

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)
Minutes from SERN Meeting
November 5, 2014
York, NE

Hosted by Lisa Hurley, York County Development Corporation
Facilitated by Jen Olds, SENDD

28 individuals were present for the business meeting including the following: Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Women's Business Center), Lonnie Dickerson (Hanna Keelan Associates), Max Kathol (City of Crete ED), Laurie Richards (Nebraska Film Office), Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Steve Peregrine (NIFA), Cullin Sila (Black Hills Energy), Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation), Corrinne Pederson (NMPP Energy), Lisa Scheve (Cass County EDC), Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln/Bradshaw), Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln), Randy Cantrell (Extension Professor, Nebraska Rural Initiative), Kevin Hagenmoser (Nebraska Enterprise Fund), Deb Heskett (York County Development Corporation), Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College), Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development), Jim Keeler (UNL Broadband Initiative), Tony North (York County Development Corporation Board of Directors/North Printing Company), Paula Rhian (Excel Development Corporation), Marilyn Schlake (UNL Extension), Mike Lucas (York Public Schools), Craig Vincent (Nebraska Public Power District), Taylor Seibert (Striv.TV), Dr. Steve Eckman (York College), Ken Liermann (Abengoa Bioenergy), Teri Carlson (Holthus Convention Center).

Welcome/Regular Business

Called to order at 10:06 A.M. by Jen Olds, SERN Chair. Chair Olds welcomed attendees to the new Holthus Convention Center in York. She then provided an initial orientation to everyone in attendance on the meeting agenda and format. Tony North, President of York County Development Corporation welcomed everyone to York.

A. Treasurers Report

Chair Olds indicated that she did not get a current balance from Devin, SERN Treasurer prior to the meeting. SERN had about \$1,000 in the account prior to making a couple of payments for the Local Elected Officials Training held October 16, 2014 in Beatrice. They will have some sponsorship funds coming in for that training. Chair Olds stated that she will distribute an updated treasurer's report in a month or so once all of the Local Elected Officials Training financial business is complete.

B. Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes from the previous SERN meeting (July 31, 2014) are posted on the SENDD website www.sendd.org. With no changes or corrections from the attendees, the previous meeting minutes were accepted as written.

C. Report – Local Elected Officials Training

Chair Olds reported that the Local Elected Officials Training was held at Southeast Community College in Beatrice on October 16, 2014. There were about 75 registrants, with 60 people showing up for the training. There were a total of 40 communities represented. With many new

elected officials scheduled to take office after the first of the year, they hope to have another training in June or July of next year. Chair Olds appreciated the work that the Education Committee put in to making this a successful training. Sponsorships and a \$500 grant from the PRN will cover expenses associated with the training. Corrinne Pederson with NMPP Energy thanked Chair Olds for her work in coordinating this training.

Stronger Economies Together

At this time Marilyn Schlake with UNL Extension gave a report on the Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program. The purpose of the SET program is to strengthen the capacity of communities/counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. These strategies use a lot of data to form a regional economic development plan. This program is being implemented through a combined effort from UNL Extension and USDA-RD. This program will provide funding for organizations to come up with a regional economic development plan. There was a good discussion about this program amongst the SERN group.

Rural Poll – Randy Cantrell, Extension Professor, Nebraska Rural Initiative

Randy Cantrell provided the SERN group with some information on the Nebraska Rural Poll. The Nebraska Rural Poll is an annual survey conducted by the UNL Department of Agricultural Economics in partnership with the NU Rural Futures Institute. The Nebraska Rural Poll poll's rural Nebraskans about various issues and relays its findings to state lawmakers, ensuring the rural voice is heard. The goal of the Nebraska Rural Poll is to give local and state leaders a better understanding of the issues, challenges and concerns of Nebraska's rural citizens. The Rural Poll is an annual effort that focuses on such issues as community, government policy, well-being and work.

Randy is looking for suggestions of core questions to ask rural Nebraskans in next year's Nebraska Rural Poll. He instructed anyone that has questions they would like asked to either call him (402-472-0919) or e-mail him (rcantrell1@unl.edu). They are looking to obtain all possible poll topics by the end of this month, so they can develop a list of questions in January.

