

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)
Minutes from SERN Meeting
June 2, 2016
Geneva, NE

Hosted by Patt Lentfer, Fillmore County Development Corporation
Facilitated by Craig Eberle, SENDD

28 individuals were present for the business meeting including the following: Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College), Josh Sheffield (Nebraska Department of Labor – Beatrice), Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District – Lincoln/Bradshaw), Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project – Women’s Business Center), Rod Norrie (Mayor – City of Geneva), Lisa Hurley, (York County Development Corporation), Todd Kirshenbaum (Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership), Ed Koster (Southeast Community College), Cheryl Brandenburgh (Black Hills Energy), Marcus Ruhl (Fillmore County Hospital), Brandy VanDeWalle (Nebraska Extension), Melissa Nordlove (Nebraska Extension), Rex Nelson (Nebraska Extension), Dan Mauk (Nebraska City Area EDC), Rachel Pettid (Nebraska City Area EDC), Cassie Thornburg (Nebraska City Area EDC), Deb Eggleston (Nebraska Department of Economic Development), Bobbie Pettit (Nebraska Enterprise Fund), Rick Nelson (Nebraska Public Power District), Kyle Svec (Geneva City Administrator), Jason Rippe (Bioberica Nebraska), Sally Row (All Things Consignment), Dan Mauk (Nebraska City Area EDC), Mary Johnson, (Fillmore County Development Corporation), Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation), Meredith Emshoff (Fillmore County Development Corporation).

Welcome/Regular Business

Called to order at 10:15 A.M. by Craig Eberle, SERN Chair. Craig Eberle welcomed attendees to the Geneva VFW Hall. He 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 \$1,191.10. The treasurers report was accepted as presented.

B. Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes from the previous SERN meeting (February 18, 2016) in Plattsmouth were distributed with the meeting packet and posted on the SENDD website www.sendd.org. No corrections were suggested from the attendees. The previous meeting minutes were accepted as written.

C. Other Items

Chair Eberle informed the group that the next SERN meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 25th in York. The meeting will be held at York College, and include a tour of the Clayton Museum of Ancient History.

Welcome – Rod Norrie, Mayor of the City of Geneva

Rod Norrie welcomed everyone attending to the City of Geneva. The City is to begin construction later this summer on the new aquatic park. Several town hall meetings were

conducted about this project, with many of the young people in the community wanting a new water park. The water park is anticipated to be open in June of 2017. A lot of young people are moving back to the community. A new anhydrous ammonia plant is being built northeast of town. Fortigen, LLC is building the new facility. This plant will employ a significant number of people, as well as greatly increase the city's valuation. Fortigen, LLC is a top shelf business that will be a good partner with the City.

Welcome – Patt Lentfer, Fillmore County Development Corporation

Patt Lentfer is the Executive Director of the Fillmore County Development Corporation. She welcomed everyone to Geneva and the VFW Hall. She pointed out many of the things that are going on in Fillmore County. In Milligan, a new library and Village office opened in January. In Geneva, Fortigen, LLC anhydrous ammonia plant broke ground on March 11th. Construction has just begun on the plant. The plant will be open in the spring of 2017 and employ 25-30 people. A new county-wide housing study will be completed in June. Hanna:Keelan Associates did the study for Fillmore County. A Brown Bag workshop about “Bridging the Generation Gap” was held in February with Diane Siefkes presenting. Diane Siefkes also conducted an “Online Marketing Workshop” in May at the Geneva Public Library. This workshop was sponsored by REAP, SBA, FCDC and the Geneva Chamber of Commerce. Economic & Development Trend Study for Geneva, Fillmore County and the surrounding area was done by NPPD. A new housing development has started in Shickley. It will have 15 lots. Geneva will be starting a \$3.336 million pool project later this summer. Plans for completion of the pool are by the summer of 2017. In Exeter they are tearing down the old tag factory to clear for potential redevelopment. The community is also looking into new park equipment. Fairmont underwent a major downtown street improvement project.

