

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)
Minutes from SERN Meeting
June 20, 2012

Homestead National Monument Education Center – Beatrice, NE
Hosted by Janelle Moran
Facilitated by Jen Olds, Chairperson
Minutes prepared by Emily Bausch, Secretary

Present: 43 individuals were present for business meeting as follows: Lisa Beethe (SENDD Humbolt); Gary Jorn (City of Fall City); Beckie Cromer (Fall City EDGE); Rick Zubrod (Kirkham Michael); Cassie Seagren (York County Development Corporation); Becky Whitehead (Black Hills Energy); Glennis McClure (Nebraska Enterprise Fund); Bruce Tinkham (Superior Development Corp.); Nick Hurling (American National Bank); Gary Muell (American National Bank Fairbury); Rod Armstrong (AIM Institute); Dave Hahn (Nebraska Information Net); Keith Ellis (NPPD); Allison Hatch (NDED); Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association); Monica Braun (REAP); Alexis Winder (Main Street Beatrice); Elizabeth Chase (Heritage Nebraska Main Street); Laurie Richards (Nebraska Film Office SHPO/NSHS Outreach); Troy Gagner (NMPPY Energy); Pat Coldiron (Seward Chamber); Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development); Tim Keelen (Hanna Keelen Associates); Amy Vrtiska (JEO); Ron Snyder (Southeast Community College); Marilyn Schlake (University of Nebraska Extension); Joe Lauber (NDED); Rhnissa Decker (NDED); Vicki Huddleston (Plattsmouth Main Street Association); Lonnie Dickson (Hanna Keelan Assoc.); Stephanie Schrader (Nebraska City Area EDC); Bobbie Meints (Five Rivers RC&D); Arlis Hohl (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance); Cheryl Brandenburgh (Black Hills Energy); Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation); Ray Ringlein (Senator Johanns Office); Bob Jones (NDED); Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association); Steve Peregrine (NIFA) Jen Olds (SENDD); Emily Bausch (SENDD); Sara Seidel (USDA-RD); Janelle Moran (REAP); Darryl Nauman (Ayers & Ayers)

Agenda Items:

Meeting called to order at 10:00am by SERN Chair Jen Olds.

Welcome:

Jen welcomed attendees to the Homestead Nation Monument Education Center in Beatrice NE. She discussed the format of the meeting. Host of SERN meeting Monica Braun and Janelle Moran of Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP) welcomed attendees and introduced Mark Engler of Homestead National Monument. Mr. Engler noted there are 370 National parks across US. This Site includes heritage center, hiking trails, and monuments. The Homestead Act of 1862 was 123 years ago and it caused the settlement of 1,000s of acres. The Homestead Act was to attract citizens gave each settler 163 acres and it led to the largest super power of agriculture ever created.

Regular Business:

- a. Treasurers Report was accepted as presented begin balance \$1,247.99 ending balance \$1,072.99. Bills included \$175 to Alan Richards for Governors Conference on Rural Affair.
- b. Minutes of the March 14, 2012 Quarterly meeting were approved as present on the SENDD website www.sendd.org
- c. Connecting Nebraska Award – SE Nebraska Award went to Alan Richards of Pawnee City. Alan provided a thank you note to the group for being honored.

Round Table Updates:

Tim Keelen (Hanna Keelen Assoc.) – Hanna:Keelan has been around for 35 years. Currently we have 24 planning projects including housing studies, comprehensive studies and blight studies. Also have been working with new research and development of National and Community and Chamber of Commerce's.

Amy Vrsкта (JEO Consulting) - Developing and emphasizing economic components in development of Comprehensive Plans. Working with communities to utilize FEMA disaster funding for planning and project development. Also assisting with Hazard mitigations grants which are currently due to State (Beatrice, Seward, Battle Creek) have applied in the first round. Communities looking for an emergency Siren(s) or Generators must talk to Sheila Haskal.