Round Table Updates – Resource Providers & Community Updates

Jonathan Jank (Seward County Economic Development) – SCED recently finished their second annual membership campaign. Partnering with Fillmore, Seward and York Counties on a Tri-County Career day and Job Fair to be held on March 17, 2015 at the Holthus Convention Center in York. In Milford they are working on the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) certified community application and downtown revitalization. In Seward, creating a Building Information Modeling marketplace piece by Olsson Associates and the Kiewit Building Group for the Seward Rail Campus. The old Seward middle school site is developing a \$7 million TIF project. This will consist of 20,000 square foot commercial space and 15,000 square foot residential. A speculative building is being designed in partnership with Ayers and Ayers on a 23 acre site plan. In Utica they are currently working on the NDED Leadership Community application. The village also passed their village sales tax and LB840 at the November 4th election.

Marguerite Himmelberg (Southeast Community College) – Adult basic education classes are being held in Beatrice, Auburn, Falls City, Hebron, Seward, Nebraska City and Tecumseh. ESL

classes are being held in Nebraska City, Tecumseh and at Wilber-Clatonia High School. An Advisor Council meeting is scheduled in Seward on November 7, 2014. This meeting allows members of the community to come and learn about adult education, provide input and suggestions. This is a lunch meeting from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church, with an RSVP required for food purposes. Allied Health Nurse Aid class in Crete held this fall, with plans for one more in the area during the winter quarter. SCC is looking to hold another Nurse Aid class in Geneva this winter as well. High school Nurse Aid class is available in York for students in York and surrounding communities. Customized trainings include welding classes in Falls City (ending November 19, 2014) and Nebraska City leadership training (customized and through the Nebraska City Area EDC). STOP classes are now offered online in Thayer County, Seward County and York County. As part of 2015 SCC Strategic Planning Process, the new SCC President's directive includes seeking feedback from the communities we serve. In 2015, Mike Peagram, Dean of Student Services/Assistant Campus Director at Milford and Amy Chelsey, Dean of CE, will be soliciting community feedback at town hall meetings. Schedules and details are not available at this time. There will likely be notices in the newspapers and she will update at the next SERN meeting.

Lonnie Dickerson (Hannah:Keelan Associates) – They are busy working in Nebraska, Wyoming, North Dakota and Kansas on completing comprehensive plans, zoning and subdivision regulations. Services include housing market studies, downtown revitalization plans, industrial park master plans and housing development plans. They work with both state and federal agencies.

Steve Peregrine (NIFA) – Dates for the NIFA annual housing conference are February 3-4, 2015 in Omaha. Applications for NIFA Housing Study grant funds are due March 1, 2015. The 2015 Profile of Nebraska is underway, with the online version (dashboard) to be enhanced. Any comments can be directed to NIFA. Disaster/Replacement housing loans are still available in eligible areas.

Corrinne Pederson (NMPP Energy) – She is encouraging everyone to get acquainted and educate the newly elected officials, both locally and regionally. If you have a new State Senator please involve them and invite them to your meetings.

Mike Lucas (York Public Schools) – He is the Superintendent of York Public Schools (YPS). He grew up in Florida and spent 6 years in Franklin, NE. He is in favor of Tax Increment Financing due to the opportunities for more kids in the school system. Participated with YCDC to conduct tours of three local manufacturers on National Manufacturing Day (October 3, 2014). YPS is partnering with Centennial and Seward Public Schools on an Agronomy Academy for high school students. This is being sponsored by many local seed companies. YPS is also partnering with Truck Center Companies in York on an internship program.

Cullin Sila (Black Hills Energy) – A lot of growth and need for natural gas. Working on replacing steel lines and installing automated meter readers throughout their coverage area. This is a 10-year replacement project.

Laurie Richards (Nebraska Film Office) – Growing the film industry in Nebraska helps diversify our economy and grow jobs. Many communities in Southeast Nebraska have LB840 programs. She advised everyone to let her know if their community is interested in pursuing LB840 for film development. She also advised everyone to call her if their community receives a call for information on filming there and registering with the Nebraska Film Office. The Nebraska Film Association is a statewide organization – coalition of film industry people who are promoting

filmmaking in Nebraska. In Fremont the Northeast Nebraska Film Association – Stacy Heatherly has produced a film “It Snows All the Time” which has an Alzheimer’s theme. This film is based on a true story, partnering with the Fremont Alzheimers Committee to raise awareness and funding toward that film.

