

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)
Minutes from SERN Meeting
March 19, 2013
Nebraska City
Hosted by Stephine Shcrader
Facilitated by Jen Olds

Present: 28 individuals were present for business meeting as follows: Dave Hahn (Nebraska Information Network), Amy Vrtiska (Olsson's Associates), Ray Ringland (Senator Johanns Office), Ron Schiedner (Southeast Community College), Vick Huddleston (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Jim Ulrich (President Plattsmouth Main Street), Becky Whitehead (Blackhills Energy), Nick Harding (First National Bank Fall City), Brenda Bowman (First National Bank Fall City), Wendy Warner (Excel Development Group), Michael Foutch (U.S. Small Business Administration), Becky Cromer (Fall City Edge), Alan Richards (Pawnee City Development Corporation), Becky Hanna (Hanna Keelan Associates), Robin Ambroz (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority NIFA), Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District SENDD), Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD), Emily Bausch (Southeast Nebraska Development District SENDD), Lisa Beethe (Southeast Nebraska Development District SENDD Humboldt) Lori Richards (Nebraska Film Officer), Keith Ellis (NPPD), Lynn Kohout (Nebraska Department of Economic Development NEDED), Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development Corporation), Steve Peregrine (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority NIFA), Paula Rhian (Excel Development), Maxine Moul (USDA Rural Development), Jeanne Hain Wiemer (President Seward Artisans & Craftsmen Guild & Secretary Nebraska Association of Bed & Breakfast), Stephanie Schrader (Nebraska City Area Economic Development Corporation)

Called to order at 10:04am by Jen Olds chair of SERN. Jen welcomed attendees to the Plattsmouth State Bank in Downtown Plattsmouth. Host of SERN Stephanie Schrader welcome members to Nebraska City and introduced Joe Johnson City Administrator. Joe Johnson also welcome and discussion on broadband communities and sharing information.

SERN is a regional group, resource providers working to connect with communities. Meetings are held quarterly in different areas of the areas. This is the first meeting of 2013.

- a. Treasures Report – No changes in the treasury, begin and ending balance is \$1,072.99. No receipts or expenditure. Looking for a strategic planning activity such as the local elected
- b. Minutes of the Sept 20, 2012 and Nov. 6, 2012 Quarterly meeting were approved as presented on the SENDD website www.sendd.org.
- c. 2013 Meeting Schedule
 1. Beckie Cromer- Fall City Edge June 19, 2013
 2. Jonathan Jank Seward County ED– August 21, 2013
 3. Hebron – November 6, 2013
- d. LinkedIn has a group called Partnership for Rural Nebraska which is professional social network.

Maxine Moule USDA Rural State Director – Partnership for rural Nebraska can work together for the statewide networks. There are Revolving Loan Fund USDA- Intermediary Revolving Loan

Funds for rural business loaning. USDA is funding and teaching “best practices” via webinars. Loan Programs: IRP, RBEF, REDLEG, RMAP. Intermediary 1% interest for 30 years maximum loan is 1 million. Currently there is \$300 Million available to lend.

REDLG – Rural Economic Development Loan is Grant 0% interest loans to eligible utilities including – Nebraska City, Fairbury, Fall City, Auburn, Beatrice to make loans to hospitals, colleges, schools in the area. It can be loaned out, repaid, and then re-loaned. RMAP – Rural Microentrepreneur Assistant Program was also discussed. Funds currently available; IRP – \$32 million, RBEG \$1million, and REDL \$6million. The goal for USDA is growing business even on the smallest level.

ROUND TABLE Updates began at 10:34AM

Dave Hahn (Nebraska Information Network) – Nebraska Information Network (NIN) is a non-profit organization funded by 20 independent Telephone Companies across the state. NIN promotes Broadband Technologies, Ethernet and Economic Development in the state. NIN also works with Distance Learning and Tele-health applications.

Amy Vrtiska (Olsson’s Associates) – OA is working on marketing and growing hazard mitigation planning and assistance across the state recently Hayes, Frontier, & Hitchcock Counties.

Ray Ringland (Senator Johanns Office) – Senator Johanns term will end in 2 year and until then no change in the engagement of the Senator and his staff “Full speed ahead”. The Senator’s office has a grant specialist available to support grant seekers on applications.

Ron Schiedner (Southeast Community College) – Southeast Community College placement report for July 2011-June 2012 for programs, graduates, and where they are hired was distributed. The report shows where the students are working for in from each program of study. The Study also shows employers of the trade and salary range. On May 10, 2012 in the Gallup Building there was “Leadercast” conference.

