

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)  
Minutes from SERN Meeting  
March 12, 2015  
Milford, NE

Hosted by Jonathan Jank, Seward County Economic Development Corporation  
Facilitated by Jen Olds, SENDD

42 individuals were present for the business meeting including the following: Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Women's Business Center), Laurie Richards (Nebraska Film Office), Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation), Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln/Bradshaw), Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln), Kevin Hagenmoser (Nebraska Enterprise Fund), Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College), Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development), Paula Rhian (Excel Development Corporation), Marilyn Schlake (Nebraska Extension), Craig Vincent (Nebraska Public Power District), Jeff Baker (Seward County Economic Development Corp.), Linda Black (Nebraska Department of Economic Development), Jason Bousquet (Nebraska Business Development Center), Cheryl Brandenburgh (Black Hills Energy), Deb Eggleston (Nebraska Department of Economic Development), Mike Flyr (Jones Bank & Trust/Seward County Economic Development Corp.), Michael Foutch (Small Business Administration), Peggy Galloway (McBattas Companies d/b/a MSA Brand Products), Brenda Hicks-Sorensen (Nebraska Department of Economic Development), Bob Jones (Nebraska Department of Economic Development), Dennis Kahl (Nebraska Extension), Shawn Kaskie (UNK – Center for Rural Research and Development), Ed Koster (Southeast Community College), Pat Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation), Charles Lieske (Seward Area Chamber of Commerce), Glennis McClure (NGAGE), Maxine Moul (USDA-RD), Kaylin Nerverve (USDA-RD), Tim O'Brien (Omaha Public Power District), Ken Reinsch (Southeast Community College), Scott Kahler (Southeast Community College), Kathi Schildt (Advanced Association Management), Stephanie Shrader (Nebraska City Area Economic Development Corporation), Sarah Skinner (U.S. Senator Deb Fischer), Griselda Rendon (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project), Ryan Broker (U. S. Senator Ben Sasse), Bob Walters (Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership), Stacie Turnbull (Ag Career Academy), Tara Vaida (USDA-RD).

### **Welcome/Regular Business**

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 A.M. by Jen Olds, SERN Chair. Chair Olds welcomed attendees to the meeting. She then provided an initial orientation to everyone in attendance on the meeting agenda and format.

#### A. Welcome to Milford

Ed Koster, Director of Southeast Community College welcomed everyone to the Southeast Community College – Milford Campus. He discussed some of college's current initiatives, which included prioritizing a five year strategic plan, looking at expansion/new facilities, and putting in learning centers.

At this time, Chair Olds introduced Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, who is the recently appointed Director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and Maxine Moul, State Director of USDA-RD in Nebraska.

## B. Treasurers Report

Chair Olds directed everyone to the treasurer's report. The current balance in the SERN general fund is \$686.88. This includes payments for the elected officials training, as well as some receipt of sponsor checks for the training.

## C. Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes from the previous SERN meeting (November 5, 2014) are posted on the SENDD website [www.sendd.org](http://www.sendd.org). With no changes or corrections from the attendees, the previous meeting minutes were accepted as written.

## D. 2015 Quarterly Meeting Hosts / Schedule

Chair Olds directed everyone to the handout that included the quarterly meetings for the 2015 calendar year. The second quarter meeting will be in the Southeast quadrant and will be hosted by Beckie Cromer – Falls City EDGE. The third quarter meeting will be in the Southwest quadrant and will be hosted by Jeremy Voss – Thayer County Economic Development Alliance. The fourth quarter meeting will be held in the Northeast quadrant and will be hosted by Lisa Scheve – Cass County Economic Development Corporation.

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

*Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development)* – SCED is partnering on four upcoming events: 1. Tri-County Job Fair and Career Day – March 17, 2015 in York ([www.Tri-CountyJobFair.com](http://www.Tri-CountyJobFair.com)); 2. Southeast Nebraska Professional Development Seminar – March 25, 2015 in Seward; 3. Airing our Heroes Career Fair at Fort Riley, KS on April 22, 2015; 4. Bayer Crop Science North American Wheat Breeding Research Station grand opening on May 13, 2015 in Goehner. He needs resources for downtown revitalization efforts (please e-mail at [Director@SewardRegional.com](mailto:Director@SewardRegional.com)).

*Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College)* – President Dr. Paul Illich: 1. Finalizing 5 yr strategic plan with includes goals to promote enrollment growth; 2. Going through a facilities master planning process to asses all current facilities and well as potential learning sites. Welding classes in Falls City. Allied Health classes being held in Nebraska City & Falls City. Continuing education workshop scheduled in Brownville in July. Training on Leadership for Nebraska City employees. Traffic safety licensing – looking at online stop classes in Otoe County. Entrepreneurship Director is making his way around our service area.

*Craig Vincent (Nebraska Public Power District)* – NPPD provides support to communities in our service area with business recruitment, retention and preparedness. We do this through the development of marketing materials, assistance with BRE interviews, attendance at trade shows, support of specific recruitment or retention projects, and delivery of educational programs and strategic planning activities.

*Kevin Hagenmoser (Nebraska Enterprise Fund)* – Nebraska Enterprise Fund is a small business lender and technical assistance provider for the whole state of Nebraska. Lately his focus has been on funding transitions of small businesses from older rural Nebraskans to the young entrepreneurs in our communities. Interesting fact – recently 25% of NEF's loan inquires are from new entrepreneurs wanting to purchase a business owned by older, possibly retiring business owners.

*Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street)* – Mentioned the Riverfront Plattsmouth as a premier project in the community. Fourth annual summer music program to be held in Plattsmouth.

*Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street)* – Plattsmouth comprehensive plan has been updated and will go before City Council for approval. We are sponsoring two “Power Hour” sessions per month. The sessions feature 1-hour videos (30 total) by Roger Brooks Company addressing marketing, business development and branding. We are doing this to assist our business community in improving their businesses and economic situations.

*Marilyn Schlake (Nebraska Extension)* – Discussed the following two initiatives: 1. If funded, the University will be looking for rural counties wanting to work on a regional basis to develop a regional economic development plan based on industry clusters. More information will be available. 2. A new collaborative effort to address the business transition issue. Let her know if you are interested in joining the effort.

*Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Women’s Business Center)* – Upcoming activities include the following: 1. March 18, 2015 – Women’s Entrepreneurship Conference in Grand Island; 2. March 26, 2015 InnovateHER Challenge – Competition for innovative products/services that impact/empower women’s lives (application deadline is March 16); 3. April 16, 2015 – Marketing session in Plattsmouth; 4. April 29, 2015 – Marketing session in Seward; 5. May 5, 2015 – Marketing session in Beatrice; 6. April 21-22 – MarkeTECH Pre-Conference conference in Kearney.

*Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation)* – Tri-County Job Fair & Career Day to be held in York on March 17, 2015. Announced Pyramid Tarps & Repair, LLC as a new business to York. They have a few businesses for sale, including a meat locker and restaurants. York’s chamber director has resigned and the position is open. She is organizing a Lunch-and-Learn event in May for succession planning.

*Paula Rhian (Excel Development Corporation)* – We have submitted applications for low income housing tax credit projects in Falls City (14 units), Wahoo (15 units) and Lincoln (72 units). Rehabilitation of the President and Ambassador building in Lincoln is about 25% complete. LB 358 made it out of committee to standardize how low income housing tax credit properties are assessed.

*Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln)* – Mentioned LB 318 which is a bill that has been introduced at the legislature to provide funding for all Development Districts in the State of Nebraska to assist the Nebraska Department of Economic Development with programs, projects, communications, etc. Mike Champion recently started as a new Housing Rehabilitation Specialist with SENDD.

*Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln/Bradshaw)* – SEND, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation that has been designated as a Non-Profit Development Organization (NDO) by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. We are currently educating counties and municipalities with CDBG Program Income Reuse Funds about this program. SEND, Inc. has also been awarded new loan funds that will be available for small businesses in the 15 county area. SENDD continues to provide administration of two LB840 programs and twelve CDBG EDLF Reuse Loan Fund programs. Assisting many of these CDBG EDLF Reuse Loan funds are going through monitoring reviews at this time.

*Griselda Rendon (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project)* – New with REAP through the Center for Rural Affairs – Hispanic Business Center to help small businesses with small business loans up to \$50,000 for start-up, expansion, remodeling, etc. Also provide technical assistance through informational workshops and one-on-one assistance.