Ron Snyder (Southeast Community College) - Ron shared with the group that he was a member of a Training Solutions program at the college. The purpose of Training Solutions is to assist companies' organizations and agencies in developing customized training programs to meet their specific training needs. A brochure was provided that describes the Training Solutions program and a list of the various types of training provided by the program. Ron is available to provide presentations of the Southeast Community College's training solutions program and the various ways entities can get involved with the training and training related services provided.

Marilyn Schlak (University of Nebraska Extension) - The Rural Futures Institutes will be announcing two grant programs on July 19th for teams (multi-disciplinary/multi-organization) to address Rural Futures objectors and grants will be due in October 2012.

Vicki Huddleston (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) – Looking for ways to assist and share information with other communities in Southeast Nebraska.

Joe Lauber (NDED) - Talent innovation initiative is grants/loan and Tax incentives for ANGEL investment for innovative small business

Rhissa Decker (NDED) – The Talent innovation initiative is designed to enhance momentum in Nebraska's fastest growing industries, maintaining and building on its workforce and leverage private sector innovation. Offering planning & matching grants/loan programs, seed capital, and ANGEL investment matches and tax credits. Visit: www.nded.org for more information.

Allison Hatch (NDED) – The InterNE program has awarded about \$2.3 Million of the \$3 million available for FY2011-2012 and 2012-2013. More will become available as early contracts begin to terminate. Also the Tourism Division at DED will be forming an independent commission starting in July 2012.

Bob Jones (NDED Housing) – Have received and are reviewing housing annual applications. DED housing staff is working to establish Grantee training seminars and educational opportunities as early as this November.

Ray Ringlein (Senator Mike Johann's Office) – Have Constituent service brochures available: State Staff focuses toward connecting Nebraskans with assistance to Federal Agencies and also, connecting constituents with local resource providers.

Keith Ellis (NPPD) – NPPD Economic Development forces on three things; Community Preparation, Retention and Recruitment. Community preparation for economic development includes organize, strategic planning, update marketing, data files and publication of marketing materials on websites. Retention includes getting visits with local companies. Recruitment in agriculture processing includes Ethanol in Nebraska. The National Plastics show is designed for business currently located overseas but looking to come back to the states. Finally, NPPD attended the Wind Show which focuses on the supply side of wind power.

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.

Rod Armstrong (AIM Institute) – The Second annual Broadband Connecting Nebraska Conference will be Tuesday October 2, 2012 at The Cornhusker Conference Center in Lincoln. Featured Keynote by Vint Cerf, Vice President: Chief Technology Evangelist for Google. New devices will be demonstrated, along with presentation on best practices in broadband use from across Nebraska. Online Registration will be open soon.

Gary Muell (American Nation Bank- Fairbury) – American Nation Bank is seeking lending and business development opportunities throughout southeast Nebraska. From SBA loans to long-term fixed rate agriculture land loans, American National has a lot of flexibility in its financing options.

Nick Harling (American National Bank) – American Nation is looking for new lending opportunities. New lending division specializing in business loans less than \$250,000. Currently, American Nation is looking of loans up to \$15,000,000.

Bruce Tinkham (South Central Coalition SCEDD ~ REAP) – Social media workshop with GROW Nebraska featuring Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google plus to be held in Red Cloud, NE June 28th. DED Allison Hatch to speak Superior Elks club - June 28 at noon about InternNE.

John Baroni (Cass County Commissioner) – The Plattsmouth Main Street project is completed and is “Open for Business”. The Downtown Entertainment plaza features weekend musical talent.

Glennis McClure (Nebraska Enterprise Fund) – Nebraska Enterprise Fund (NEF) as a Certified CDFI is actively working to help fill small/micro business financing gaps across Nebraska. NEF has done direct loans just over \$100,000 and works with CD guarantees along with banks in loan packages. NEF is hiring a loan officer to help with demands. Glennis also serves as a board member of the new NGage Economic Development organization in Gage County. NGage is currently looking for an Executive Director.

Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation) – CPI-Lansing has started construction of circle track grain facility. There are two new businesses in Geneva: Certified Truck and Trailer Repair and Sharon’s Pantry (soft pretzels and all natural ingredients). New lighting and awning project for the Downtown Revitalization has begun in Geneva. A \$1million Bank expansion for Geneva State bank has also begun. Ohioa had its 125 year celebration. Currently, the old Geneva hospital building is being marketed for a new use. The 2012-2013 Odegeo leadership for Fillmore County starts in September 2012.

Becky Whitehead & Cheryl Brandenburgh (Black Hills Energy) – Encourage communities to look at their web presence. BHE provides technical assistance for business retention site visits.

Cassie Seagren (York County Economic Development Corporation) – The 2012 Cattlemen’s Ball was held in McCool Junction June 1 & 2. The final tally of total funds raised is not received but the event was a success. YCEDC has held Economic Development 101 for community education. YCEDC plans to host NEDA (Nebraska Economic Development Association) Conference on September 12-14, 2012 – Holiday Inn & Convention Center in York. YCEDC is working with SENDD on its CEDS process and working with Olsson Associates on site analysis planning project. York High School renovations have begun and York College is also working on an expansion (600 students). Camelot Inn has new owners and renovations to the mini travel stop have started. A new ice cream shop has opened up in York.

Steve Peregrine (NIFA) – Modernization Asset Grant for New companies employing 2-200 with net depreciable assets <\$10million, \$1Million remains available until June 30, 2013. Approximately 35 companies assisted to date. NIFA Housing Study grants funds available in early fall. Check www.nifa.org for new homebuyer campaign, youtube videos of NIFA programs and 2012 annual housing Market Place. First Friday Club Housing focus on housing lunch will be in Seward on the 3 Wednesday in June.

Arlis Hohl (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance) – Rienke Manufacturing galvanizing plant in Deshler has completed the expansion and will be at full force by September 1, 2012, as they are still hiring for open positions. Metalquest in Hebron is working on an expansion. Housing in Thayer County remains an issue, and Reinke has built a 4-plex, and has a waiting list of 10 people. In Davenport Stones Thoreau has been holding meeting about gardening with a variety of topics including organic gardening. Also a farmers market will be held there. Visit www.stonesthoreau.com for more information. The Center for Rural Affairs has been a partner with the Stones Thoreau gardening series. A planning grant has been awarded through the Department of Economic Development and will be starting soon and will be finished by the will be the end of this year. TCEDA attempted to host a Manufacturing Camp for teachers and students with solid works but low attendance caused the work shop to change to a mini learning session in Fairbury.

Bobbie Meints (Five Rivers RC & D Tecumseh) – Five Rivers is partnering with REAP to offer Quick Books Courses and is hosting advanced Quick Books right now with the next course scheduled for July 17 from 9am-12pm at the Fall City Chamber of Commerce. Contact the office at 402-335-3347 for more information on how you can get a course scheduled in your community. 5 Rivers is preparing for the 10th Annual Small Scale

Commercial wine making school, which will be held October 19th and 20th at the Kimmel Education and Research Center in Nebraska City. Cost is only \$375 for 2 full days of learning, which includes materials, food, and a wine tasting. Class size is limited to 26, so please contact the 5 Rivers office to reserve seat. Hurry they fill quickly. Five Rivers wrote the grants for four Scrap Tire Collections, all four received funding and collections are currently taking place. Contact county representatives for more information. Wrote a large household hazardous waste grant for all 8 counties in our area and are currently await news if funding will be received. In the process of voting 3 year grant on behalf of the Five Rivers Weed management area to gain funding to control evasive weeds in their nine county areas. The grant will provide qualified landowners with funding to combat specific evasive weeds on their property. A 25% cost share for 10 year management agreement is required. Contact our office for more information. Continue to work with the Nemaha NRD, Peru State College the City of Peru and the Nemaha County lodging committee to update the steamboat trace trail from Peru to Brownville. Updates will include camping pads with electricity Adirondack shelters and QR coding signage.

