



Southeast Nebraska Development District

COOK MAIN STREET—SUCCESS!

To look down the Cook Main Street now it is hard to imagine the amount of planning and preparation that went into achieving this new streetscape. Cook community leaders for years had been charting a growing need. Definite steps toward correcting those short comings got new emphasis in 2009. What is now two blocks of new side walks, curb, paved street, along with corrected elevation issues and new water lines/fire hydrants was the result of careful budgeting and planning.

In 2009 the Village of Cook began a renewed look at the infrastructure needs of the community. After reviewing the different approaches to clarifying needs, they entered into a contract with JEO for a Blight and Sub-Standard Determination study. SENDD staffer Kevin Burnison took the results of that study and

worked with the Village Board to package a \$350,000 Community

Development Block Grant. The Village of Cook was completing

bond payments for the previously built Cook Community Center. They were able to team that financing capacity with USDA Loan & Grant funds to finance the \$900,000 total project cost.

A \$760,000 construction contract was awarded to Constructors, Inc. and construction started in August 2010. A year later the project is substantially complete. The final construction piece of the project (ramp railings and hand rails) should be completed in the next 60 days and the project should be closed out before the winter snows start. Other parts of the total street project package include a \$113,000 engineering contract for design, plans & specs and construction inspection as well as a \$17,000 CDBG general administration contract with SENDD.

In July 2011, Cook celebrated the completion of the project with a community celebration complete with inflated bounce castles for the kids and a street dance for the adults. Village Board Chairperson Elizabeth Jett and other community leaders are pleased to see the project move to completion.

This project is a good example of a community confronting challenges and working, to put a financing plan in place. A plan that allows a small community to take on a substantial project that is expected to last a generation or two.



This Cook main street project included for the two blocks of main street: new concrete driving surface, curb and sidewalks the full width of Main Street, building front to building front. Underground utilities included new water mains, valves, fire hydrants and service lines and storm sewer improvements. Unique to this project was the elevation difference from the north side of the street compared to the lower south side of the street. That resulted in a significant effort for ramps and railings.



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NEWSLETTER
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SERN Meeting—Wednesday, September 21, 2011 **Resources Available to Small Businesses and Communities – Presentation**

Has your community or business considered a needs assessment survey? Does your community have a need to conduct income surveys to be eligible for federal and/or state grant opportunities? Do you have planning and mapping needs in your community? Interested in a "grow your own" philosophy of economic development? If you answered yes you will not want to miss this exciting opportunity to attend a presentation on resources available through the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Center for Rural Research and Development (CRRD).

Community stakeholders, public employees, public officials, volunteers, and resource providers in the Southeast Nebraska Region are invited to attend a Free presentation to be held in Wahoo, Nebraska on September 21, 2011.

Shawn Kaskie, CRRD Director, will share cases in which students have assisted small businesses and communities with a variety of resources available from the University and other partners. Examples of resources include community needs assessment and income surveys, GIS map-

ping and economic gardening (a "grow your own" philosophy of economic development).

The mission of the Center for Rural Research and Development focuses on empowering the region's residents to seek avenues of rural economic development by building entrepreneurial and professional capacity, and by encouraging creative thinking about the economic growth of our region. The center espouses the "grow-your-own" philosophy of economic development, known as economic gardening, as well as other approaches to economic and business development.

The event will take place at the **Heritage Inn Hotel, 950 Chestnut Street, Wahoo Nebraska 68066 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on September 21, 2011.** There is no cost to attend the presentation however an RSVP is requested to save your seat as space is limited.

This program is being hosted by the Southeast Nebraska Resource Network (SERN) and the Wahoo Economic Development Office.

SERN is a group of development resource and service providers interested in the betterment of Southeast Nebraska. The SERN business meeting will take place from 10:00 a.m. – Noon prior to the event. Community and Economic Development stakeholders are encouraged to attend the SERN business meeting to connect with providers for the region. To learn more about SERN and how to attend SERN meetings email Jen Olds, SERN Chair at jolds@sendd.org.

SERN includes the following Nebraska Counties and their municipalities: Butler, Cass, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, and York.

To RSVP for the event email or call Doug Watts, Wahoo Economic Development Office at 402-443-4001 or watts@wahoo.ne.us.

2011 Annual Action Plan Hearing Scheduled

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) will open a public comment period for the 2011 Annual Action Plan due to proposed changes in the Housing, Community Development, Homeless, Allocation and Categorical Distribution sections. The Plan involves the annual distribution of approximately \$11 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, \$4 million in HOME program funds, \$600,000 in Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Program funds; and \$300,000 in Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (authorized under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended); \$4 million in Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) funds; and \$1.5 million in Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) funds. The 2011 Annual Action Plan describes program priorities and strategies, application schedules, eligible activities, and selection criteria for projects.

The plan is available on the DED website at:

<http://www.neded.org/community/grants/documentslibrary-a-forms/annual-action-plan>, or can be requested by contacting Brian Gaskill at 800-426-6505 or 402-471-2280, or emailing your request to brian.gaskill@nebraska.gov.

The public comment period for the amendment to the 2011 Annual Action Plan will run from August 23, 2011 through September 26, 2011.

In the 2011 Annual Action Plan, DED is proposing through these amendments to revise the distribution of HOME, CDBG, and ESG funds within the Housing, Community Development, and Homeless sections and revise the 2011 Allocation and Categorical Distribution.

Mail or email written comments by September 26, 2011 to: Brian Gaskill, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, PO Box 94666, Lincoln, NE 68509-4666; or brian.gaskill@nebraska.gov. Comments will be accepted starting August 23, 2011. Individuals requiring sensory accommodations, including interpreter services, Braille, large print or recorded materials should contact Brian Gaskill by August 22.

SENDD can assist Communities with Planning for future Projects

Early bird catches the worm: Fall is the perfect time to start planning for 2012 projects. As the weather starts to cool off it's time to start the planning process. Community Development projects including, Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure require community participation and development.

Knowing is Half the Battle: Some communities face difficulties in knowing what they want and how to achieve those goals. Communities can use Planning projects to help identify possible solutions and the costs to implement them. Different types of Planning Projects can include: Preliminary Engineering Reports for Public Works Planning for Water and Waste Water, Street Condition Study, Housing Market Study, and Project Feasibility Studies.

Hit the Ground Running: SENDD has recently assisted with 3 Planning grants awarded to the following communities: Fairbury for a Comprehensive Plan, Gilead for Waste Water Treatment, and Grafton for Waste Water Treatment. These planning projects will help each community identify solutions and outline the best course of action. These communities will be ready to identify funding for construction after the planning phase is completed.