Round Table Updates – Resource Providers & Community Updates

Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation) – Pellet Technology USA broke ground in late April. York County housing study is wrapping up. York's 8 ball field complex construction is ongoing. Teams will be playing on these new ball fields in 2017. Henderson has finished a complete re-construction of their Main Street. Two new subdivisions are in the planning stages (York & McCool Junction). Perks in Henderson is a new café that is opening soon.

Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College) – Learning Center Coordinators have been hired for York and Nebraska City. Interviews for Plattsmouth to be held next week, with the Falls City position advertisement just posted today. Hebron and Wahoo positions are next. Current activity in the area: part-time LPN class in Geneva; High School nurse aid class offered in Crete and Geneva annually. High School nurse aid class will also be offered in Fairbury this fall. Emergency Medical Responder and Advanced Cardiac Life Support offered in Crete this past year. Welding class is starting this fall in Deshler.

Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) – Branding and Wayfinding: have hired a consultant and are in the process of establishing a committee to work toward developing a brand for our community. Wayfinding is a concern that we will be working on improving. Upper Level Housing: projects in planning stages for CDBG DTR program funds. Include two for housing/business and one for housing. Other privately funded projects include a 2,000 square foot apartment and remodel of an existing apartment building into 6 new units.

Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Associations) – The summer music program will be starting this weekend. Live entertainment every weekend through October 5th. The new

campground is pending new vendor submission. Southeast Community College is locating on Main Street in downtown Plattsmouth. Construction is underway, with anticipation to be open October 1. River levels are fine at this time.

Cheryl Brandenburgh (Black Hills Energy) – Going to IFT food show in July in Chicago. If anyone is interested in attending please let her know. Continuing to focus on the web – web pages for sites and buildings. Businesses are being invited to regional meetings on changes for incentives. In our region Omaha and Lincoln are hosting these. Working in York County to see if we can serve natural gas. Attended Nebraska Business & Industry Day put on by the Nebraska Diplomats.

Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project – Women’s Business Center) – The REAP Women’s Business Center (REAP WBC) is collaborating with local organizations to offer the “Online Marketing Strategies” workshop. Wahoo Chamber of Commerce is hosting one of these workshops in Wahoo on July 12, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. at the Wahoo Public Library. The REAP WBC and Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership (SCC-DP) is collaborating with Union Bank & Trust to offer Metrics Matter – Using Numbers for Better Decision Making on June 7 in Seward at Union Bank & Trust at 7:30 a.m. UNL Extension in Seward County, SCC-DP and REAP WBC are holding an ESI camp for middle school youth from June 14-18, 2016 in Seward.

Ed Koster (Southeast Community College) – He is the Vice President of Technology – Milford Campus Director for Southeast Community College. SCC is in a transformational phase. They recently completed a strategic planning process, including a facilities master plan study. This process involved community workshops, surveys, public forums and planning sessions. Workforce development is a top priority in southeast Nebraska. Based on this feedback, the facilities assessment, and an independent needs analysis, the facilities master plan project includes the replacement and renovation of many of SCC’s campus facilities in Beatrice, Milford and Lincoln. This also includes the establishment of a new campus near downtown Lincoln. These construction projects could be paid for through general obligation bonds. They are moving forward on the preparation process to place the bond issue on the November 2016 ballot. They are working on informing people in the region about this potential bond issue.

Todd Kirshenbaum (Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership) – Formed a new county partnership combining chambers and economic development in Seward County. Submitted CDBG Downtown Revitalization grants for Seward and Milford. Cordova and Utica are hosting the first annual big blue mile shootout on June 4. Kitty Vacha from Tasteful Indulgence from Seward will be on Cake Wars.

