

## SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)

Minutes from SERN Meeting

November 16, 2010

Round the Bend Steakhouse, Cass County (South Bend, NE)

Hosted by John Yochum, Cass County Economic Development

Facilitated by Jen Olds & Whitney Bumgarner

Present: Michael Foutch (US Small Business Administration); Pat Coldiron (Seward Area Chamber); Courtney Dunbar (Olsson Associates); Whitney Bumgarner (NDED); Marilyn Schlake (UNL CARI); Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD); Emily Bausch (SENDD); Rod Armstrong (AIM Institute); Scott Willet (Ne Great Plains RC&D); Doug Watts (Wahoo ED); Alan Richard (Pawnee County ED); Mary Kruger (Five Rivers RC&D); Monica Braun (REAP); Jen Olds (SENDD); Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D); John Yochum (Cass County ED); Corrinne Pedersen (NMPP Energy); Gordy Flemming (Deshler); Craig Vincent (NPPD); Glennis McClure (NEF); Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street); Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street); Bill Stazzoni (Ayars & Ayars); Wendy Werner (NEHDA); Rick Zubrod (Kirkham Michael); Laurie Richards (Heritage Nebraska); Devin Meisinger (OPPD); Roger Meeks (USDA-RD); Roger Wehrbein (CCNEDC); Ron Snyder (SECC); Becky VonRentzell (Village of Elmwood); Steve Peregrine (NIFA); Kay Gerdes (City of Weeping Water); Mike Collins (Ayars & Ayars); Lana Rourke (Seward County ED); Maxine Moul (USDA-RD).

### Agenda Items:

Meeting called to order at 10:05 by Jen Olds.

#### 1) **Roundtable/Introductions:**

Emily Bausch (SENDD / SENACH): Affordable Housing Council is administering two housing rehab projects: Disaster Repair in Cass, Otoe and Saunders Counties and Regional Rehabilitation in Otoe, Polk, Saunders and Butler Counties.

Roger Wehrbein (CCNEDC): Visitor

Marilyn Schlake (Nebr. EDGE/UNL/CARI): A Nebraska EDGE course, to be held in Southeast Nebraska, is in the planning stages with Pawnee City and Five Rivers RC&D. A 5-day Entrepreneur Camp will be available next summer for high school youth. Scholarships are available for UNL Big Red Camp.

Maxine Moul (USDA-RD): Just completed the FY 2010 review – RD loaned/granted nearly \$191 million in ARRA funds and total \$381 million.

Monica Braun (Center for Rural Affairs): On November 29<sup>th</sup>, Patt Lentfer and Arlis Hohl (of Fillmore and Thayer County EDC's) will be hosting a Non-Profit Workshop in Bruning from 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

Reminder: MarketPlace will be February 22-23, 2011 in Kearney.

Pat Coldiron (Seward Chamber of Commerce): Seward has been using TIF and LB840 for economic development projects and secondary business recruitment.

Laurie Richards (Heritage Nebraska): Helps communities from Cozad to the Missouri River through the Main Street Program and works statewide with communities on historical building preservation. Plattsmouth is a prime example of the success of Main Street.

Gordy Flemming (Deshler Mayor): Enjoys attending these meetings to take information back to Deshler. By completing the NCIP Leadership Curriculum, Deshler identified a recreational trail in the City Park as a community project. Funds have been awarded from NCIP and the area NRD to assist with the project. The City also applied for Recreational Trail Program Funds through the Nebr. Game & Parks Commission and is awaiting a formal award announcement.

Michael Foutch (SBA): Loan approved up to 22%! 40% of loans went to rural businesses. The SBA Jobs Act, signed in September, offers grants to non-profits for economic development. Appreciation was expressed to Maxine and Marilyn for the educational forums on SBA.

Mary Kruger (Nemaha County): Is a member of the lodging tax committee in Nemaha County.

Tammy Timms (Five Rivers RC&D): The FY09-10 Annual Report is completed. Events recently conducted include a prescription drug event in Auburn, Household Hazardous Waste Collections in nine communities, two wine making schools, and reapplying for a School Lab Chemical Collection grant through NETF. An EDGE class is being planned.

