

SouthEast (Nebraska) Resource Network (SERN)
Minutes from SERN Meeting
November 6, 2013
Hubbell, NE

Hosted by Jeremy Voss, TCEDA
Facilitated by Jen Olds

28 individuals were present for Business meeting including the following: Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Women's Business Center), Phyllis Schoenholz (UNL Extension), Jim Reiff (Nebraska Enterprise Fund), Dave Hahn (Nebraska Information Network), Lisa Beethe (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Humboldt), Kevin Burnison (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Humboldt), Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln/Bradshaw), Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln), Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation), Alan Richard (Pawnee City Economic Development), Elizabeth Chase (Nebraska Main Street Network), Ray Ringlein (Senator Johanns Office), Glennis McClure (Nebraska Enterprise Fund), Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation), Keith Ellis (NPPD), Michael Sothan (Main Street Beatrice), Imelda Catalan (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project-Hispanic Business Center), Jeremy Voss (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance), Al Dlouhy (Midwest Bank-Deshler), Gary Muell (American National Bank-Fairbury), Karen Stohs (Nebraska Department of Labor-Beatrice), Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association), Marcia Borchert (Pawnee County Promotional Network), Freda Wiedel (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance), Deb Craig (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance), Tim Armstrong (Great Plains Communications), Harold Stone (Stones Thoreau).

Welcome/Regular Business

Called to order at 10:03 A.M. by Jen Olds, SERN Chair. Jen welcomed attendees to The Acreage Steakhouse in Hubbell. She then provided an initial orientation to everyone in attendance on the meeting format, and reminded everyone to sign in on the attendance/sign-in sheet that was being passed distributed.

A. Treasurers Report

No changes in the treasury. Beginning and ending balance is still \$1,072.99. No receipts or expenditures in the last quarter.

B. Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes from the previous two SERN meetings (August 21, 2013 and June 19, 2013) 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. Set Schedule for 2014 SERN Meetings

At this time Chair Olds asked for volunteers to host quarterly SERN meetings in 2014. She explained that host responsibilities include finding a location, setting up catering/lunch, as well as lining up a guest speaker. Olds indicated that she will send out a press release/agenda, with the host handling the meeting RSVP's. At this time the following individuals volunteered to host a quarterly 2014 SERN meeting:

Quarter 1: Northwest Quadrant in York – Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation)
Quarter 2: Southwest Quadrant in Fillmore County – Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation)
Quarter 3: Southeast Quadrant in Gage County – Glennis McClure (Nebraska Enterprise Fund)
Quarter 4: Northeast Quadrant in Lincoln – Elizabeth Chase (Nebraska Main Street Network)

Nebraska Main Street Network – Elizabeth Chase

Elizabeth Chase, Director gave a power-point presentation on the Nebraska Main Street Network. She discussed the Main Street Program and the four point approach. The four point approach includes 1. Economic Restructuring 2. Design 3. Promotion and 4. Organization. Elizabeth provided some examples of existing Nebraska Main Street Communities, and discussed the varying levels of participation. Programs that Nebraska Main Street offers include (but are not limited to) technical support and training, conferences and workshops, lunch and learn, information resources, advocacy, promotion and marketing, grants and partnerships, as well as grant application assistance.

Elizabeth continued by stressing the importance of Main Streets and the many benefits of downtown revitalization. Main Streets are the center of employment for a community and a reflection of community pride. She stated that it takes commitment, funding, knowledge, working together, patience and participation for a successful Main Street program. For more information on Nebraska Main Street visit the website www.nebraskamainstreet.org. A Q & A session followed the power-point presentation.

Round Table Updates – Resource Providers & Community Updates

Keith Ellis (NPPD) – Attending FabTech trade show in Chicago November 18-20, 2013. Attending IPPE Expo in Atlanta January 28-30, 2014. Discussed ADY training, with over 60 people participating on marketing community. Working with communities on strategic planning; trend studies; community guides. Discussed an Entrepreneurial Study involving workforce, small business. A high-end survey assessment to assess entrepreneur needs and skills, partnership potential with DED, UNL Extension, Development Districts. He stressed the key is follow-up with local service providers. NPPD's role in entrepreneurship is to maximize existing services in Nebraska that already exist, and not create a new entrepreneurship service.

Michael Sothan (Main Street Beatrice) – Fairly new to this position. Currently working on community ties and staying involved with the community. Seeing success in implementing USDA-RBEG revolving loan funds. Downtown revitalization project along Highway 136 in downtown Beatrice. House and Home Exhibit by the National Endowment for the Humanities of the Mid American Arts Alliance to be on display from April 11 to May 24, 2014 in Beatrice. Homestead Days June 2014.

Lisa Hurley (York County Development Corporation) – Conducting travelling offices monthly in Henderson, Bradshaw, Benedict, Waco and McCool Junction. Will have 50 BRE's done by the end of the year. Starting to organize a job fair/career day for Spring 2014 for York County, with York College, area schools, chambers and YCDC. Attending FabTech trade show in Chicago later this month. Went to IEDC in October.

Kevin Burnison (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Humboldt) – Currently doing outreach to communities in the SENDD District, attending Village Board/City Council meetings. Mentioned that SENDD is currently contracting with communities on nuisance enforcement.

Glennis McClure (Nebraska Enterprise Fund) – NEF is transitioning to new leadership now and for a few months with the retirement of Rose Jasperson. Jim Reiff is the new Executive Director of NEF. NEF is all about helping with business development and helping with small and micro financing. They want to get to know the banks in your community. Visit NEF's website (www.nebbiz.org) for more information on NEF's programs and trainings.

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 Telehealth applications.

