

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)

Minutes from SERN Meeting

January 20, 2010

Tecumseh, NE

Facilitated by Jen Bolen

Present: Jen Bolen (SENDDD), Angie Antholz (SENCA), Alan Richard (PCDC), Tammy Timms (RC&D); Glennis McClure (Federal Reserve Bank); Scott Willet (RC&D); Kevin Burnison (SENDDD); Mary Kruger (NCDA); Janelle Moran (REAP); Patt Lentfer (Fillmore ED); Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD); Tom Hamer (SENEDA); Doug Goracke (Tecumseh ED); Adam Carter (Tecumseh); Shana Carter (Tecumseh ED); Jason Sokolewicz (NPPD); Whitney Bumgarner (DED); Lydia Wiles (DED); Connie Reimers-Hild (UNL-Kimmel);

Agenda Items:

- 1) Organization/Functionality: Pinkerton opened the discussion with ‘What do local economic developers look for / what can we offer? Goracke noted that SERN can offer updates on programs – so many programs out there that it is difficult to keep up on them. Discussions at SERN on community issues can be solved by networking with SERN members. Richard noted that SERN is an opportunity to meet all resources (people) to help communities. SERN has been very valuable in sponsoring educational presentations at quarterly meetings. Everyone agreed that SERN is a viable group and should continue to meet.
- 2) Determine Leadership: Two Co-Chairs will remind hosts to plan scheduled SERN meetings and will assist with communications. Each SERN meeting would have a host – someone responsible to set the date, location, lunch, speaker, etc. from one of four quadrants.

Officers are:

Co-Chair 1: Jen Bolen (SENDDD)

Co-Chair 2: Whitney Bumgarner (DED)

Secretary: Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D)

Treasurer: Devin Meisinger (OPPD)

- 3) Schedule Meetings: McClure noted that it was important to move the meetings around. Daytime meetings might be tough for some communities to attend. It was decided to continue to meet quarterly, rotating locations in the four SERN quadrants. It will be up to the host to schedule date, site, etc. Bolen will distribute meeting information through email. SERN checking account remains at ~\$1,400. Pinkerton or Meisinger will manage account through OPPD for now.

2010 Meeting Schedule:

Jan/Feb/March: Host – Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D); Southeast Quadrant

April/May/June: Host – Pat Lentfer (Fillmore County); Southwest Quadrant

July/August/September: Host – Scott Willet (Nebraska Great Plains RC&D); Northwest Quadrant

October/November/December: Host - John Yochum; Northeast Quadrant

Brainstorm Speaker Topics: Community Planning, USDA RD Programs, Open Meetings Act, Board Training (Economic Development Boards); Examples of Successes in communities; etc.

- 4) SERN Website Domain Name: Site is suspended. After a discussion, it was decided to let the website expire and not renew. Discussion continued on other methods to communicate: Facebook, E-mail, Blogs, Yahoo.groups (McClure & Bolen will work on this as a possibility), Google Wave, etc.
- 5) Roundtable Updates:
- Tecumseh ED– Updates on Downtown Revitalization in Tecumseh, Soda Fountain Opened, New Liquor Store, Big Brothers/Sisters Operation – buildings being rehabbed through Downtown Commercial Rehab Program (started mini-grant program with LB840 funds); Looking for ways / funding to do downtown sidewalks, and wellness center. Housing study conducted, and housing rehabilitation program awarded by DED.
- NPPD– assisting communities with reselling of buildings from business closures and finding potential companies to occupy vacant buildings with viable businesses.
- NDED Business Development – Working on business survey database that will evaluate and provide comparisons of business data in other states. NDED is seeing a major boost in community requests to learn about LB840. Webinar on LB840 will be on January 26.
- NDED Housing – Housing rehab pre-applications (optional) are due by February 26, final applications are due in May. Applicants get scoring points for submitting pre-applications.
- UNL - Kimmel– UNL will continue to support SERN. Connie Reimers-Hild has recently been appointed to serve on the Rural Development Commission. Goal is to bring research from the university to the communities, can help with speaker/presentation ideas.
- SEND – George Frye has retired from SEND. Dave Taladay is the new Executive Director effective December 1, 2009. SEND is in the process of hiring for a position in Humboldt. Continue assisting communities with development of applications for Energy Efficiency, CDBG and other funding applications. Six communities recently awarded housing rehabilitation programs through NDED, SEND will provide administration.
- SENCA – Continues with Head Start and Emergency program. SENCA is seeing a need for housing rehabilitation in the eight counties served by SENCA.
- Pawnee City/Pawnee County – Pawnee City has been awarded a Housing Rehabilitation Program through NDED. The City/County continues to look for leadership programs. “Swiss Kids” performance is coming to Pawnee City in June.
- Nebr. Enterprise Fund – Provides assistance to businesses with “business succession” planning, connecting with resources to plan for the future and resources to assist new owners. They have seen a “pull back” on lending from banks, the enterprise fund can help with gap financing for business start ups and expansions.
- NE Great Plains RC&D – as a requirement of funding, had to complete a 5-year area plan for nine-county area. Randy Cantrell at UNL CARI helped to compile data. Sustainable Agriculture Conference will be held on Feb. 5 & 6 at the Downtown Holiday Inn – Lincoln. The RC&D was asked by Seward to coordinate spring clean up day.
- Auburn – The City is using TIF to fix roofs on Downtown Buildings. Auburn has two business districts, trying to do more work in the south business district. A Peru State College Art Professor recently purchased a building in the south business district and will be putting an art gallery in the building.
- REAP – Assists with business plans and financial projections for cash flow in a 14 county area. REAP provides assistance with lending programs, women’s business center, and Hispanic business center. In Fairbury, they turned a vacant Wal-mart building into a mini mall. “Market Place” event will be in February in Kearney, online registration.

Fillmore County – Milligan will host the Nebraska Wine Festival in February and a beer festival in March. Fillmore County communities have received recent housing rehabilitation program funds through NDED. Geneva has completed phase 1 of a downtown revitalization program and is submitting an application to implement a downtown revitalization project. Revolving loan funds are being used and one lot was sold in the industrial park. Fillmore County is host to three-one-hour leadership brownbag lunch sessions.

OPPD – A Wind Supply workshop is being sponsored by NPPD, OPPD, and NDED on February 11 in Lincoln. Roberta Pinkerton asked the SERN group to inform businesses of the opportunity if interested in producing wind supply products.

Five Rivers RC&D – Providing programs for household hazardous waste; also working with ESU 4 & 5 to provide “school labs”.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Lunch: Buffet at Vic’s Steakhouse

Presentation by Randy Cantrell, UNL Center for Rural Innovations “Recruiting and Retaining New Residents in Communities” at 12:45 with 29 participants in attendance.

(See attached SERN Quadrant List Attached)