Alan Richard (Pawnee County ED): Thanks to Marilyn Schlake for her assistance to Pawnee County in planning the EDGE course. An announcement for a huge expansion in Pawnee City will be presented Thursday night. The expansion was made possible through the assistance of USDA RD. The new community building in DuBois is being enjoyed by many in and around that community. Possible school merger between Lewiston and Pawnee City. Nineteen Amish families now live in Pawnee County.

Becky VonRentzell (Village of Elmwood): Is the new Village Clerk. Elmwood just completed a \$2.7 million sewer facility.

Scott Willet (Nebraska Great Plains RC&D): Will be hiring a new office program support assistant. Seward is planning another household hazardous waste and electronics collection. Just finished 3 SARE listening sessions in Lincoln, Omaha, and Council Bluffs – the information collected will be reviewed by the national SARE team. The RC&D State Conference was in Valentine in October.

Corrinne Pedersen (NMPP Energy): Nebr. Municipal Public Power has municipality members from a 5-state area. Crete is adding additional sales tax through LB840 as a solution to not cut services, tax is now at 1 ½ % which is at the maximum allowable level. Jefferson County is hosting an energy efficiency workshop for commercial and industrial businesses. Cuming County has created an Economic Development group.

Wendy Werner (Nebraska Housing Development Assoc): Offering Collaborative Housing Initiatives. Summit was held in August. Collecting comments on the Housing Trust Fund.

Rick Zubrod (Kirkham Michael Engineering): Offer engineering plans and design for community /county infrastructure (housing, development, drainage, septic, etc).

Roger Meeks (USDA RD): Rural development has \$381 million in new funds. There will be fewer resources in the future, which is why it is so important for SERN members to work together.

Doug Watts (Wahoo ED): Wahoo is working on a 2 year project to put new entrance in from the North as you enter the city of Wahoo. Plans include an expressway. Wahoo retailers are in favor of this improvement.

John Yochum (Cass County ED): As the meeting host, thanked everyone for their attendance and supporting Cass County. Reminded everyone that we are all ambassadors of our communities and to look at the positive people within the community to be ambassadors.

Devin Meisinger (OPPD): Working with Omaha Chamber on manufacturing project to 1) identifies sites for a power park, 2) rail-served manufacturing, and 3) non rail-served manufacturing. The Dream and Do IT – Information Technology project – is a technical internship program that currently has 8 students from Bellevue College. The program includes school work and a semester's worth of time working at a manufacturing business. Participated in a national call-in in California.

Rod Armstrong (AIM Institute): New initiatives in broadband and youth engagement.

Steve Peregrine (NIFA): Affordable housing and healthcare for beginning small businesses and farmers. Matching grants up to \$60,000 for housing studies. Annual Housing Conference is January 25 & 26<sup>th</sup>, the theme is The Upside of Down. Hosting the "1<sup>st</sup> Friday Program" where communities talk about NIFA funding success. Lowest interest rates available now. NIFA board has approved \$650 million worth of bonds.

Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street): Board of Director on the Plattsmouth Main Street. The economic restructuring committee is sending out surveys to determine needs of area businesses. Seminars will be developed based on the results.

Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street): The 1<sup>st</sup> of July started the Streetscape project – a 5 block X 2 block area – adding new sidewalks, new street lighting, new sewer, and narrowing streets to be completed by September 2011, was possible by adding the additional ½ sales tax. The previous ½ sales tax was extended. The west side of Main Street will be identified as the “entertainment section” of town. Fourteen high school students have helped with the Main Street project.

Ron Snyder (SECC): The Training Solution Team offers 70 clients 60,000 hours of training in workforce development. Southeast Community College has committed to this expansion of service to communities.

Glennis McClure (Nebraska Enterprise Fund): Offers funding for small microbusiness development – can provide a match for funds for capital expenditures, example is to match an SBA loan. Area Entrepreneur/Small Biz Resource Forum in Beatrice, Tuesday, November 30, 2010. Co-chair for NetForce – a no-fee professional development program for secondary teachers (can earn college credits) to be held this spring.

Craig Vincent (NPPD): Jason Sokolewicz is no longer with NPPD, Craig has accepted some of the job responsibilities Jason had.

Roberta Pinkerton (OPPD): The Nebraska Wind Energy Conference was held last week. New wind farms in Humboldt (60 megawatt) and Petersburg (40 megawatt).

