

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)  
Minutes from SERN Meeting  
March 23, 2017  
Nebraska City, NE

Hosted by Dan Mauk, Nebraska City Area Economic Development  
Facilitated by Craig Eberle, SENDD

26 individuals were present for the business meeting including the following:

Todd Kirschenbaum (Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership), Pam Frana (Nebraska City Tourism and Commerce), Ray Ringlein (Senator Sasse), Walker Zulkoski (Gage Area Growth Enterprises), Marilyn Schlake (Nebraska Extension), Jennifer Serkiz (Cass County EDC), Roger McCullough (Program Director at Nebraska Business Development Center), Quinten Farley ( Nebraska Business Development Center), Rick Yoder (Nebraska Business Development Center), Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College Community College), Mary Johnson (Fillmore County Development), Sara Skinner ( Senator Fisher), Denise Jensen (Department of Corrections), Ryan Kramer (Unite – Fiber Optics), Dan Mauk (Nebraska City Area Economic Development Center), Cindy Meyer (SCC Nebraska City Learning Center), Dave Taladay (Taladay and Associates), Rex Nelsen ( UNL Extension-Kimmel Education and Research Center), Pat Lentfer (Fillmore County Development), Mike Nagle (UNL Extension Manufacturing), Janelle Moran (REAP), Monica Braun (REAP), Lonnie Dickson (Hanna:Keelan Associates), Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street), Crystal Dunekacke (SEND D), Craig Eberle (SEND D).

### **Welcome/Regular Business**

Called to order at 10:05 am by Craig Eberle, SERN Chair. Dan Mauk – Nebraska City Area Economic Development welcomed attendees to Nebraska City and summarized recent development projects in Nebraska City. Nebraska City’s Mayor Brian Bequette also provided a welcome and an overview of upcoming events in Nebraska City.

Craig Eberle then provided an initial orientation to everyone in attendance on the meeting agenda and format.

#### **A. Treasurers Report**

Chair Eberle directed the attendees to the treasurer’s report that was included in the meeting packet. The current balance in the general fund is \$1,144.10. The treasurers report was accepted as presented.

#### **B. Acceptance of Minutes**

Minutes from the previous SERN meeting (October 20, 2016) in Auburn were distributed with the meeting packet and posted on the SENDD website [www.sendd.org](http://www.sendd.org). No corrections were suggested from the attendees. The previous meeting minutes were accepted as written.

### C. Other Items

The next SERN Meeting will be held in June in Beatrice.

### **Round Table Updates – Resource Providers**

Todd Kirschenbaum – Seward – Creating new brand and logo for Seward County – new website on line soon. Quarterly door hangers – events of county on one side/ community on the other.

Pam Frana – NCTC – Arbor Day Celebration: Bloody Mary contest, Fox Center Event Space, time: TBA Guinness Record for Tree Hugging on Arbor Day – parade, home and garden show, craft fairs

Ray Ringlein – Senator Sasse – Constituent Services – Recent town hall of 600 people. Face of Nebraska on policy impacts being discussed in DC. Voice to send messages of Nebraskans to policy makers. Mobile office hours to help with local constituent services.

Walker Zulkoski – NGAGE – Attended NIFA – New housing study focus on housing efforts – Eclipse partnering with Homestead National Monument. Focusing on workforce issues – DOL/Dept. of Ed/DED looking for a job shadow for high school students with credit in manufacturing. Matrix is prepared to start program and a model to be used in other places.

Marilyn Schlake – Nebraska Extension – Marketing Hometown American in Seward County recently concluded. York County is underway. Program uses trained facilitators and study circles. Looking for fall and spring communities. Great Plains Community Scholarships or around \$1000 for paid programs. Entrepreneurial Communities Conference in McCook – Sessions in the business over 20 speakers presenting from NE and Great Plains states. Topics range from tourism, entertainment, broadband, etc. Handed out postcards. Community Development Certificate – Non-credit certificate graduate program. Looking for focus group volunteers – Wednesday, March 29, Thursday, March 30 to contribute ideas for ED professionals.

Jennifer Serkiz – Cass County EDC – New to the role. Site development – working to seek shovel ready sites. Greater Omaha partnership – Career Rocket – Keeping talent in the region – April 1-8, a week long job shadowing event. K-12 students with a goal of 10,000 experiences that have been accomplished. Students in businesses, businesses in classrooms, etc. – First year.

