

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)

Minutes from SERN Meeting
August 25, 2010
Seward Civic Center, Seward, NE
Facilitated by Jen Olds & Whitney Bumgarner

Present: Mary Simmons (Black Hills Energy); Michael Foutch (US Small Business Administration); Eric Zeece (DED); Pat Coldiron (Seward Area Chamber); Courtney Dunbar (Olsson Associates); Whitney Bumgarner (NDED); Dena Stevenson (NDED); Linda Black (NDED); Arlis Hohl (TCEDA); Marilyn Schlake (UNL CARI); Jason Sokolewicz (NPPD); Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD); Tim Keelan (Hanna & Keelan); Keith Carl (Hannon & Keelan); Emily Bausch (SENDDD); Rod Armstrong (AIM Institute); Roger Hahn (Nebraska Information Network); Scott Willet (NE Great Plains RC&D); Doug Watts (Wahoo ED); Alan Richard (Pawnee County ED); Bob Peterson (Prairie Gold Homes); Mary Kruger (Five Rivers RC&D); Monica Braun (REAP); Lydia Wiles (NDED); Allison Hatch (NDED); Jen Olds (SENDDD); Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D); Dan Hoffman (Invest Nebraska); John Yochum (Cass County ED); Sandi Gilsdorf (Windstream); Priscilla Pekas (Windstream); Charlotte Narjes (UNL CARI); Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corp); Al Roder (City of Norfolk).

Agenda Items:

Meeting called to order at 10:05 by Jen Olds.

- 1) Treasurers Report: Account balance of \$1,414.99.
- 2) May 2010 Minutes: Minutes from the May 23, 2010 were reviewed. No changes recommended.
- 3) Continuing Nebraskan's Award Nominations: History – Each regional group put in award for someone who has done a great job in building their community. Awards are presented at Governor's Conference in November. Everyone is asked to consider sending in a nomination then the review committee will determine which nomination will be forwarded. Members of Nomination Review Committee are: Roberta Pinkerton, Monica Braun, Whitney Bomgarner and Jen Olds. Nomination forms will soon be ready.
- 4) Roundtable/Introductions:
 - Jen Olds (SENDDD): Has been helping communities apply for Energy Efficiency Grants – many were awarded. EDA grant for 45 communities to get new emergency siren systems or upgrades. New staff member is Emily Bausch.
 - Roger Hahn (Nebraska Information Network): List of 530 communities in the state – 65 are unincorporated – and the list of who provides broadband service is at www.nin-telecom.com.
 - Jason Sokolewicz (NPPD): Getting ready for trade shows and working with DED on Battelle Study.
 - Linda Black (NDED): Holdrege area – serves 19 counties- 29 communities are certified. New application is available online to become certified. 3 data center sites – 31 rail serve sites have been narrowed down to 10.
 - Scott Willet (NE Great Plains RC&D): SARE Listening sessions are scheduled – one in Lincoln on Sept 23 and one in Omaha on Sept 24. Annual RC&D Conference is October 4-6 in Valentine.
 - Doug Watson (Wahoo): Two new businesses funded with USDA RD Revolving Loan. An economic development group for the county has been formed.
 - Alan Richard (Pawnee County ED): Housing study contract with Tim Keelan has been signed. New library in Pawnee City. EDGE class will start in January with RCDI grant assistance. Table Rock has new fire station and Debois has new community building.
 - Bob Peterson (Prairie Gold Homes): Is a 501 © 3 business now. Now offering commercial buildings. Open house in September for 2 part home built for Neighbor Works Lincoln.

Monica Braun (REAP): Loans up to \$35,000 for small businesses. Business plan basic training in Plattsmouth. Small business Needs Assessment is complete and results will be on REAP website at www.cfra.org/REAP. 451 people completed the survey.

Lydia Wiles (NDED): Paula Rhian is no longer working with DED Housing. Bob Doty is new housing director.

Allison Hatch (NDED): works for retention and expansion – Targeting for Growth curriculum development. Helping O’Neill and Albion identify where they are and where they can move – wide scope of development.

Dena Stevenson (NDED): Business recruiter at NDED. Preparing for Diplomats weekend in September.

Whitney Bumgarner (NDED): Leading Battelle Study to target industries to become competitive - hoping for early fall results. Synchronist is online database for business services – let DED know if you want to be in their database.