Josh Sheffield (Nebraska Department of Labor – Beatrice) – We are continuing to host Operation EMPLOY (Employers Matching People to Long-Term Opportunities in your Community) every other month. This is a hiring event where we invite 12-15 employers and as many job seekers as we can find. Our current number has been 30-50 in attendance each time. Employer workshop where we discuss trends they are seeing in the labor force, then we take those trends and provide Job Seeker workshops to address some of the issues employers face. Talk through some ways to overcome the barriers, i.e. childcare, tardiness, and medical appointments. JDNEG (Job Driven National Emergency Grant) – Transportation, Manufacturing, Distribution and Logistics. Wage reimbursement for On the Job Training. Also training dollars for individuals to get trained in these specific fields. Also coming up on September 27, 2016 we have our annual event for high school students. Explore It! So if you know anyone who is passionate about their occupation, have them contact the Nebraska

Department of Labor in Beatrice, 402-223-6060, so they can get involved. New businesses in Beatrice: Landmark Snacks (beef jerky, processing); DaVita Dialysis Center; Barnhouse Guitars. Homestead Days is scheduled for June 13-19, 2016.

Kyle Svec (City of Geneva) – Discussed the new aquatic center in Geneva. New fertilizer plant locating in Geneva – started moving dirt. Estimating 30-35 new job positions, with close to 100 or so part-time positions during construction. Opportunities for the future include a new community center/senior center, as well as a new fire hall. A new housing development in town. Five houses have been built so far, within 5-6 years all of the lots could be snatched up. Another private developer has stepped in to construct larger homes (\$350,000-\$400,000). Mentioned new wrestling room at the high school, new Fillmore County Hospital building, new behavioral health center recently opened at the hospital. Someday he anticipates more growth out by the highway. There are a lot of nice businesses located downtown. Channel 10/11 featured Geneva as Our Town. Geneva was the first town under 5,000 population to be featured.

Dan Mauk (Nebraska City Area Economic Development) – LB840 in Nebraska City. Renewal effort in the community is underway. Will be up for vote in November. Rural Renaissance site selector event to be held August 24-26, 2016. To include five counties. Syracuse will get a new hospital thanks to a USDA-RD loan. Rapid response is underway for American Meter layoffs (40 jobs). New Nebraska City Aquatic Center is open. NCAEDC has two interns working with him this summer from the Rural Futures Institute.

Rachel Pettid (Nebraska City Area Economic Development) – Interning with NCAEDC this summer from the Rural Futures Institute. She is from Omaha. A senior at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is connecting with surrounding communities on branding efforts.

Cassie Thornburg (Nebraska City Area Economic Development) – Interning with NCAEDC this summer from the Rural Futures Institute. A senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studying food management and hospitality.

Brandy VanDeWalle (Nebraska Extension – Fillmore County) – Nebraska Extension has resources in almost any area imaginable. Working to address issues identified by stakeholders and working in interdisciplinary teams to address those items. Ramping up youth development programming even more and collaborations with other organizations.

Melissa Nordlove (Nebraska Extension – Fillmore County) – Currently a senior at UNL. Interning with the Nebraska Extension this summer. From North Bend.

Rex Nelson (Nebraska Extension – Nebraska City). In a new position with UNL Extension at the Kimmel Extension and Research Center in Nebraska City. Supporting business development in regional food systems, and also working with the UNL Community Vitality Initiative team which supports rural community development.

Rick Nelson (Nebraska Public Power District) – Recently completed an Economic & Demographic Trades Report for Geneva. Held successful Community Economic Development training (70+people) with Janet Ady/Ady Advantage. This training was co-sponsored with Black Hills Energy. Added Nicole Sedlacek to our staff as an Economic Development Specialist. Working with Rural Renaissance Group (NIFA, DLR, Great Plains Communications and First National – Omaha) to host Business Leader's Summit in August (Otoe, Nemaha, Richardson, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage). This is the second annual event—held in a different region each year.

Marcus Ruhle (Fillmore County Hospital) – He is the Patient Experience Liaison at Fillmore County Hospital. Also serves on the Fillmore County Development Corp. Board of Directors. Fillmore County Hospital has 150 employees. New Behavioral Health Center is open at the hospital. They have a full time orthopedic surgeon on staff.

Mary Johnson (Fillmore County Development Corporation) – Works with Patt Lentfer at FCDC. Attending this meeting to learn more about economic development issues in the region.

Meredith Emshoff (Fillmore County Development Corporation) – Interning with FCDC for the summer. Currently a junior at the University of Kansas. From Exeter.

