

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)

Minutes from SERN Meeting

September 21, 2011

Heritage Inn – Wahoo, NE

Hosted by Doug Watts

Facilitated by Jen Olds

Present: Doug Watts (WAED); Brook Euteneuer (NDED); Lydia Wiles (NDED); Allison Hatch (NDED); Shawn Kaskie (UNK); Michael Foutch (SBA); Rod Armstrong (AIM Institutes); Dave Hahn (NIN); Sheri Henderson (Saunders Co ED & City of Ceresco); Cheryl Brandenburg (BHE); Devin Miesinger (OPPD); Courtney Dubar (OA); Mike Ayars (Contractor); Cassie Seagren (YCDC); Bruce Tinkham (Superior Development Corp.); Janice Stopak (USDA-RD), Sara Seidel (USDA-RD) Diane Bryant (USDA-RD), Keith Carl (Hanna:Keelan Associates P.C.); Paula Rhian (Excel Development); Bobby Meints (Five Rivers RC&D); Emily Bausch (SENDDD); Janelle Moran (REAP); Patt Lentfer (FCDC); Jen Olds (SENDDD); Alan Richard (PCDC); Arlis Hohl (TCEDA); Keith Ellis (NPPD); Dave Taladay (SENDDD)

Agenda Items:

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

Welcome:

Jen Olds, SERN Chair, opened the meeting, special thanks to Mr. Doug Watts for hosting the meeting and organizing event. Members were encouraged to complete Roundtable Summary Sheet (yellow sheet) to ensure correct information about their business/organization in SERN minutes.

Regular meeting:

- a. **Treasurer's report** – Devin Meisinger presented the Treasurer's Report current balance -\$1,247.99
- b. **Minutes June 7, 2011** - minutes were emailed to members and approved as presented.
- c. **Officer Election** - Jen Olds asked members to volunteer for the office of secretary – Cassie Seagren nominated Courtney Dunbar from Olsson Associates. Courtney accepted the nomination.
- d. **Follow up on Local Elected officials Training – (See attached summary)** Jen Olds presented a summary about the training. 65 attendees of which approximately 50 were categorized as local officials/staff. There have been a number of inquiries to continue the education in other locations of the region. SERN will need to revisit development of a committee/budget/ etc. to organize a future training. NMPP donated the printing and mailing for this workshop. The utility providers provided the afternoon snack, and speakers volunteered their time and donated their expenses. Because of partnerships and volunteers, the training was held without tapping into the SERN treasury. Keys to the success were the 5 Rivers RC&D survey which pinpointed the need and willingness of people to attend this training, donations and volunteer time from committee, speakers, and partners, and quality of the speakers. Lessons learned include: Don't hold training on first or second Monday/Tuesday of the month (County Board Meetings), Include an evaluation for the training to attendees.

InternNE New Legislation for Internship Program

Allison Hatch from NDED presented the Intern Nebraska Program. The program is to create opportunities for students to intern in Nebraska businesses. **(See attached flyer)**

The program provides a 40% match, up to \$3,500 per internship, for eligible business hiring eligible student interns. (Businesses in distressed areas may receive a 60% match up to \$5,000). A business may apply for funding for up to 10 interns per year, with a maximum of five interns per company location, per year. Up to \$1.5 million is available each fiscal year to support businesses in hiring interns. Funding is provided through reimbursement to business.

Eligible businesses are primarily in: Manufacturing, Research & Development, Distribution, Transportation, Storage & Warehousing, Data Processing, Telecommunications, Insurance & Financial Services, Administration (Headquarters) and more.

Eligible students must be enrolled in full-time in a postsecondary college or university with junior or senior status, or in their second year of a two-year program. Internships must pay minimum wage or more and range from 200-1,000 hours. Visit website for more information www.InternNE.com

ROUND TABLES:

Brooke Euteneuer (NDED) – New to DED going to work with site and building fund, market research

Lydia Wiles (NDED) –Mikhaila Noller is the new Northeast Housing Representative. In the process of contract negotiation for release of funds for housing applications; working on the consolidate plan.

Allison Hatch (NDED) – Department is continuing to implement Talent Innovation Initiative. InternNE program began June 1st, and has allocated about 1 million in funds to companies creating new internships. DED began taking Angel Investment tax credit application September 1st and began taking applications for the business Innovation Act and Site and Building Fund on October 3rd. Check DED's website for more information. DED hosted over 100 international guests at their Reverse Trade Mission (RTM) a couple weeks ago. The RTM was also combined with the Nebraska Diplomats Passport weekend where DED recognized many business and business leaders across the State.

Rod Armstrong (AIM institute) – Intern Nebraska will be hosting 8 conferences for broadband across Nebraska. Working on developing Broadband across Nebraska, working with USDA –RD. November 1, 2011 Conference on Broadband adoption. Jen Olds included information from Dennis Kuhl email regarding Broadband planning team.

Shawn Kaskie (UNK) - Market research, community needs assessment, and income survey. NBDC business transition certification trainings are available via webinar later this fall. UNK CRRD is offering Survey & Marketing Research services for businesses and communities applying for CDBG or testing new ideas. New Entrepreneurship Program and Activities: Quick Pitch Competition November 17 and Business Plan Competition February 22, 2012.