Rick Zubrod (Kirkham Michael) – We assist communities /counties, large and small, to plan, provide engineering design and construction for; roads, bridges, municipal water/wastewater systems, street, drainage, trails, lake restorations, airports, etc.

Stephanie Schrader (Nebraska City Area EDC) – For employee recruitment attended the Peru State College & Veterans job fair. Also there is job board in the NCAEDC office window. Retail business is 90-95% full downtown Nebraska City. Industrial Site development infrastructure minus sewer is complete and 42 acres have been sold and the balance is being developed. A Housing Study to expand the Housing Inventory is beginning looked at, and also a 25 million in construction projects including: Army corps building a new levy, all project school expansion, new natural gas line.

Beckie Cromer (Fall City EDGE)- Falls City Ball Park improvement project has just started. The Downtown Revitalization project begins July 9th, wilderness Falls senior housing development ribbon cutting was held in June. The 17700 industrial building sold to Airlanco for a new research and development center creating 15 new jobs. WASP and Airlance received NIFA asset moderation grant.

Gary Jorn (City of Fall City) - Fall City is Widening Airport working on New Water well and updating Comprehensive Plan

Lisa Beethe (SENDD Humboldt) –SENDD CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) Process: the summaries for County themes are complete and there will be discussion with the SENDD Board on goals and objectives. The final Draft will be presented for a 30 day public comment period. SENDD Humboldt is also working Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Pre- application and applications in Peru, Auburn, and Stella. The Downtown Revitalization programs (DTR) currently underway are in Tecumseh, Fall City and Auburn.

Lonnie Dickson (Hanna Keelan Assoc.) – Discussed elements of affordable housing, noting Mosaic housing Good Samaritan, Catholic Arch Diocese and Veteran housing needs. Also works on housing demand studies for special projects.

Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) – Discussed the 27 year Street Scape design plan and Wastewater System upgrades, made possible through a special election for new sale tax. The Project took 15 months. There are 8 façade improvement completed and 9 waiting. There is also 13 new business result of downtown street scape. Plattsmouth will be hosting the September SERN meeting.

Jen Olds (SENDD) – SENDD serves 15 Counties in Southeast Nebraska. SENDD works with the Department of Economic Development (DED) programs, grant administration, and most recently kicked off a Nuisance Abatement program. The SENDD board is looking for Private Sector Board members for their quarterly meetings on the third Thursday in the evening. The member will be appointed to a 3 year term. SENDD will be submitting several applications to DED for new Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation. SENDD is also working on a NDO for a regional revolving loan fund set aside.

Emily Bausch (SENDD) - SENDD has begun a pilot Nuisance Abatement program in a SENDD community. The program will assess nuisance, notify owners, present finding to governing body, and work with community until all items have been cleared.

Alexis Winder (Main Street Beatrice) – Beatrice Main Street has received grant from USDA to provide Gap financing for business in downtown Beatrice. The grant will address façade issues downtown and should be starting soon. Business transition assistance training is scheduled. Main Street is working with DED on Revitalization Planning. Construction will start next year on the Carnegie Building. A new business Dukes has opened a Coffee and wine bar in town. The Movie Theater received a grant for Digital change of over. One building is working on upper level development of a Children’s museum, however upper story development doesn’t cash flow and sometimes grant or financing for sprinkler systems is needed. SCC Sumer School is offering an Entrepreneurship class.

