

South-East (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)

Minutes from SERN Meeting

June 7, 2011

Wheeler Inn – Auburn, NE

Hosted by Mary Kruger

Facilitated by Jen Olds

Present: Crystal Dunekacke (SEND); Mary Kruger (Nemaha County Tourism & Five Rivers RC&D); Doug Watts (Wahoo Economic Development), Kevin Burnison (SEND); Cassie Seagren (York Co. Development Corp.); Janice Stopak (USDA), Becky Ferrill (Black Hills Energy); Paula Rhian (Excel Development); Stephanie Shrader (Nebraska City Area Economic Development); Scott Kudrna (City of Auburn); Bobby Meints (Five Rivers RC&D); Corrinne Pedersen (NMPP Energy); Michael Foutch (Small Business Administration); Roger Meeks (USDA-RD); Dennis Kahl (UNL Extension); Emily Bausch (SEND); Steve Peregrine (NIFA); Janelle Moran (REAP); Shannon Chestnut (Village of Beaver Crossing); Beckie Cromer (Falls City/Richardson County Economic Development); Lydia Wiles (DED); Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County DC); Jen Olds (SEND); Sara Seidel (USDA-RD); Alan Richard (Pawnee City ED); Roberta Pinketon (OPPD)

Agenda Items:

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

Welcome: Jen Olds, SERN Chair, opened the meeting with expressing appreciation to Mary Kruger for setting up meeting location, speakers, and lunch. She noted that a “resource” table was set up and would be available during the afternoon local officials training. Members were encouraged to complete Roundtable Summary Sheet (new form) to ensure correct information about their business in SERN minutes. Lunch would be served at 11:30am for a cost of \$8.50.

Regular meeting:

a. Treasurer’s report – Current balance is: \$1,370.00. Printing and Mailing costs associated with the Local Elected Officials Training may be deducted from the balance after costs are compiled.

b. Minutes from March 9, 2011 meeting were accepted as presented.

c. Broadband Regional Forums – Mr. Dennis Kahl UNL Extension Educator presented an Update on the Southeast Region Broadband Forums held in April 2011. (SEE ATTACHED INFORMATION)

Roundtable Updates:

- 1. Mary Kruger – Nemaha County Tourism & Five Rivers RC&D:** In Auburn the new Veterans memorial is completed, everyone is encouraged to stop by and visit before they leave town.
- 2. Alan Richard – Pawnee County Development Corp:** CJ Foods in Pawnee City is expanding and will be the world’s largest meat processing plant. Pawnee City Revolving loan program is being used for storefront awnings and signs. An assisted living survey is being conducted in Pawnee City.
- 3. Pat Lentfer – Fillmore County Development Corp:** New Fillmore County Hospital building project is going well. Some discussion has started on how to market the old hospital. HOP (Homeowners Opportunity Program) has started and five applications are being processed. The Development Corp hosted an electronics recycling event on June 2, 2011. The 2010-2011 Odegeo Leadership for Fillmore County will graduate 17 participants on June 10th. Dr. Robert Dudley will be the speaker at the celebratory luncheon. Royalty Gifts has opened on 13th Street in Geneva. Dirt work has been started for a new Gambles – Do it Best in Geneva. There is also a specialty gun store opening in Exeter.
- 4. Becky Ferrill – Blackhills Energy:** Mary Simmons has been retired. Cheryl Brandenburg has been hired as the Economic Development Manager for BHE.
- 5. Doug Watts- Wahoo ED:** Wahoo is working with JEO Consulting group to develop a Virtual Building Site for the Lake Wanahoo Commercial Park. The 22-lot site next to Lake Wanahoo will be designed virtually with buildings best suited for the lake compatible businesses. Wahoo is progressing with plans to develop Chestnut Street north one mile from the city limits to Lake Wanahoo and future expressway. Wahoo is also raising funds for a 5 million dollar Softball Park.
- 6. Steve Kudma – Mayor of Auburn:** Aaron manufacturing is employing nearly 100 people in Auburn. Nemaha County Hospital has completed a 6 million dollar upgrade.