Deb Eggleston (Department of Economic Development) – Works statewide with the LB840 program. LB 1059 will go into effect on July 21st. New business development manager at DED – Jason Guernsey. He would like to tour communities/businesses in the area. Contact her to set up and coordinate schedules. BRE's completed in Lincoln. Let her know – she is happy to work with your communities. Governor's Economic Development Summit to be held July 12, 2016 at the Cornhusker Marriott in Lincoln. There are 260 registered. Rooms are available at the Cornhusker Marriott, deadline is June 20th.

Bobbi Pettit (Nebraska Enterprise Fund) – She was recently hired on March 1 as the Director of Business Development for Greater Nebraska. Brought on by NEF to reach more businesses across Nebraska. Bobbi is located in Kearney and is working to reach more businesses and also working to develop partnerships with other business support and funding agencies.

Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District – Lincoln/Bradshaw) – SENDD staff are busy writing grant applications for counties/communities. Recently submitted NAHTF housing applications for Fillmore County and Thayer County. Also submitted four CDBG Downtown Revitalization applications to DED on May 31. SENDD is currently working with communities on public works, planning and owner-occupied rehabilitation applications to be submitted later this summer. SENDD has loan funds available for small businesses, as well as providing technical assistance to new and expanding businesses in the 15 county area. SENDD provides administration of fourteen CDBG Reuse, LB840 and USDA-RD REDLG loan programs. SENDD staff have started work on their Certified Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). This is due to the Economic Development Administration by June 30, 2017. We will be contacting counties and communities to set up regional meetings to obtain input in developing the CEDs.

Community and Business Spotlights

Jason Rippe, Bioberica Nebraska, Inc.

Jason Rippe is the Manager of Bioberica Nebraska and Bio-Tee, USA in Geneva. Bio-Tee, USA began production of heparin in 2009. Heparin is extracted from pig intestines. It is an essential medicine, #2 behind penicillin. They are the largest non-Chinese producer of heparin. There is growing demand for a traceable product. They produce the raw material for heparin in a safe and controlled environment. There are some by-products as a result of this process that can be used in bio-fuels applications and plant health products.

Bioberica Nebraska started production of chondroitin sulfate in 2001. Chondroitin sulfate is a dietary supplement. Bioberica Nebraska processes most products into an intermediate state. Their parent company is in Spain. The company recently bought a new plant in Iowa. The local plants employ 12 people in Geneva. There are around 370 people employed globally. It is a

capital intensive business. Worked with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development originally to locate in Geneva. He feels they are in a good position located here in Geneva.

Sally Row, All Things Consignment

Sally and her husband purchased a building across from the Fillmore County courthouse in 2015. The building includes an upstairs apartment that is rented out. Last November she started a non-profit business out of this location called All Things Consignment. Items sold in the store are unique things with character. She currently has about 90 consigners. Currently constructing a stage for live band performances. Two ladies are employed to work at the store, not including herself. There are three different types of consignment arrangements. Proceeds from some of the sales go to support youth ministry at her church.

LUNCH – Geneva VFW Hall

Adjourn SERN Business Meeting

SERN Business Meeting was adjourned.

Feature Presentation: Karla Wilcox – Making a Better and More Productive Workplace

Karla Wilcox is the Furniture Product Manager at Eakes Office Solutions. She works out of the corporate office in Grand Island, NE. Karla has been in this position for 3 years, but has been in the furniture industry for 12 years. She was accompanied by Rob Lloyd, Furniture Specialist with Eakes Office Solutions out of Hastings. She delivered a power point presentation on making your office a better and more productive workplace.

She started with an open dialogue on what people feel makes them more or less productive during the workday. She stated that the success of businesses today depends on the health, well-being and engagement of employees. There are four types of employees: Actively Engaged; Engaged, Dis-engaged and Actively Disengaged. Karla then pointed out ways to make your workspace better. Some of these included making the workspace attractive and comfortable to you, minimizing clutter, and establishing uninterrupted periods. She continued by discussing tips on making your workday more productive. Handouts were distributed including a workstation checklist, as well as correct sitting posture. Discussion on office desk and chair set-up for proper seating ergonomics took place.