

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)

Minutes from SERN Meeting

May 26, 2010

Milligan, NE

Facilitated by Jen Olds & Whitney Bumgarner

Present: Lydia Wiles (NE DED), Allison Hatch (NE DED), Whitney Bumgarner (NE DED), Monica Braun (REAP), Denise Ulman (Geneva), Jennifer Nelson (USDA – RD), Mary Johnson (FCDC), Patt Lentfer (FCDC), Kyle Svec (City of Geneva), Courtney Dunbar (Olssen Associates), Marcia White (Nebraska Community Foundation), Doug Friedli (Nebraska Community Foundation), Charlotte Narjes UNL CARI, Jen Olds (SENDD), Mary Simmons (Black Hills Energy), Alan Richard (Pawnee city Development Corp), Michael Foutch (SBA), Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D), Scott Willet (Great Plains RC&D), Pat Coldiron (Seward Chamber), Arlis Hohl (TCEDA), Gordy Fleming (City of Deshler), Rick Zubrod (Kirkham Michael Engineering), Kayla Schnuelle (NE Rural Initiative), John Yochum (Cass County ED), Deb Craig (Dageforde Agency), Rosemary Dageforde (Dageforde Agency), Laurie Richards (Heritage Nebraska), Bob Peterson (Prairie Gold Homes).

Agenda Items:

Welcome by Pat Lentfer, meeting host. Lentfer noted that Evening with Friends Restaurant opened five years ago by Stephanie and John Nichols. Site used to be the town lumberyard and previous to that a mechanic garage. Several funding sources for this restaurant came from resource providers that are members of SERN and programs discussed at SERN meetings.

- 1) January 2010 Minutes: Minutes from the January 20, 2010 were reviewed. No changes recommended.
- 2) Treasurers Report: Account balance of \$1,414.99.
- 3) Google Group/Communication of Group: Jen Olds had set up a Google account to assist with communication of this group. Only 18 people had signed up. So the question was asked, is it a good tool? And how do we get people to use it? Who should be on the distribution lists? After some discussion, it was decided to cancel the Google group and use regular email distribution lists to communicate. Discussion continued on why attend SERN meetings. It is important to find out about local projects – when we visit an area we should learn about a project that community has worked on and completed and how was this accomplished. Towns visited should also be invited to discuss issues they are trying to solve, as someone in SERN may be able to help them. Meetings could also offer Business Forums – area businesses can ask questions to the panel of Resource Providers in a friendly, open discussion setting.
- 4) SBA Programs (Michael Foutch): The US Small Business Administration and its nationwide network of partners help millions of potential and current small business owners start, grow, and succeed. Most don't realize that SBA is available to small communities! SBA offers help with: starting a business, financing a business, growing a business, opportunities in contracting, recovery from disaster, and a voice for small business in government. Financial assistance is available for new or existing businesses through guaranteed loans made by the area bank and non-bank lenders. To learn more about SBA's loan programs, a ½ hour podcast is available on CD free of charge. SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), offers expert advice to help businesses succeed. Contact Michael Foutch at 402-221-7211 or Michael.foutch@sba.gov for more information on all the loan programs and assistance available to small businesses.
- 5) Roundtable Updates:
Willet, Great Plains RC&D– Looking for funding assistance for Polk Nebraska Legion Club building – to be rejuvenated or build new. Jen Olds with SENDD offered to contact the Village to identify funding possibilities.

Seward County Cleanup Day brought in 17,200#'s of electronics and 6 rolloffs full of appliances and mowers.

Timms, Five Rivers RC&D– Surveys of elected officials in the towns of eight counties have been sent out. About 33% of the 63 towns contacted have responded. Results will be shared with the SERN group at the next meeting. Five Rivers will be posting a hiring notice for a new Program Support Assistant soon.

Kyle Svec, City Administrator, Geneva – Geneva has two new CDBG grants. The first, the downtown revitalization project, is in the second phase to implement improvements. The second is for a feasibility study for the Senior Center. Geneva will be getting a new logo (brand). LB840 has been terrific for the town! Eight families are being assisted with home improvements through the CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Richard, Pawnee City Dev. Corp – A VFW/USDA project has provided funding to tear down an old house and replace with a much needed parking lot.