Craig Vincent (Nebraska Public Power District) – He works with the economic development team at NPPD, officing out of York. This branch of NPPD acts as a resource and service provider that partners with communities on business retention and expansion visits, as well as community preparedness.

Kevin Hagenmoser (Nebraska Enterprise Fund) – Provide lending programs across the state for small businesses with an emphasis on veterans. Projects in our Nebraska communities that Nebraska Enterprise Fund should be considering are especially small businesses needing loans but are not quite a good fit yet for your community banks. Let NEF help them become bankable and build jobs. NEF is putting on a Small Business Financing for Veterans program on November 13, 2014 at 6:30 P.M. at the Opportunity Center in Lexington, NE.

Max Kathol (City of Crete Economic Development) – TIF projects in the community are progressing. The new Dairy Queen is now open and the new Union Bank is enclosing its shell. Soft announcements from Tabitha about two homes to be constructed. LB840 approved funds to assist SBA application for a restaurant on Main Street. The City has also set aside matching funds for a USDA-RD REDLG project. Crete is continuing to work on their Certified Community application.

Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street) – Paul Lambert is returning to office as Mayor of Plattsmouth after the November 4, 2014 election. Christmas on Main is scheduled for November 29, 2014 in Plattsmouth.

Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street) – Ribbon cutting ceremony for Highway 75 improvements to be held on November 6, 2014. New projects are currently under construction, including Woodhouse Ford, Bomgaars and 2 spec. homes being built by Legacy Homes of Omaha. The Plattsmouth High School sports complex was recently completed.

Marilyn Schlake (UNL Extension) – An open invitation to attend Community Vitality Business discussions via conference call. Monday, November 10th 2014 at 2:00 p.m. the topic will be possible development of a Nebraska Referral System. On Wednesday, November 19th at University of Nebraska-Kearney a strategic plan for development a business succession statewide effort. For more information contact Marilyn at 402-472-4138 or mschlake@unl.edu.

Deb Heskett (York County Development Corporation) - She works with Lisa Hurley at the York County Development Corporation office. Lisa will fill everyone on what is going on at YCDC.

Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Women’s Business Center) – Griselda Rendon has been hired as the REAP Hispanic Business Specialist for Southeast Nebraska. Her office is in Grand Island (griseldar@cfra.org). REAP is opening a new loan product – the Alice Integrity Loan Program. It is for loans up to \$5,000 and does not require collateral. It is available in Lancaster and adjacent counties plus Platte and Colfax. The REAP WBC is working with David and Associates to offer marketing workshops.

Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation) – Manufacturing day education tours – toured three manufacturing facilities with 25 counselors and teachers. Tri-County Job Fair scheduled for March 17, 2015. The Waco Industrial Building has sold. The Ruche Boutique

opened in York on October 1, 2014. Commercial land around the new Holthus Convention Center is for sale. Attended IEDC, headed to FabTech. Business succession achieved for K9 Kennels in York, which is now under new ownership. LB357 sales tax passed, will fund softball complex and quiet zone.

Paula Rhian (Excel Development Corporation) – Working on an application for a second phase of rental units in Falls City. Starting construction in Lincoln on the rehab of the Ambassador and President buildings in Lincoln. Three houses are current for sale in Seward.

Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln) – SENDD hired a new Community Development Specialist, Rian Harkins. Rian is heading our Nuisance Enforcement program. SENDD has active Nuisance Code Enforcement programs in Dorchester, Humboldt, Brock and Palmyra. Disaster housing grants are available through SENAHC for communities with damage in Otoe, Seward and Saunders counties. We are starting several Owner Occupied Rehabilitation projects in Crete, Fairbury, Nebraska City, Humboldt, Hebron, York and Tecumseh. Also starting up Downtown Revitalization (DTR) planning grants in Plattsmouth, Geneva, and Auburn, Community Investment Strategy (CIS) projects in Nebraska City and Plattsmouth, as well as a CDBG Public Works street project in Peru. SENDD assisted the City of Fairbury and the Bonham Theater in received funding from the CDBG Tourism Development Initiative program for removal of architectural barriers. SENDD is administering Down Payment Assistance (DPA) programs in Seward County and Fillmore County of which both programs have available funds for assistance.

Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln/Bradshaw) – SEND, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation that has been designated as a Non-Profit Development Organization (NDO) by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. We are currently educating counties and municipalities with CDBG Program Income Reuse Funds about this program. SEND, Inc. has also been awarded new loan funds that will be available for small businesses in the 15 county area. SENDD continues to provide administration of two LB840 programs and twelve CDBG EDLF Reuse Loan Fund programs. Working with two businesses on applications to the USDA-RD REAP program, as well as the City of Crete on a USDA-RD REDLG application.

Lisa Scheve (Cass County Nebraska EDC) – The Highway 75 opening is scheduled for November 6, 2014. Plattsmouth received recertification as a Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community. A Louisville downtown business that was destroyed by a fire this summer has been re-built and opening in December.

Jim Keeler (UNL Broadband Initiative) – Distributed a handout of technology use by businesses in Nebraska – regional comparisons. This report is also available on their website <http://broadband.nebraska.gov/>.

Community and Business Spotlights

Taylor Siebert, Striv.TV

Taylor Siebert is the owner of Striv.TV in Henderson. Taylor and his wife moved back to Henderson in 2010. He started this business which produces and broadcasts high school events on the internet. This includes streaming live video and audio broadcasts of local high school sporting events. This business has taken off through the power of social media. This business began with 6 schools signing up for the service. Now his is up to 43 schools. Taylor indicated that he is continuing to be innovative. He is now offering an educational component to this business, offering training classes to educate students on streaming.

Ken Liermann, Abengoa Bioenergy

Ken Liermann, Pilot Plant Manager at Abengoa Bioenergy in York gave a presentation on the Abengoa Bioenergy ethanol plant. He indicated that there is a great deal of research being conducted at the plant. They are continuing to look for ways to get more out of starch grains. The plant is proceeding with a 5,000 square foot office complex expansion. Ken then showed a promotional video to the SERN attendants about the York Abengoa Bioenergy plant.

Dr. Steve Eckman, York College Museum and Performing Arts Center

Dr. Steve Eckman, President of York College gave a presentation to the SERN group about York College. He stated that 10% of York College graduates reside in York County. This is significantly higher than in the past. York College is a private liberal arts college affiliated with the churches of Christ. They are proud of their 12:1 student to faculty ratio, with enrollment currently at 400 students.

Dr. Eckman stated that there are many new projects going on at the college. These are as follows: 1. They are in the process of starting learning communities and building a better web presence. 2. Clayton Museum of Ancient History – this is a new museum that will be located in the lower level of the Mackey Center on campus. This museum will include a collection artifacts focusing on the ancient Roman soldier, spanning a period from 3500 B.C. to the 17th century. This is from a private collection of C. Foster Stanback, who is donating this collection to the school. Mr. Stanback has invested money into the museum construction, which is underway. This will be a premier collection in the United States for Roman war artifacts. They are anticipating opening on April 15, 2015. 3. York College Performing Arts Center – York College is building a 12,000 square foot facility that will include a teaching center and theater/concert hall. This building will include classrooms for drama and other classes. Dr. Eckman summarized by stating that this is a very exciting time for the college.

LUNCH – Holthus Convention Center (catered by Kerry's Restaurant in McCool Junction)

Adjourn SERN Business Meeting

SERN Business Meeting was adjourned.

Feature Presentation: Tour of the Holthus Convention Center

Teri Carlson – Director of the Holthus Convention Center:

Teri Carlson, Director of the Holthus Convention Center in York gave a presentation about the facility. She stated that the total cost of the project was just over \$8 million. She was hired as the Director of the convention center in March. They have already held 12 events in the facility since mid October. This convention center was modeled after the Nielsen Community Center in West Point, NE. Teri stated that this convention center offers the perfect setup, with a convenient location off of Interstate 80, access to 800 lodging rooms near the facility, flexible meeting and event spaces, state of the art audiovisual and Wi-Fi, and a large grand ballroom that can accommodate a wide range of audiences. Construction is now complete and in September the facility was turned over to the City of York. Teri provided some insight into the donation process for the facility. She then conducted a tour of the facility for the SERN group.