*Tara Vaida (USDA-Rural Development)* – She recently joined USDA-RD as a Program Specialist working out of the Norfolk office.

*Kaylin Neverve (USDA-Rural Development)* – Intern with USDA-RD working on marketing outreach.

*Tim O'Brien (Omaha Public Power District)* – OPPD has developed and approved three new rates that support economic development: 1. Economic Development Rate; 2. Green sponsorship (allows for renewable participation); 3. High Voltage rate for large new customers. Significant amount of new projects in Southeast Nebraska, most notable the NioCorp Niobium mine near Elk Creek.

*Glennis McClure (NGAGE)* – Engaged in ECAP project with UNL Extension and Rural Futures. Involved with Community Branding Project in Beatrice with school, chamber, main street, and the city. Doing a housing study in 2015. Recent strategic plan with assistance from Cheryl Brandenburg of Black Hills Energy and Keith Ellis of NPPD.

*Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corp.)* – Six additional assisted living units at Fairview Manor in Fairmont. Expansion at Heritage Crossings in Geneva – seven more assisted living units, and four independent living units as well as updates in the skilled nursing area. TouchStone Orthopedics had a ribbon cutting at the Fillmore County Hospital. Nick's Farm Store is adding a 8,000 square foot building and bean bins as they will now be a dealer for Golden Harvest seed. Rural Living Expo in Geneva had over 70 vendors and lots of traffic March 6 & 7. Fillmore County Barn Quilts were featured in the March/April edition of Nebraska Life magazine. The Odego Leadership for Fillmore County class is in its 7<sup>th</sup> month and will have an emphasis on agriculture during their March session. Tri-County Job Fair/Career Day to be held at the Holthus Convention Center in York on March 17, 2015. Fillmore County Supervisors made a resolution to become designated as a Livestock Friendly County. Fillmore County Hospital is building a Behavioral Health Unit. It will have 10 beds. Household Hazardous Waste Collection will be held on April 11, 2015.

*Stephanie Shrader (Nebraska City Area Economic Development Corp.)* – Recently completed Phase I of III of 1 gig fiber in Nebraska City. Lied Conference Center is undergoing a \$10 million renovation. Nebraska City working on new pool/tennis courts – will start this summer. ESI camp for middle schoolers being held July 6-10, 2015. Nebraska City is looking for a new City Administrator and City Clerk/Treasurer.

*Laurie Richards (Nebraska Film Office)* – Promote Nebraska to the media industry – commercial and feature, documentary, music video, reality TV. Mission is to encourage the hiring of a local crew. Educational 4 year university program & 2 year community college program – video and technical/web design, film making, production and writing, etc. Partner with Nebraska Film Association and the Mary Reipma Ross Media Arts Center at UNL. Currently an Omaha Film Festival is running through March 15 on films from around the world and writers conference (screenwriting) with the writer's theater. Diversify economy – huge impact. For example, Alexander Payne's "Nebraska" generated approximately \$1.4 million for the Madison County/Norfolk area.

*Brenda Hicks-Sorensen (Nebraska Department of Economic Development)* – Provided a general introduction. Initial areas of focus include incentive reviews, marketing plan, role in workforce development (expanded), trade missions, and developing Youth Talent Initiative.

*Jason Bousquet (Nebraska Business Development Center)* – He is a PTAC consultant with NBDC. He will be serving an expanded service area encompassing Cass, Clay, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnwon, Lancaster, Nemaha, Webster, Nuckolls, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York counties. He will best serve primary job providers interested in selling to the government. He is available for speaking opportunities on the topic of selling to the government.

*Michael Foutch (Small Business Administration)* – The SBA is pleased to report preliminary numbers on federal contracting dollars going to small businesses in Nebraska in FY 2014. While federal goals call for 23 percent of all contracting dollars go to small businesses in Nebraska, it looks like we have nearly doubled that goal. That is a testament not only to Nebraska firms out doing their competition around the country, but resources such as the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers around the State getting our small firms ready for the bidding process. Of more than \$1 billion in federal contracts going to Nebraska companies, almost half a billion went to small business. Small businesses in Nebraska also are getting access to capital, if the data from the first quarter of FY 2015 is anything to go by. The SBA approved 102 guaranteed loans, a 30 percent jump from the same time in the previous year. The \$28.4 million in volume helped these businesses create more than 400 new jobs, and helped keep almost 700 jobs on Nebraska payrolls. One reason for the bump in loans: the SBA eliminated up-front fees for borrowers for loans \$150,000 or less, saving small businesses \$2,500 in fees on a loan of that size. In fact, in the first quarter of FY 2015, the SBA approved 67 loans for \$150,000, a 70% jump of those small loan sizes from last year. New business owners were approved for 46% of these guaranteed loans. That out-paced the rest of our four-state region (Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri).