7. **Shannon Chestnut – Clerk Village of Beaver Crossing:** Beaver Crossing has a new restaurant in town and is looking into a Downtown Revitalization project for Façade and Lighting improvements.
8. **Roger Meeks – USDA:** USDA offers direct funding for Down Payment assistance in rural areas.
9. **Janice Stopak & Sara Seidel – USDA Rural Development:** USDA Community programs work with communities for projects such as: Fire Barns, Clinics, daycares, museums, libraries, streets, water system improvements, sewer, food pantries or farmers markets.
10. **Kevin Burnison – SENDD Humboldt:** SENDD has Downtown Revitalization projects underway in Falls City, Auburn and Tecumseh. Cook will be having an open house for its main street project.
11. **Michael Foutch- U.S. Small Business Administration:** The Rural lender Advantage loan program offer lenders (even in Omaha and Lincoln) a streamlined application for up to \$350,000 with a 75% or 85% guarantee, very helpful for banks without a big commercial loan department. The SBA continues to enjoy solid success with its loan numbers in the state to date in Fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2010 to present), with 367 loans approvals for small business (136 of them to rural business and 151 to start up) for \$118 million. As a direct result of this access to capital, these businesses are creating 1,633 new jobs. In the 1st congressional district alone this fiscal year, small businesses have been approved for 172 SBA – backed loans for \$47.4 million, creating 803 new jobs. SBA continues efforts to reach out to commercial lenders, offering training on our loan programs and personalized help for them to navigate through our paperwork with their potential deals.
12. **Jen Olds, SENDD:** SENDD continues to assist their membership of 15 Counties and 106 municipalities with Grant Administration and project development. Membership packets have been sent to communities and counties. SENDD is assisting several communities with Down payment assistance programs as well as owner occupied rehabilitation programs throughout the membership region. Siren Project has been bid out and installation of equipment and upgrades in 45 communities should begin in October 2011.
13. **Stephanie Shrader – NCAEDC:** There is a new building in Red Fox Run industrial Park in Nebraska City. NCAEDC hosted 2 trainings on “starting your business” with over 23 participants. NCAEDC has been busy with assisting business on the IOWA bottom side, with warehousing in Nebraska City due to flooding.
14. **Janelle Moran- REAP:** Reap continues to provide technical assistance with Business plan development, training and loans, reap now provides loans up to \$50,000. Locally, REAP has conducted Quick Books Training with Five Rivers RC&D: 2 in Tecumseh, 2 in Nebraska City, and 2 in Auburn
15. **Beckie Cromer – Fall City/ Richardson County ED:** A new Mexican Restaurant, a new Chiropractic Clinic and an Oxygen Supply company have recently opened in Falls City. Wilderness Falls housing development construction of 16 duplexes is beginning in July. Also a new master plan is being created for single family homes. The fiber optic project is moving along and Southeast Nebraska Career institute is doing well.
16. **Crystal Dunekacke – SENDD:** Discussed SENDD Membership and SENDD seeking NON-PROFIT Organization (NDO) status as an economic development tool.
17. **Emily Bausch – SENDD:** SENDD has recently conducted an inventory assessment of its membership in order to better identify individual membership needs. SENDD is examining the possibility of offering a Nuisance Code enforcement program.
18. **Corrinne Pedersen – NMPP Energy:** NMPP is working with the newly formed economic development corporation in Fairbury. Also NMPP is working with USDA-RD on Energy Efficiency Workshops in several Nebraska Networks.
19. **Bobbie Meints – Five Rivers RC&D:** Continuing to work with REAP on Quick Books Training throughout Southeast Nebraska. Five Rivers hosted 21st Century Grazing Conferencing featuring Greg Judy in Tecumseh on May 26-27, 2011. Five Rivers is preparing for the 9th Annual Small –Scale Commercial Wine School in Nebraska City to be held in October 26-27, 2011. Also Five Rivers is hosting a pasture tour near Pawnee City, to help landowners identify and control sericea.
20. **Dennis Kahl- UNL Extension:** On June 16 Noon - 7pm at the Civic Center in Seward NE or online at www.sewardcountybusinessfair.com the Seward County Business fair will take place. Several Extension ESI camps have happened lately in Albion, Central City, Fall City, Wahoo, Schuyler, and Geneva, also conducting workshops on direct marketing on Main Street.
21. **Lydia Wiles – Nebraska Department of Economic Development:** The 1st Round of Housing Applications has been received and these applications are being scored in the next few weeks. The 2nd round of Owner Occupied Home Rehabilitation applications are due July 29, 2011.

- 22. Paula Rhian - Excel Development Group:** Excel is finishing construction on 16 senior units in Seward. Also Excel has completed 24 units in Waverly and is almost fully leased up. Funds have been awarded for a 16 unit senior project in Fall City, construction will start in July.
- 23. Cassie Seagren – York County Development Corporation:** York was recognized on May 6th at the Nebraska Diplomats Business and Industry Day for becoming an Economic Development Certified Community. McCool Junction will be hosting the Nebraska Cattleman's Ball next June and preparations are underway for that event. The Express Nebraska Truck Center at the York interchange official opened in March.
- 24. Steve Peregrine – Nebraska Investment Finance Authority:** NIFA announced the Nebraska Asset Modernization Initiative offering financial incentives to small Nebraska Manufactures who invest in updating their equipment or purchase new. Details at www.nifa.org
- 25. Roberta Pinketon –OPPD:** OPPD/NPPD and DED partner to have a Nebraska booth at the 2011 Windpower conference. The purpose is to recruit businesses involved in renewable energy.

Community/Business Spotlight:

Courthouse Square Bakery – Amber Kindman Mrs. Kindman discussed the process for a business starting up in a historic downtown building. She noted difficulties in presenting the idea to funding sources and banks of a bakery on street level and living in the seconded story. She discussed some of the commercial codes required to bring older building up to newer standards. Her specialty will be Artesian Breads and she brought samples of some of her bread and some brownie/cookie bites.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Lunch: Wheeler Inn, Auburn

Local Elected Officials Training was conducted after lunch.

3rd Quarter SERN meeting Saunders County/Wahoo Area – September 21, 2011

Minutes Prepared by
Emily Bausch - SENDD