

Tom Bliss to Lead SENDD

March 27, 2017 – Lincoln, NE

The Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND D) is pleased to announce Tom Bliss has been hired as the new Executive Director of SEND D.

Tom Bliss joins SEND D from his previous position as the Executive Director of Mo-Kan Regional Council in St. Joseph, Missouri. Mo-Kan Regional Council is a six county economic and community development program in northwest Missouri and northeast Kansas. The organization administers programs that include workforce development, Homeland Security, small business, as well as economic and community development programs. During his 14 year tenure, Bliss led Mo-Kan through significant growth, both in annual operating budget and reserves. Tom credits innovative programs and new partnerships with the organization's developmental success.

SEND D Board of Directors Chair Lisa Hurley from York County Development Corporation released the following statement: "On Thursday, March 16th, the Board of Directors voted unanimously for Tom to be our next director. He comes with high recommendations and a wealth of knowledge regarding federal programs, strong connections, and leadership skills. I would like to welcome Tom to the SEND D family, and am excited to have him start." Hurley continued with praise for SEND D staff, "I would also like to extend a thank you to Craig Eberle and the rest of the staff for their hard work during this transition period." SEND D Business Loan Officer Craig Eberle served as Interim Director during the interval preceding Tom's arrival.

Tom Bliss is eager to begin his leadership at SEND D. "I am very excited to be part of SEND D. The agency has a reputation across the Midwest as being a leader in economic and community development and housing. I truly appreciate the opportunity to help in this mission," Bliss stated.

Though Tom isn't originally from Nebraska, he does have local roots. "I have a lot of special memories of this region, because my dad was born here. As a kid, I always looked forward to visiting my grandmother who lived in Fairbury," he said.

In addition to his role at Mo-Kan, Tom Bliss has taken leadership roles in several organizations to promote economic development. He is currently serving on the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board of Directors. Tom has also held numerous positions with the Missouri Economic Development Council, Missouri's Department of Economic Development Broadband Committee, and Missouri Association of Councils of Governments (MACOG) among other organizations.

Prior professional experiences include serving as Assistant Director at Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments in Maryville, MO, along with additional positions in city administration, economic development, and community development. Tom Bliss has a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and a Master of Public Administration degree, both from Missouri State University.

Tom will relocate to Lincoln and begin his leadership of SEND D on April 17, 2017. The SEND D service area should anticipate seeing Tom visiting counties and communities as he introduces himself throughout the 15 county district. He said: "I genuinely look forward to working with each community to improve the quality of life and grow our economy."