Vick Huddleston (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) - Starting in April the Entertainment plaza will be opening. New public art project monument in courthouse yard, information can be found on the main street website. The group recently held the awards banquet for Main Street activities in 2012. Main Street is looking for grants and small business loans, the organization has several projects in the works and individuals that would like to start businesses on Main Street and like most people are looking for funding and direction. We are working on a branding project with the City of Plattsmouth for marketing.

Jim Ulrich (President Plattsmouth Main Street) – The Façade improvement projects have 1 completed, 2 under construction and 6 underway. Main Street is working on developing upper level housing for the downtown area. Currently, planning events for the in entertainment plaza. Main Street is also working with the City of Plattsmouth on developing a marketing campaign “Jewel of the Platte”.

Becky Whitehead (Blackhills Energy) – BHE weatherization program is a program that provides assistance to low-income and elder to help do small clean-up, furnace inspections, and energy audits, caulking windows and other weatherization projects. If you know anyone in your community that would benefit from this FREE program, please Contact Cheryl Brandenburg at 402-437-1850.

Nick Harding & Brenda Bowman (First National Bank Fall City) – First National Bank is working with individuals and business for loans that are outside the box.

Wendy Warner (Excel Development Group) – Excel is a developer, builder, manager of housing in 3 states. Excel utilizes various funding sources including state, LIHR & FHLB. Wendy is the supportive Services Director responsible for implementing the supportive services for 40 projects. These include Sr. & family rental projects, as well as rent to own. Some examples of services would include home health care to financial and credit counseling. Wendy has been almost a year and has been working to develop a database of supportive services in the states that Excel owns & manages properties. Excel is looking for new topics and partners.

Michael Foutch (U.S. Small Business Administration) - Small businesses in Nebraska Continue to get access to capital through the SBA - \$156 million in Fiscal 2012, the second – largest loan volume in our states history. In the first quarter of FY 2013, \$32 million has gone to small business owners, and 40% of that went to start ups. With that financing, 450 new jobs are being created and 700 jobs are being kept on payrolls. We have also learned from 2010 to 2011 self-employment in Nebraska grew 7.9%, and that small businesses provided slightly more than HALF of all jobs in the state. PWO important SBA loan programs we want to highlight: CAPLines, giving contracting businesses up to \$5 million in working capital to perform the work, and small Loan Advantage, which offers guaranteed financing for projects up to \$350,000, even to lenders with no previous experience doing SBA loans.

Becky Cromer (Fall City Edge) – Fall City is working on a \$23million BNSF project. Fall City Phase II Downtown rehabilitation program (DTR) is complete.

Alan Richards (Pawnee City Development Corporation) – Pawnee City is working on a Downtown Façade improvement project.

Becky Hanna (Hanna Keelan Associates) – HannaKeelen has started working on a Housing/planning project in Seward and Knox counties. Becky is promoting Nebraska Housing Developers association membership, golf tournament 9/17/13.

Robin Ambroz (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority NIFA) – NIFA has the lowest 1st time homebuyer rate ever at 2.5% for 30 year loan. 1st round of applications for low income housing tax credit program was received on March 18. There were 21 application submitted requesting approximately \$9.5 million.

Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District SENDD) – SENDD is a 15 county development organization. Jen distributed SENDD's 2012 performance report. She noted that SENDD is assisting members with many different types of applications grant applications submitted to DED for community projects. SEND INC. a Non-Profit Development Organization to work with revolving loan funds is working with DED to become certified.

Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD) – The American Wind Energy Association AWEA Conference and trade show is May 5th-8th in Chicago. The Nebraska booth has partnerships of OPPD, NPPD, DED with the goal of promoting Nebraska as a business location.

Emily Bausch (Southeast Nebraska Development District SENDD) – Emily discussed the recent success the Code Enforcement/Nuisance Abatement Program in Dorchester and noted new program beginning in new communities. The program works with communities to identify

nuisances, notify property owners, and achieve compliance. The SENDD website contains current programs and projects as well as the SENDD Newsletter.

Lisa Beethe (Southeast Nebraska Development District SENDD Humboldt) –SENDD has been working on Home Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Programs in Stella, Auburn, and Peru, has also been working on an application for 2nd story Rental Rehab in downtown Tecumseh. Other applications being proposed include Fall City Downtown Rehabilitation, Peru Public Works project for Park Avenue coming into town. SENDD recently completed a 3 year Performance Report and will be distributing to Counties and Community leaders in the near futures. Kevin Burnison is working on REDLEG projects in ADAMS, TECUMSEH.