*Dennis Kahl (Nebraska Extension – Seward County)* – Planning entrepreneurship camps across the State of Nebraska. Get teams started, working closely with Seward, York, Johnson, Thayer, Nuckolls, Merrick and Dawes County this year. Part of ECAP team (Entrepreneurial Community Activation Process) in 8 communities. Remind of 3 grant entrepreneurial online free curriculums. E-tailing marketing, agritourism, online and direct marketing of food specialty products. Foundation of Facilitation – Power of Business – Friday IS-Live Chats g+. Visit our new website [www.cvi.unl.edu](http://www.cvi.unl.edu).

*Shawn Kaskie (UNK – Center for Rural Research and Development)* – Professional opportunities are available (20+) in several Central Nebraska communities ([www.nebraskaruralsourcing.org](http://www.nebraskaruralsourcing.org)). Free business feasibility and economic impact analysis consultation available for any rural Nebraska entrepreneur, business, non-profit or local government. Income needs assessment surveys conducted in Nebraska City and Plattsmouth. Entrepreneurship Outreach Center has programs for all ages. [www.unk.edu/academies/crrd](http://www.unk.edu/academies/crrd).

*Linda Black (Nebraska Department of Economic Development)* – Industry Clusters – working closely with manufacturing, IT, bio and logistics companies. They all have similar needs: 1. Workforce/Labor; 2. Perception; 3. Housing. Also assisting with research and supply chain. Education is a critical partner – invite them to the table. Industries – revision program (<http://necareertours.com>).

*Deb Eggleston (Nebraska Department of Economic Development)* – Newest field staff member of DED. Map is currently being structures – no specific territory yet. Worked eight years as the Scribner Economic Development Director. Will be working with the LB840 program statewide in addition to business development focus. BR & E's are important and spur conversations that

need to happen to identify programs that can be of assistance to the businesses and their growth plans.

*Bob Jones (Nebraska Department of Economic Development)* – Housing Consultant for Southeast Nebraska with DED who works with the housing programs. Annual cycle applications – pre applications are due March 31, 2015. CDBG housing – focus group in Kearney. Held learning sessions and used feedback to change application process.

*Peggy Galloway (McBattas Companies d/b/a MSA Brand Products)* – Trying to re-build economic development, create jobs with industrial sewing, printing and packaging. Seeking expansion for all, need resources.

*Sarah Skinner (Lincoln Office of Senator Deb Fischer)* – Senator Fischer chairing a field hearing for Environmental and Public Works Comm. on Saturday, March 14 at 10:00 a.m. at UNL East Campus. The subject will be Waters of the U.S. Senator Fischer is an advisor (1 of 4) to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, chairs two sub committees: 1. Emerging Threats (Armed Services) and 2. Surface Transportation & Port Authority (Comm., Science and Transportation).

*Charles Lieske (Seward Area Chamber of Commerce)* – Mentioned the following events/activities: 1. Ag Recognition Banquet – March 16, 2015; 2. Spring Show – March 27-8, 2015; 3. Seward County clean-up day – April 4, 2015. Submitted a tire recycling grant. Working with Seward Area Development Corp. on a spec. development. Dark fibre is progressing.

*Stacy Turnbull (Ag Career Academy)* – Attending as a presenter for the Ag Career Academy.

*Cheryl Brandenburgh (Black Hills Energy)* – Discussed the following items: 1. Heartland Economic Development Basic ED course is full. Six are attending from Nebraska. 2. Testified in support for Development Districts on LB 318. 3. Bringing a program together with BNSF – information will come out soon. 4. Welcome back Jen from her surgery!! 5. Construction on our service building in Auburn. 6. Partner with Arbor Day Foundation – energy savings 1,500 trees.

