks, and computer technology for NCRPC and North Central Kansas Community Network Co. (NCKCN).

Both positions are full time, based in Beloit, KS, and offer good benefits and a great work environment. Positions are open until filled.

For the full job descriptions and to learn how to apply visit [www.ncrpc.org/employment/](http://www.ncrpc.org/employment/).

## EVENTS & MORE

Executive Board Meetings  
Thursday, January 26, 2023  
Thursday, February 23, 2023

Find more on the web »  
Events:

[www.ncrpc.org/news/events](http://www.ncrpc.org/news/events)  
Funding sources and deadlines:  
[www.ncrpc.org/funding](http://www.ncrpc.org/funding)

## Annual Report Celebrates Milestone Year

As we wrap up celebrating the 50th year since the NCRPC was organized, the 2022 annual report highlights program impacts, milestones and accomplishments over the years.

Thank you to our partners, members and the many individuals who have served on various boards and committees of the NCRPC and NCKCN through the years. Our region has made progress by working together.



SCAN ME

We look forward to continuing to collaborate for future successes in North Central Kansas and beyond.

## On-the-Job Training Program Provides Opportunity for Workers and Employers

Employers may be eligible for reimbursement to help cover job training costs of candidates meeting certain criteria.

On-the-Job Training offered through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers up to a maximum of \$3,000 per year for two years to compensate employers for the cost associated with training and loss of production for newly hired employees.

Adults meeting certain priority categories such as veteran status, low income, or basic skills deficiencies may qualify for training assistance. Programs are also available for dislocated workers and youth ages 16-24 who are not attending school.

Potential examples of occupational skills training for adults may include on-the-job training for city water operators or local businesses training new hires in a skilled profession.

"I feel like On-the-Job Training is the best type of training because it is generally hands on, very company specific, and an earn and learn model that works," said Tucky Allen, Business Services Director with Kansas WorkforceONE. "The end goal is a career/good job for participants."

To learn more about WIOA On-the-Job Training and to determine eligibility, contact Tucky Allen at Kansas WorkforceONE at 316-303-2906 or by email at [tucky@kansasworkforceone.org](mailto:tucky@kansasworkforceone.org).



# Weatherization Assistance Program Helps Decrease Utility Costs for Client

"Lifesaving." That was the single word a weatherization client recently used to describe the help received through the Weatherization Assistance Program. The NCRPC administers the program for 41 Kansas counties.

Edward's central Kansas home had a 36-year-old rusted out furnace that needed to be replaced. His monthly budget was tight after he was forced to retire early due to health issues. When his electric bill became overwhelming, Edward began to seek assistance and applied for the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Weatherization helps reduce energy costs for households by improving the efficiency, health, and safety of their homes. Through the program, a new energy efficient furnace was installed in Edward's home. Other improvements included the addition of 1,384 square feet of attic insulation, 1,058 square feet of sidewall insulation, and other small measures

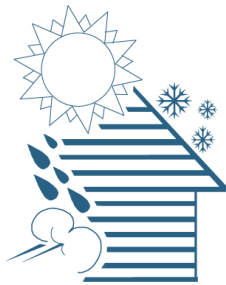
that addressed health and safety concerns.

"Since the work has been completed, the house feels different," Edward said. "It is warmer, and a transformation in overall comfort has been recognized."

His electric bill immediately decreased by more than \$40 each month and he is expecting to see bigger savings as the seasons change.

Eligibility for the Weatherization Assistance Program is based solely on income. To view maximum income guidelines or learn more about the program, visit [www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization](http://www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization).

*Please note that due to program demand, there currently is a wait list for services.*



## Entries Now Being Accepted for Rural Voices Youth Contest

High school seniors in North Central Kansas are invited to compete for a chance to win \$1,000 by submitting an essay or short video in the 2022-2023 Rural Voices Youth Contest. Entries should be reflective of this year's contest theme, which is "Rural Kansas...Working Together."

The NCRPC has sponsored the contest annually since 2006 and has awarded more than \$27,000 to high school seniors from around the region. Students submitting the top two entries will each receive a cash award of \$1,000. The winning entries will also be published on the NCRPC website.

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 — including the counties of Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline and Washington. The deadline to submit an entry is February 1, 2023.

Additional information and registration details are available at [www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices](http://www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices).



## Energy Saving Tips

Winter weather is here! According to the U.S. Department of Energy, home heating uses more energy and costs more than any other system in your home. For energy saving tips, go to <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-heating-systems>.

## Torkelson Joins Staff

We are pleased to announce that Jeren Torkelson has joined the NCRPC staff as weatherization inspector. In this role, he will be performing inspections for the Weatherization Assistance Program funded by the Department of Energy and Low-Income Energy Assistance Program to ensure compliance with program requirements. Torkelson joins the



Jeran Torkelson

organization with five years of construction experience.

Jeran is originally from Beloit and now resides in Osborne with his girlfriend and young son.

He enjoys spending time with family and watching the Kansas City Chiefs.





## North Central Regional Planning Commission

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# Salina Business Owner Expands Local Brewery Options

## *Loan Provides Capital for Business to Pivot*

Instead of the proverbial phrase “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade,” one Salina business focused on making ale when faced with challenges. When the coronavirus pandemic impacted Blue Skye Brewery and Eats, LLC with temporary business closure and revenue decline, co-owner Monte Shadwick got creative.

“We were very fortunate to have been in business for 7 years when the pandemic hit and were in a good financial position to weather the storm. However, to keep our team employed and working, we needed to create an income stream from other sales,” Shadwick said.

In Fall 2020, the business expanded its wholesale line by the keg and began offering it to other local restaurant/bars to meet the trend of having a local craft beer on tap. They



Blue Skye Brewery and Eats, LLC, is located at 116 N. Santa Fe Avenue, Salina, Kansas. (Courtesy Photo)

also created a new revenue source by adding a small canning machine. The new machine makes it possible for Blue Skye Brewery to sell beer in recyclable 32-ounce cans, which allows customers to mix and match a variety pack and take it to go. The business has a large list of customer favorites that it brews in house including

Jalapeno Ale and seasonal varieties such as Watermelon Crawl.

The project to pivot operations and purchase brewery equipment to meet the changing demands was made possible 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 First Bank Kansas. As a result of the project, another brewer was hired, allowing the business to retain 14 and create 1 full-time equivalent positions, including the owner.

For more information about the NCRPC Business Finance program, contact Debra Peters at 785-738-2218 or visit [www.ncrpc.org/services/business](http://www.ncrpc.org/services/business). To learn more about Blue Skye Brewery and Eats, LLC, find them on Facebook.