Whitney Bumgarner (NDED): The Battell Study was completed over a 6-8 month time frame. The report results are being broken out in sections to evaluate. Great volume in CDBG Economic Development Applications.

Courtney Dunbar (Olsson and Associates): Work with communities for industrial site planning, land utility and feasibility studies. Conduct flyovers of areas to get “whole picture”.

Jen Olds (SENDD): Received economic development designation from EDA. Combines SENDD and the River Country Economic Development, now a 15 county area. 27 board members - elected and non-elected members, currently have five board member vacancies to be filled. Next board meeting is December 16<sup>th</sup>. Will be working on a new comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDSD) to include all 15 Counties. SENDD is administering housing rehab projects in 10 communities– need qualified contractors to bid on projects. The NDED Annual Action Plan is now accepting comments – communities are encouraged to review the plan and provide public comment. NDED will be accepting public comments through December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**2) PRN Update:**

Maxine Moul, USDA Rural Development. The Partnership for Rural Nebraska is a partnership of many agencies, created from the 20 year old Rural Development Commission. When the Nebraska Development Network dissolved in the 90’s the regional groups became part of the PRN. There are seven active regional groups throughout the state now. PRN will be sponsoring the No Host Gathering Thursday night, November 18 (prior to the NCIP Conference Friday). PRN provided scholarships to regional groups to attend the Gov’s Conference on Rural Nebraska.

**3) Five Rivers Survey:**

A volunteer committee met October 13 to review and analyze the survey to determine what SERN can do as a group to respond to the survey results. The committee discussed developing workshops tailored to each of eight counties in the Five Rivers area, based on answers to survey. The workshops would be presented next spring. The committee asked for SERN member support to: 1) encourage communities to participate and 2) attend workshops to present on their resource programs. Corrinne Pedersen asked to join the committee.

**4) Community Spotlight:**

John Yochum (Cass County ED) – Cass County offers a lot of geographic attractions – Mahoney State Park, Plattsmouth Main Street, Strategic Air Command Museum, Bloom Where You are Planted Pumpkin Farm, Lofte Community Theatre.

Kay Gerdes (Weeping Water City Clerk) – Community Auditorium Two vacant buildings downtown Weeping Water were purchased by 7 volunteers who formed a non-profit business. Low interest loan from USDA-RD was approved, also received CDBG funds from NDED. Project to be completed in three phases 1) generous donations of local businesses, local residents, and formal alumni allowed for the renovation to include city offices on east end of building and renovations for main auditorium; 2) Handicap accessibility to lower level and paved parking lot; 3) purchase new doors and design the basement renovations –seeking funds. The city is taking care of maintenance costs. Once the 40 year loan is paid off, the non-profit will disband and the city will retain ownership.

**5) Business Spotlight:**

Tammy's Soap Shack: Maker of soy candles, soaps, and lotions. Hobby that started in her house. Store is located on Main Street, Weeping Water. Has one college girl that helps with labeling and works the counter. She is a member of GROW Nebraska. [www.tammyssoapshack.com](http://www.tammyssoapshack.com).

**6) Regular Business Meeting:**

Treasurer's Report: Devon Meisinger reported a balance of \$1,392.99 after reimbursing Monica Braun \$22.00 for unpaid meals from last quarter SERN meeting.

Minutes: No amendments. Accepted

Governor's Conference: November 19<sup>th</sup> in Kearney. Six scholarships were given to attend.

Connecting Nebraskan's Award: Roberta Pinkerton was SERN nomination. Congratulations, Roberta!

2011 Quarterly Meeting/Hosts: SE Quadrant – Nemaha County/Mary Kruger; SW Quadrant – Thayer County/Arlis Hohl; NW Quadrant – York County/Cassie Seagren; NE Quadrant – Saunders County (Wahoo)/Doug Watts (Note: Site hosts were volunteered and still need to be confirmed). Dates and locations to be determined.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.**

**Lunch: Buffet by Round the Bend.**

**Guest Speaker:** Presentation by Jason Henderson, Vice President, Omaha Branch KC Federal Reserve Bank, "Transforming Nebraska's Economy – Realities of Changing Community Demographics."

Respectfully,

Tammy Timms, Secretary