Michael Foutch (SBA) – As the fiscal year winds down, the SBA has some amazing news to report about small business in the state and access to financing. 507 loan approvals for \$156 million the latter figure represents the highest loan volume in Nebraska in a single year in the agency's history. 181 of these loans went to rural business, and as a direct result of those loan approvals, 522 new jobs were created and rural small business were able to keep 1,224 jobs on their payrolls. However, while 6 loans were made in Saunders County, NONE were made in Wahoo. The Rural Lender Advantage SBA loan program can change that, with a streamlined application for loans up to \$350,000 with a 75% to 85% government guarantee. This program could be crucial in determining whether a business stays open and those jobs stay in town or whether that business has to fold up and those jobs go away. Please call the SBA at 402-221-4691 to see how they can help your community.

Dave Hahn (Nebraska Information Network) - NIN is a non-profit organization supported by 20 Nebraska Telephone Companies. Some of the issues NIN focuses on are Broadband development in Nebraska, Telecommunication and distance learning application in rural Nebraska.

Shari Henderson (Clerk of Ceresco/Saunders Co Economic Development) –Saunders County is in the infant stage of developing a website for 6 communities in Saunders County. Looking to gain knowledge and seek guidance from providers.

Cheryl Brandenburg (Black Hills Energy) – Black hills Energy (BHE) recently recognized as 2011 Cornerstone of the Year Company by the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. BHE will see a stronger emphasis on LOIS (Location One Information System) so if you have questions contact Brooke Euteneur (NDED) or Cheryl B. (BHE). Cheryl has been asked to serve as chair of the Cass County site review group. BHE is a recipient of the Intern Nebraska program and will be hiring 10 interns across their region. The Nebraska Developers conference is NEXT WEEK 28-30 at NBC Suites in Lincoln.

Devin Meisinger (OPPD) - NEDA event was sponsored by the Lincoln Chamber. The Reverse Trade mission was a few weeks ago and two companies are looking at Nebraska, one is renewable energy and the other is lighting.

Courtney Dunbar (Olsson Associates- Economic Development) Olsson Associates (OA) is actively involved in 12 industrial site plans. Also has been working site selection for four different Nebraska industrial projects. Olsson's has added staff to handle automation and technology engineering (Telecommunication, intelligent transportation systems)

Mike Ayers (Ayers & Ayers Inc.) - Contractor in Lincoln interested in resources available.

Cassie Seagren (York County Development Corporation) – McCool Junction is hosting the 2012 Nebraska Cattleman's ball hosting the event June 1 & 2. YCDC launched a new website, interactive with LOIS. YCDC has signed a lease on their spec building. YCDC is working on building and site analysis with OA. Klute Manufacturing Inc. of Bradshaw celebrated 50 years of doing business this week. YCDC is preparing for various studies in the upcoming year including transportation.

Bruce Tinkham (Agrex Inc. & Superior Development Corp.) – Looking for available information and resources.
Janice Stopak/Sarah Seidel (USDA-RD) – Community Facilities Programs has reached its fiscal year end. Next year appears to have ample loan fund for various projects including Fire Barns, Community Building, Ambulance, Fire Trucks etc. Lincoln Area office serves 23 counties in Southeast Nebraska. USDA currently has 5 job openings, listed on usajobs.gov.

Diane Bryant (USDA-RD) – USDA-RD is accepting applications for 2012 Energy grants through Rural Energy Assistance Program (REAP) 25% grant for eligible energy efficiency improvements or renewable energy systems.

Keith Carl (Hanna:Keleen Associates P.C.) – Friend Nebraska is doing a study for Continuum of Care for elderly persons and households in a three county "Effective Market Area" and working on behalf of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

Dave Taladay – (Director of SENDD)- SENDD serves 15 counties and their communities in SE Nebraska. Staff Jen Olds and Emily Bausch will provide update.

Alan Richard (Pawnee City Economic Development) – Housing Study shows that Pawnee City needs 51 housing units. Pawnee City is working with USDA on possible assisted living Units. CJ food business expansion addition is complete. A downtown Façade and Awning Grant program has begun using LB840 money; currently 12 applications have been received. Pawnee City is looking at 3 new businesses. There are lots of job openings within 40 miles of Pawnee City, need to find workers. Niobium rare earth mining could be huge project in Johnson and Pawnee County. Mining will be 500 Feet down.

Bobbie Meints (5 Rivers RC&D) – QuickBooks Training will be in Beatrice at the Chamber of Commerce on October 4, 2011. Electronics Recycling offered: Fairbury on October 4th from 9am to 1pm, Fall City October 8th 9am-1pm. Small Scale Commercial Wine making school will be October 21st and 22nd 8am to 4pm both days in Nebraska City. Low stress animal handling workshop October 27th and 28th Kimmel Ag Expo building in Syracuse Follow 5 Rivers RC&D on facebook!

Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corp.) Gambles Do It Best is building a new store in Geneva. The new replacement Hospital is set to open in spring of 2012. H&R Armament sells guns & does custom manufacturing opened in Exeter. Grafton and Ohiova received grants to help with improvements to their Waste Water Treatment System through CDBG Program. Fillmore County currently has an active HOP program. Shickley and Strang are raising funds for community building. The Geneva Downtown Revitalization project will be looking at lighting other improvements to the downtown. FCDC is looking for ideas to use the Old Hospital creatively.

Arlis Hohl (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance) – Rienke is working on a \$10 million expansion at their Deshler location. The building has been delivered the footings are all poured, tanks are in Texas. TCEDA is working on a planning grant application for a County-wide housing study. Cargill grain handling facilities is looking at an expansion at the old ethanol plant in Carleton. New business in Davenport is Stones Thoreau a business of from the farm to local schools fresh vegetables and fruits program. Belvidere is planning to build a train watching station. TCEDA is partnering with REAP for QuickBooks training Monday September 26, 2011. Deshler and Davenport are planning 125 year anniversary events to be held in 2012.

Keith Ellis (NPPD Economic Development) –Keith Ellis is the new NPPD Economic Development representative for Southeast and Central Nebraska with an office in Lincoln. NPPD has recently attended the Supply Chain conferenced in Des Moines for wind industry information. NPPD is waiting for Federal Energy policy to sustain industry growth. FabTech show is coming up in November and will be in Chicago.

Janelle Moran (REAP) – REAP offers Technical Assistance and micro business loans. REAP is offering QuickBooks training September 26th and October 4th in Thayer County and Beatrice. REAP is looking at new and more training to offer and is working on Hispanic application.

Doug Watts (Wahoo Economic Development) – Things are picking up in Wahoo there is a new Computer Store, new barber shop, and expansion to existing Wahoo Locker. There were 17 homes sold last month and a 5th section added to the Kindergarten class.

Paula Rhian (Excel Development Group) – Wilderness Falls senior housing project in Fall City has started construction of 16 units.

Jen Olds (SEND) –Derek Bargmann is a new hire in the Humboldt Office. Craig Eberle has relocated to Bradshaw, NE and is now working out of his home that serves as the SEND Western Field Office. Staff will attend the Nuisance Abatement Training hosted by WCND in Kearney on October 27 to obtain information about how to implement a nuisance abatement program for members. NDED recently awarded new Housing Rehabilitation Programs to four SEND communities in York, Nebraska City, Falls City and Geneva. SEND is watching flooding impacts incase funding resources open up. Encourage communities to start compiling data related to businesses affected, closures, relocations, disruptions, main street indicators, etc. Often have to scramble when FEMA/EDA/NDED, etc. announce disaster funding.

Community Spotlight

Doug Watts introduced Wahoo Mayor Jerry Johnson for the community spotlight presentation. Mayor Johnson has 42 years of managing Coops across the state and has worked with many communities on economic development projects. Wahoo has had some growth and is stable. Lots of young families have been moving to Wahoo. Wahoo is 30 minutes from Omaha, Lincoln and Fremont. Retail business has suffered due to population commuting. Consider Wahoo a faith based community with 13 churches. New aquatic center, new library, new county hospital, new law center and jail. Houses Dodge county inmates at the Jail and law enforcement center. Wahoo locker expansion looking at whole sale and retail. Wahoo Lake is finished (City, County and NRD) it is a no wake lake with camping sites. NDOR is working on express way highway 77 and a paved road over the dam. The old College Campus has been deteriorating, trying to figure out what to do with it. Old Hospital has been removed and is now green space. A junk yard near ballpark has been acquired and is going to be developed. Old high school is now an activities center. Many successful projects are happening in Wahoo.

Business Spotlight

Doug Watts introduced Mr. Charlie Emswiler & Mr. Scott Buresh of Wahoo Locker & Wahoo Bakery to discuss their business. Wahoo Locker has expanded from mainly custom slaughter to also retail business and sales. Wahoo Locker has won many awards on their meats. The Locker's business has grown so much that it needs a new 8,000 square foot plant and warehouse. The local Wahoo revolving loan fund is being used to assist with the locker's expansion. Additionally, the City has vacated Maple Street to make room for the expansion.

The Emswiler/Buresh partnership also owns the Wahoo Bakery. The Bakery had been owned and managed by the same family for nearly 30years when they purchased the building. The Bakery increased from between 30 to 50% in a few years of business. Emswiler and Buresh also took on a catering business that they do that part time because they both enjoy cooking. The partnership felt they could expand further and started B&E Fundraising which is a local program that schools and organization can used to sell retail products for fundraising events.

SERN Meeting Adjourn at 12:00pm – Lunch by B&E Catering of Wahoo

Featured Presentation: New Resources Available to Small Businesses and Communities

Shawn Kaskie, Director of the Center for Rural Research and Development, University of Nebraska at Kearny presented information about resources available to businesses and communities. Examples of resources / services include data collection and analysis, evaluation studies, moderated focus groups, needs assessments, research design, scientific sampling and surveys and polling. Shawn shared the model for "economic gardening" and the philosophy of economic development using that model.