Roger McCullough – NBDC – PTAC – Duns/Sam/Market research – Offices in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney and Wayne. Free services – funded by defense and logistics agency.

Quinten Farley – NBDC – Replacing Roger upon retirement next week. DUNS/Sam.gov for contracts. Greet the Buyer - May 17 in Lincoln to meet procurement office from State of NE and City of Lincoln.

Rick Yoder – NBDC – The Pollution Prevention Regional Information Center (PLRIC) is working with Keep Cass County Beautiful (KCCB) on a USDA funded project to create a Green Business effort for Cass County. Expected results: distinctive branding, energy efficiency, money saved. PZRIC providing similar service to Great Plains Ecotourism. Also developing a grant proposal for multi-state Missouri River Bicycle Trail. If interested, please contact. Also – looking for energy policy partners/collaborators for grant funding.

Marguerite Himmelberg – Southeast Community College Community College – Gap Assistance Program is a new financial aid program for low-income students who take non-credit community college courses higher education. Board will be reviewing proposed projects later this month; Implementation based on Board approval would likely be sometime in the 2017-18 year.

- Proactive approach to Legislative Session. Provided Community College Facts Sheet that shows Nebraska Community Colleges granted 65,000 awards in a 10-year period (2005-06/2014-15); most in Trades, Health or Academic Transfer. 92% of students remain in Nebraska upon completing their educational goals.
- 3 Learning Centers now operational offering both credit and non-credit courses; Hebron Center open soon; land purchased in Falls City where we plan to build a center. All six Learning Center coordinators have been hired and are working in their communities.

78% increase in dual credit and SENCAP 2012-13 to 2015-16. Reduced all dual-credit and SENCAP courses to half tuition.

Sara Skinner – Deb Fisher’s Lincoln Office – Fed Bonuses/Water Bill/Strong Families pilot program – tax credit for hourly employees for child/parent employed by small businesses. Transparency with treasury payments. Consumer final protection Board – supported by community bank. Armed Services Committee. Commerce, Science and Transportation committee – chair of surface subcommittee. Environment and Public Works – Rules Committee. Continuing to meet with people in listening sessions throughout the state. 5 offices throughout the state for services. Keep local office hours to make available in every county in the state.

Denise Jensen – Department of Corrections – Agency Recruiter – Average stay of inmates in Nebraska is 2 years. 1% is maximum. Community Corrections are employable and are paid minimum wage. Looking for second chance. Over 100 different programs to help with rehab, but it takes people to run those programs.

Ryan Kramer – Unite – Fiber Optics. Heavy presence of fiber in SE NE. Cox Communications owns majority share – investment to continue installation and increase the rural network.

Dan Mauk – NCAEDC – Town hall tonight to talk about TIF. Holiday Inn Express. New Blight map with HK. Previous blight map missing sites that needed development. Previous map included out to the middle of the river – added 206

acres. 2 LITEC 30 units near mall, 28 units for senior need Ambassador Nursing Home. Hosting Brownfield Training – SENDD to send out invite. Community Daycare in development. 190 in town current 161+ are full or near capacity. Ask employers hire – barrier to adding spaces. NIFA Handout – divide between Rural and Urban.

Cindy Meyer – SCC Neb City Learning Center – Regional focus. Need for credit classes in the community. Serves a 35 mile radius – help to provide classes within half an hour in the 15 county region. Use distance learning to connect classes within the network. Hybrid classes to meet in person and online. 3 classes in Neb City – 1 with a face to face instructor. Local class can save 40 hours of travel time plus expenses. Available nights and weekends.

Dave Taladay – Taladay and Associates – Consulting work in ED and CD. Kearney Hill story - CDBG street/housing in 1984. Recent strategy planning – streets Kearney Hill Road only 34 years later.

Rex Nelsen – UNL Extension-Kimmel Education and Research Center – Social Media/Marketing – Rural Futures has resources to do community engagement training coaching and long term strategic planning. Prospecting for other communities for pilot program.