Tim Keelan (Hanna & Keelan): Community and County planning/zoning business. Does blight study, housing (assisted living) and wind energy development zoning in rural areas.

Courtney Dunbar (Olssen Associates): 640 employees, 23 offices in 7 states. Look at sites for site utility, feasibility studies for commercial lending. Offer field services in environment construction.

Pat Coldiron (Seward Chamber): Extending hiking/biking trail that has been well utilized. Excel development is adding new housing complex. Seward has passed new school bond.

Eric Zeece (NDED): New employee at NDED.

Arlis Hohl (TCEDA): New MET tower on Monument Road between Hebron and Alexandria. SENTC travel guide will be coming out in November. Byway 136 is developing travel guide, too. September 10 will be 6 County tire recycling event.

Charlotte Narjes (CARI): Helping with broadband planning.

Marilyn Schlake (CARI): EDGE course to be offered online and also the traditional method. 19 instructors certified to teach EDGE. NETForce is grant for teacher/high school training program to bring entrepreneurship to the school.

Michael Foutch (SBA): Record of SBA loans in 2010. Average loan is over \$300,000. Many are women owned businesses. Recovery Act Loans are going down – bill is pending to restore provisions of Recovery Act. Lance Morgan was winner of Small Business of the Year Award. Podcast is available to explain SBA process.

Pat Lentfer (Fillmore Co ED): Bond to build replacement hospital passed. Hosting dedication to airmen from Fillmore County. Tire recycling event brought in 200 tons of tires. Ohiova received USDA grant for water system. Geneva is doing feasibility study for Senior Center and also Downtown Revitalization Project.

Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD): 13 Counties served. OPPD has seen highest peak demand during last heat wave. NETA fall conference is September 22-24 in Kearney. MADC- 10 state group will be holding the Competiveness Conference in Chicago December 5-7th.

Mary Simmons (Black Hills Energy): Chamber of Commerce conference executive meeting in Norfolk. Lincoln Area Development Partners will showcase your community to DED staff.

Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D): Hazardous Waste Collections are scheduled in 9 communities throughout Five Rivers area. Advertising for Beginning Wine School and Advanced Wine School. Annual report is being developed. Anhydrous Tank project with partners in Region V to help deter meth production.

John Yochum (Cass County ED): New development on main street in Plattsmouth. Weeping Water has renovated old hall and has new community center. Three new restaurants in Cass County.

- 5) AIM Institute: Rod Armstrong – AIM began in 1992 and focused on IT and now provides assistance in leadership & information technology, connecting people & careers, building stronger workforce, and empowering individuals & operations. www.nin-telecom.com provides lists of broadband service for communities.

- 6) Invest Nebraska Business Plan Competition: Dan Hoffman – Invest Nebraska has been around since 2002. This competition is for high growth businesses. Competitors must be from the Southeast Community College District, excluding York and Lancaster County. Winners can receive a \$25,000 equity investment.
- 7) Community Spotlight:
 1. Two Dog Pond- Rachell Pozell – Two Dog Pond is a 5 year business of designing and creating jewelry. Her market strategy? Most of her accounts are on-line. She use Blog, ETSY and VistaPrint.com (prints free brochures and other marketing materials, shipping fees apply).
 2. STE Wireless – Mike Fehlhafer - STE Wireless is 10 year old broadband wireless service company in Utica. His company’s first antennae were placed on the local COOP elevator, which then provided fast internet service to the whole Utica School District. His company continues to add antennae to many communities’ COOP elevators. He can now offer 100 mg downloads and fiber optic to support 55 mg. Over 1,300 people in five counties are served – from north to Hwy 92, south to Saline County, east to Hwy 77 and west to Hwy 81. STE prefers to offer this service to towns of 1,000 or less population.

Next meeting will be hosted by John Yochum.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Lunch: Catered by Café on the Square

Presentation by Charlotte Narjes, UNL Center for Applied Rural Innovations, “Leveraging Technology for the Future (Broadband Planning).

2010 Meeting Schedule:

Jan/Feb/March: Host – Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D); Southeast Quadrant

April/May/June: Host – Pat Lentfer (Fillmore County); Southwest Quadrant

July/August/September: Host – Scott Willet (Nebraska Great Plains RC&D); Northwest Quadrant

October/November/December: Host - John Yochum; Northeast Quadrant

Respectfully,

Tammy Timms, Secretary