*Mike Flyr (Jones National Bank & Trust/SCEDC)* – He echoed Jonathan Jank's update from SCEDC. He is a Commercial Loan Officer with Jones National Bank & Trust in Seward. Jones National Bank & Trust is a full service community bank offering commercial, agriculture and consumer loans, deposit services, trust and investments, and a full line of insurance. The bank has utilized micro-lending, SBA guarantees, TIF and LB840.

*Maxine Moul (USDA-RD)* – Multi-family housing video filmed at Linden Village in Milford. Have funding for farm labor housing – even for larger cities and towns. Direct loans for single family housing are currently at 3% interest. Taking applications for Rural Energy Assistance Program – April 20 and June 30 deadlines. Soon will have announcement for applications for Value Added Producer Grants. Have funding available for Community Facilities and Water + Wastewater. Recent funding projects in Crete, Brownville, Colon, Byron, Unadilla and Milligan. Have new positions – Pathways Interns. Hiring for staff in Central Nebraska and business programs in Norfolk.

*Robert Walters (Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership)* – NEMEP has transitioned to the University of Nebraska. We are growing. Currently seeking a knowledgeable manufacturing person to help sell and promote NEMEP. How may I help your manufacturers?

*Ryan Broker (U.S. Senator Ben Sasse)* He is the State Outreach Director for U.S. Senator Ben Sasse. In the process of connecting with constituents and connecting them with services that the office provides: assistance with government agencies, military academy nominations, flag requests, representation in the legislature, etc. Sign up to stay in touch with the senator and up to date on the issues affecting Nebraskans at [www.sasse.senate.gov](http://www.sasse.senate.gov).

## **Community and Business Spotlights**

### *Milford Community Update – Jeff Baker*

Jeff Baker is Chair of the Seward County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors. He mentioned SCC as being the best thing for Milford. Milford has a new community website that is up and running. Jeff stated that Milford is a community that has much to offer. LB 840 was implemented in Milford ten years ago. The amount of interest in the fund has increased substantially over the past few years. They have provided \$125,000 over the last three years to businesses in the community. They also have Tax Increment Financing available to businesses in the community.

Jeff highlighted some of the things that are going on in the community. They are in the process of upgrading some of their facilities. This includes improvements to the ball parks, scoreboards, swimming pool, etc. The Milford Foundation recently had an individual donate a large sum of money for a community development fund to promote the city. Funding is being injected into the library and senior center. Jeff stated that Milford's #1 issue is land and housing. They are land locked by the river. They are in need of housing development.

### *Ag Career Academy – Stacie Turnbull*

Stacie Turnbull provided the SERN group with some insight into the Ag Career Academy. This program involved both York and Seward Counties and the school districts of Centennial, Seward and York. This program provides hands-on classes to students in the agronomy industry. Students receive 20 credit hours for the course. The course includes industry and student interactions. Four different local agricultural companies are involved with the program. It is a rigorous course that ties science to the industry. There are currently 24 students enrolled in this one year program. Stacie provided a slide-show presentation for the group about the program.

### *Advance Association Management – Kathi Schildt*

Kathi Schildt is the President of Advance Association Management in Milford. She moved her association company to Milford, purchasing two downtown buildings. The buildings had severe grading problems. She completed gutted out the buildings, re-modeled them, added a kitchen, put in new bathrooms, and created more open space. The buildings now serve as a more functional workspace where they can facilitate meetings in house.

Advance Association Management (AAM) is a full-service association company that provides professional services to organizations of all sizes. The company helps associations with a wide range of services, including association management, financial management, event management, communications, website support and database management. AAM helps bring local, state and other resources to the community. AAM does in-house graphic design, and they also have an attorney on staff that does lobbying work.

**LUNCH – Southeast Community College (box lunch provided by SCC)**

**Adjourn SERN Business Meeting**

SERN Business Meeting was adjourned.

**Feature Presentation: Tour of Southeast Community College**

Ken Reinsch – Program Chair Electrical & Electromechanical Technology (SCC) & Scott Kahler – Program Chair Precision Machining & Automation Technology:

At this time, Ken Reinsch and Scott Kahler with Southeast Community College provided a brief overview of two educational programs at SCC. These programs are the Electrical & Electromechanical Technology program, and the Precision Machining & Automation Technology program. They then lead tours of these facilities for the SERN group.