Simmons, Black Hills Energy – The SE Nebraska Economic Development Summit will be June 16th at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. Guest speaker to the summit, Rebecca Ryan, will give a thoughtful presentation on gender/age interaction. A new brochure to market BHE Economic Development Programs has been developed, copies were distributed during the meeting.

Olds, SENDD – SENDD serves 15 member counties in SE Nebraska with grant writing, grant administration and planning. The 15-County membership has officially received Economic Development District Designation from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Crystal Dunekacke is a new SENDD employee in the Humboldt office, and Craig Eberle has returned to the SENDD Lincoln office. An application has been submitted to EDA for new emergency warning systems (sirens and upgrades) for 45 communities in 14 counties of Southeast Nebraska.

Narjes, UNL CARI – PRN survey results for broadband access will be reviewed on June 1. A summary of survey results from several CARI surveys was presented including: A Statewide Broadband Plan, Internet Connectivity, Business Survey, etc.

Friedli & White, NE Community Foundation – NE Community Foundation encourages communities to capture the transfer of wealth by setting up foundations. Shickley is the most recent town to create a foundation.

Wiles, NE DED – DED has accepted housing applications for down payment assistance. Interviews will be in June. Community Block Grant re-certification training is being delivered in Lincoln the week of May 24.

Bumgarner, NE DED – Tim O'Brien is working with Carla Patterson on developing the statewide Targeting curriculum. Plan to be completed in July. At the NEDA Conference, Richard Baier announced the Dual Rail Initiative. DED is continuing to work on Synchronist and add data from completed business surveys.

Brown, REAP – REAP has conducted a small business survey with the assistance of UNK. Market Place 2011 is scheduled for February 22-23 at the Ramada Inn in Kearney.

Peterson, Nebraska Housing Resource Inc./Prairie Gold Homes – Bar None Homes will be renamed Prairie Gold Homes, a newly developed non-profit.

Nelson, USDA RD – Rural Development will be accepting applications for the Energy Program until June 30. This program assists businesses and farmers with energy efficiency projects with 25% funding.

Hohl, TCEDA – The Watchable Wildlife National Convention will be in Kearney in October. Excellent opportunity for Nebraskans to learn about the economic opportunities wildlife can provide Nebraska. SENTC needs representation from all counties to encourage tourism to Southeast Nebraska. Lancaster County has asked to become members of SENTC. Hohl attended a Lead-based Paint workshop in Beatrice, new certification requirements are out from EPA for persons completing work on homes built prior to 1978. Former cheese plant in Hebron is for sale.

Lentfer, FCDC – Fillmore County has found the CDBG program to be very beneficial, currently applying for a homeownership program in Fillmore County. Bargains on the Byway (Scenic Byway- Highway 136) will be June 11-12.

Schnuelle, UNL Rural Initiative – Promotion of the Local Foods – Farm to School Project continues. Will be creating a Statewide Connecting Young Professionals group, geared toward those 30 years of age and under.

Richards, Heritage Nebraska – Richards is the Eastern Nebraska field representative for Heritage Nebraska. Currently, efforts are being made to preserve the 1913 Industrial Arts Building located at the former State Fair Park in Lincoln.

Yochum, Cass County Economic Development – Cass County is excited to host the 4th quarter SERN meeting sometime in October or November. Recently, they joined the state in using the Synchronist business survey system. Yochum mentioned he is still learning the unique differences in the 15 communities he serves.

Gordy Flemming – Deshler, trail committee working on a recreational trail in town. The Community just finished leadership curriculum provided by NCIP.

Rick Zubrod – Kirkham/Michael Engineering – Assisting communities statewide with civil engineering, design and construction engineering.

Courtney Dunbar – Olsson Associates – Dunbar has taken position for economic development. Olsson Associates employees more than 600, many services available.

Next meeting will be hosted by Scott Willet, Nebraska Great Plains RC&D.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Lunch: Evening With Friends Restaurant

Presentation by Brian Depew, Center for Rural Affairs, “Tapping into State and Federal Policies and Programs for Rural Development”.

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