Lori Richards (Nebraska Film Officer) - LB840/LB863 LOMEDA= Local Optional Municipal Economic Development Act = 863 the Language of the Film Industry as eligible to receive these funds by participating communities. Encourages economic development through grants to local business that provide service to film production.www.ded.org / www.FilmNebraska.org

Keith Ellis (NPPD) – Economic Development Briefing April 30th, NPPD Economic Development Services and updates Video conference. Wind Supply Chain trade show May 4th -8th Chicago with partners NDED and OPPD. Looking at food processing center trade show and metal fabrication show because it is important to build relationships with site developers and look for ways to retention business.

Lynn Kohout (Nebraska Department of Economic Development NEDED) –Joe Fox has joined NEDED office as new Business Innovation Manager, Christina Bartels has also joined our Business Innovation Team and another innovation team member will start on Monday, March 25. Linda Black has moved to the Cluster Manager Position. The Cluster team will be growing over the next few months. NEDED encourages communities to continue their work of Business Retention and Expansion visits and input the information into the Synchronist system also continue to post your available sites and building in LOIS.

Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development Corporation) – The City of Seward is an Economic Development Certified Community through NEDED. SCEDC is working on a Seward County Housing Study and Seward is reviewing and expanding their LB840 program. City of Milford is starting a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program. SCEDC has received support for the Rural Futures Institute Internship program, starting in Seward Area Investment club. A strategic plan for Seward, Milford, Utica and SCEDC is in process. The Old Middle school is being redeveloped into a regional Wellness & Technology Center. Utica opened a new grocery store. SCEDC is continuing the Seward County Leadership Development program to develop the Seward Regional Rail with the City of Seward and NEDED using CDBG Funds. SCEDC has started “Become an Entrepreneur” workshops.

Steve Peregrine (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority NIFA) – NIFA “No Place like home” Conference and award winner videos are posted on NIFA web page & Facebook (NIFA Housing). NIFA current interest rate is at 2.5% and also offering new mortgage counseling and home buyer education funding provided statewide from the Mortgage services Multi-state settlement funds. Housing Study Grant program funding application due July 15, 2013/ Modern Assets Grant Program for manufacturing equipment has \$275,000 left until 6/30/2013.

Paula Rhian (Excel Development) – City Impact HOMES in Lincoln is finishing construction of 14 rent to own homes. Grand opening will be held in May. Excel is working with local investment groups to build market rate rentals.

Maxine Moul (USDA Rural Development) USDA RD has funds available, new “all program” book available with details on funding. Nebraska RD working with 12-state region to provide administrative coverage with the loss of staff.

Jeanne Hain Wiemer (President Seward Artisans & Craftsmen Guild & Secretary Nebraska Association of Bed & Breakfast) – Jeanne is a Nebraska Artist & Author. She is a lifetime resident of Seward and an advocate of the Arts & Entrepreneur. She is starting an Artisans and Craftsman Guild and is currently the president. She is starting an Art Gallery and Tasting room on the Historic Town Square in Seward. Jeanne is also the secretary for the Nebraska Association of Bed & Breakfast, and very involved with tourism - agri/eco & historic tourism. Jeanne brought Elizabeth Chase to Seward to discuss Main Street.

Business Spotlight

NEBWorks Electronic Recycling Sells and Repairs Computers. Many people don't know what to do with “old” electronic stuff. NEBWorks Electronic has a Warehouse for taking in electronics. They work with the E-Steward way for disposal. For example CRT monitors have mercury in the monitor and very few recyclers will accept them.

Community Spotlight

Stephanie Schrader (Nebraska City Area Economic Development Corporation) – Utility Companies are in the process of a natural change, they have added an Electric car charging station. Nebraska City is working on a new housing study. The new hospital is opening up, as well as a new museum opening “Eli Windmills”. NCADC is looking at a Program for LB840 tourism and Downtown Develop. The City of Nebraska City has a museum pass, which City residents can enter for free. The Arbor Day Celebration is planned for April, and there will be lots of food. Red Fox run sold property to Nebraska Tec Construction; the North industrial site is working on Sewer Line. Currently Nebraska City has a Historic building vacancy rate of 3-5% downtown.

Feature Presentation