Jim Spangler (Beatrice Area Chamber & Director of Tourism) – Highlights of Gage County; Homestead National Monument, Beatrice Bakery (fruit cake specialist) Featured on the food network, Cedar Creek pottery Ervin Dixson pottery demonstration, Community Players, Rateglin Shattler Manufacturing woodworking and Church furniture, Vintage clothing Downtown, Beatrice Speedway every Friday night, The County Courthouse recently finished a remodel, Downtown offers tours of beautiful architecture and churches, Harley Owners Group were in town on Memorial weekend, and Monday held a Model T group Nebraskaland Model T, Upcoming event Gage County Fair featuring some fantastic Country Music groups. A bus tours scheduled for the future. The biggest Challenge is getting people to come to Gage County; however with the growing popularity of Stay-Cations people are staying close home and the Chamber is partner for Pawnee County for Regional Tours with the Byway 136 Passport program.

Janelle Moran & Monica Braun (REAP)- REAP Small Business Needs Assessment Survey results will be available soon. REAP is collaborating with Five Rivers RC&D to offer 2 quickbooks trainings. Loan activities \$50,000 for loaning as GAP have an increased demand. Women’s Business assistance center & Legal issues training are being offered.

Elizabeth Chase (Heritage Nebraska Main Street) – The Heritage Nebraska Main Street programs provides ongoing technical assistance and support to our 13 designated communities and 6 associated members across the state. We are affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Trust has undergone some major changes and the National Main Street Center will become a non-profit subsidiary of the trust that will allow us more freedom to change and evolve. We recently moved the Southeast Community College Entrepreneurship Center to Lincoln. We are wrapping up our current fiscal year and are gearing up for the new Fiscal year. We welcome any and all communities to join the Associate Member Program. If you are interested in the program I am available to come out to your community to talk about Downtown Revitalization.

Laurie Richards (Nebraska Film Office SHPO/NSHS Outreach) - www.filmnebraska.org Information about resources for filming on locations across the state. Work with local filmmakers and from outside the state. Keep data base of these resources current on the web site. LB 840/LB 863 local optional municipal Economic Development Act – incentive for film industry at municipal level. Money stays in community with business that gives discount to film project. NSHS-SHPO Outreach Field Services – Advocate, education, preservation, restoration, stewardship: Heritage Tourism Report- www.nebraskahistory.org \$196 million annual economic impact, 3,000+ jobs, and \$16.4 million in local and state tax incentives.

Sara Seidel (USDA-RD) – USDA Rural Development has ample loan funds for nonprofits, municipalities and public bodies. Grant funds have been reduced from last Fiscal year, but some are still available. Janice Stopak, Luann Brown and Sara are now service for the East half of the State for business program. Bill Sheppard will serve the East half of the State for Business program. We are always accepting applications and willing to assist during the application process.

Troy Gagner (NMPPY Energy) - Providing a new service – Fiscal impact Analysis for communities served by the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN)

Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) – New Entertainment Plaza (part of the Street Scape improvements project) with entertainment ever Friday and Saturday evening May to October. Extension of Highway 75 (Freeway to our front door) has started. We expect a lot of future growth as a result.

Pat Coldiron (Seward Chamber) – New School, old school potential, 4th of July, Introducing Technology, New Mall: A good thing is not a week goes by without someone coming into office inquiring about starting or relocating a business to Seward. Additional projects: expansion of hiking trail and Handicapped pier at the Pond, Surveying challenges of all small towns are old buildings and meeting codes.

Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development) –Seward County Economic Development Corp. (SCEDC) is working the City of Seward on the Certified Community application through DED which is tied to funding to develop a 300-acer industrial rail site in Seward. SCEDC recently worked with Bayer Crop Science to bring their North American Wheat Breeding Station to Seward County. SCEDC has developed a new website with NPPD and the City of Seward at www.sewardregional.com

Catherine Lang

Director Nebraska Department of Economic/Commissioner Nebraska Department of Labor

Catherine addressed the SERN membership to discuss the collaborative efforts in business and workforce development. She discussed the Battell Study and the collaboration the Department of Economic Development has had with Department of Labor specifically with the focus on Workforce. Discussion included why the merger of Department of Labor and Department of Economic Development has not currently taken place. She also discussed the importance of worker training.