Pat Lentfer – Fillmore County Development – Construction throughout County. Beavers Dairy becoming a state of the art dairy – opening spring as a family farm dairy. Fortigen Geneva LLC. construction is in full swing and the production of nitrogen will start the fall of 2017. Milligan Convenience Store started construction. Flint Hills Resources – expansion using new technology. The plant will produce a high protein animal and fish feed ingredient from a portion of the plant's distiller grains. Construction starting soon. FCDC regional job fair – student and worker components. Household hazardous waste collection being hosted by Fillmore County on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Shickley had a new grocery store and bakery open their doors on March 8<sup>th</sup> -5 Loaves Market & Bakery. Shickley Tech Net – program, repairs computers opened in February. Sowing Seeds Daycare, largest daycare in Geneva – efforts of a church to open a new daycare will have capacity of 100.

Mike Nagle – UNL Extension Manufacturing – Working with Jason Esser for Stronger Economies Together for manufacturing summit in Nebraska City on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership is working with small to medium sized manufacturers. We work closely with the Food Processing Center of Nebraska Innovation Campus.

Janelle Moran – REAP – State-wide program – Janelle covers 14 counties to micro businesses 10 employees or smaller to help business development with micro lending (stand along or package) and business plans.

Monica Braun – REAP – Women’s Business Center – Training - Partner with NGAGE for 5:00 pm event. Pilot program for female entrepreneur with a first time curriculum. April 12<sup>th</sup> – GI Women Ent conference.

Lonnie Dickson - Hanna:Keelan Associates – Planning firm – visioning and strategy planning for state/federal programs. Also do housing studies, county and community specific. 3 county area in western NE – workforce housing components. Redevelopment planning, blight and substandard. DTR – façade improvement and historic tax credits.

Jim Ulrich – Plattsmouth Main Street – DTR Housing is developing gradually with 8 units in planning/construction. 2<sup>nd</sup> story office building are expanding into the upper levels. River Front Development Project is nearing completion with route through Main Street. New events – June 24<sup>th</sup> Food Truck War.

Crystal Dunekacke – SENDD – SENDD services in Humboldt – Rural Case Study.

Craig Eberle – SENDD – April 17<sup>th</sup> – Tom Bliss from Mo-Kan Regional Council in St. Joseph, MO. will be new Executive Director. Spent previous 14 years as Executive Director with outside the box thinking. Press release to come this week. NC CDBG project summary. CDBG – past 4 years – \$8 million in CDBG and almost \$5 million in local match/leverage. EDA – 7 years – 5.2 million of public funds, 22 million of private for 27 million impact. 500 jobs created or retained as a result.

Jen Olds – Peter Kiewit Foundation (via e-mail) – Grant application deadlines and website information. <http://www.peterkiewitfoundation.org/for-grantseekers/application-process> - Application Deadlines for 2017: April 15, July 15, October 15. If anyone has an Economic Development project they are seeking grant funding for, they can contact me to see if an application is warranted. I’m interested in learning about projects/programs that will assist regions to grow meaningful wage jobs, assist people with low incomes to find work, and workforce development/job training types of projects.

### **SET Program – Marilyn Schlake and Dan Mauk**

Five counties – UDSA RD and Southern Rural Development in Mississippi State and Perdue. Purpose to develop an economic development plan for 5 counties. 5K to implement 4 teams. Entrepreneurship group – Educator Workshop in June 1 at Peru State College – Brett Comstock is Keynote. Business teachers/counselors to learn about entrepreneurship resources/education. April 11 Manufacturing Summit with largest employers in the SET region. C level and governor invited. Session on workforce issues. Workforce group will use information from summit to help drive future activities for manufacturing sector. Looking to use US Chamber model. Auburn afterschool received grant for maker space to partner school/city/Ariens to create workforce program. Housing brochure for counties. Cultural tourism – hospitality training. Survey prepped for Peru State College students to deliver.

**Community & Business Spotlights – Amy Allgood – Nebraska City Tourism & Commerce**

Nebraska City Developing – Replacing closed businesses. Restaurants opening up in sites of previously closed restaurants. Nebraska City 150 Events. 7 regular events – Added another 7 for 150. Farm to Fork - Day prior to the Eclipse. Event at airport for Eclipse. Riverboat. Steam Boat Trace / Grand Fondo – 44 mile bike race to Brownville with events in each town along the way. Charter bus to take people from town to town with banquet the night before.

**Lunch**

William Heng – Prairie City ChopHouse

SERN Business Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

**Feature Presentation and Tour**

Meeting concluded with a tour of the Arbor Day Farm Tree Adventure