Ray Ringlein (U.S. Senator Mike Johanns Office) – Senator Mike Johanns website is www.johanns.senate.gov. On this website are links to Constituent Services. There is a new link for Nebraskans to tell their experience with changes to or signing up for 2014 health insurance. Everyone is encouraged to share their story for good or bad.

Jim Reiff (Nebraska Enterprise Fund) – New Executive Director with the Nebraska Enterprise Fund (NEF). First time in attendance. NEF offers alternative sources of funding to entrepreneurs, including direct loans, gap financing and collateral enhancement.

Craig Eberle (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln/Bradshaw) – SENDD has two loan programs available to provide funding up to \$150,000 to small businesses in SENDD counties/communities. SENDD is currently providing direct administration under contract of LB840 Local Municipal Option Tax programs and Community Development Block Grant – Reuse Loan programs in twelve SENDD member counties/communities. In October SENDD submitted an application for Non-Profit Development Organization (NDO) designation to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. This application was submitted under Southeast Nebraska Development, Inc. (SEND, Inc.), a non-profit corporation recently formed by the District. If approved, the NDO will act as a sub-recipient of CDBG ED Grants in the fifteen county SENDD District, of which subsequent loans would lose their federal requirements.

Jen Olds (Southeast Nebraska Development District-Lincoln) – SENDD serves 15 counties and approximately 110 municipalities with membership. New owner occupied housing rehab programs assisted by SENDD have been funded in Pawnee City, Falls City, Geneva, Fairmont and Deshler. Fillmore County received an NAHTF grant to continue a downpayment assistance program for homeownership. Additionally, SENDD assisted the City of Dorchester with a grant application that has been funded through CDBG for storm sewers/drainage project. In Thayer County, a CDBG planning grant is being submitted to assist Hubbell to conduct a preliminary engineering report for a Water study. SENDD is also available to assist communities with leadership certification and economic development certification applications through NDED.

Monica Braun (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Women's Business Center) – The 2014 Small Business Needs Assessment will be available early 2014 for resource providers and business owners to complete. MarketPlace Conference will be February 11, 2014 in West Point.

Al Dlouhy (Midwest Bank-Deshler) – Branch President with Midwest Bank in Deshler.

Phyllis Schoenholz (UNL Extension) – Hiring a new UNE Educator for Clay-Nuckolls-Thayer County. Broadband surveys for businesses until November 15. UNL Extension working with

the NACO Institute of Excellence, a year-long program of professional development for Nebraska county officials, as well as ECAP – Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process. Leading Locally in Thayer County will begin in January. Attended Rural Futures Institute Conference in Lincoln November 3-5. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack provided a keynote address. The lectures from this conference are archived and can be viewed later – she can send these links to Jen Olds for SERN reference.

Alan Richard (Pawnee City Economic Development) – Veterans Memorial Dedication to take place on Sunday, November 10. Still working on housing – new houses are being constructed in the country as young farmers have been coming back to Pawnee County. Assisted Living may be dead. C.J. Foods now at 105 employees. Working on annexation. Five Rivers RC&D is still very active in the area. They currently finished a three year planning program. Storefront façade improvement program in Pawnee City continues to be a good program.

Gary Muell (American National Bank-Fairbury) – American National Bank continues to seek financing opportunities. With products such as remote deposit capture, ANB is not limited by its geographic locations. We can work with schools, hospitals and medical centers, in addition to farmers and agri-businesses. A member of the Fairbury LB840 ED Review Committee.

Patt Lentfer (Fillmore County Development Corporation) – Dr. Stoner is the new Orthopedic Surgeon in the Fillmore County Hospital. FCDC hosted a SENDD Nuisance Abatement program in Geneva in October. Eddie's Station ribbon cutting held in June, it is now the office for the Geneva Chamber. Geneva State Bank in Geneva recently reopened after a \$1.5 Million remodeling project, with a new name in January "Heartland." York State Bank in Geneva currently involved with a remodeling project. First Bank of Utica opened a new branch in Milligan. Two new businesses in the Geneva Industrial Site: Winfield and Chaney Chemical. Countywide HOP program, also new housing rehab programs in Geneva and Fairmont. The Community Building in Shickley is now open and being used. Farmers and Ranchers College Series begins in November. High School Career Day took place in September, included Industry and Business tours.

Karen Stohs (Nebraska Department of Labor-Beatrice) – Department of Labor is working on an initiative to partner with local Chambers and Economic Development organizations to provide a "hyperlink" to jobs in their local areas. Based on an agreed search criteria this button will provide direct access to jobs through NeWorks, Nebraska's Labor Exchange System. The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program has money available for companies that have had their business affected by international trade. Continue to outreach to veterans. Connecting with dislocated workers that may need training. Worker training dollars are available to employers to train existing workforce.

Marcia Borchert (Pawnee County Promotional Network) – Working on Pawnee County video that will focus on tourism, coming back home, and history. Planning for the August 21, 2017 solar eclipse. The centerline for this eclipse goes through Pawnee County. St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Steinauer just completed a \$500,000 renovation. SENTC recently received an award from the Nebraska Travel Industry for best tourism organization.

Lisa Beethe (Southeast Nebraska Development District- Humboldt) – SENDD is available to assist communities with planning activities and needs identifications. SENDD Humboldt is working with new owner occupied rehabilitation projects in Falls City and Pawnee City.

Jim Ulrich (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) – Major focus for Economical Restructuring Committee is to develop affordable upper level housing in the downtown buildings. They hope to work with the resource agencies represented at this SERN meeting in their efforts of development.

Charles Jones (Plattsmouth Main Street Association) – HyVee in Plattsmouth is opening December 3. Victorian Christmas on Main scheduled for December 6. Movie “The CRIB” is a fifteen minute film with scenes being filmed around Plattsmouth. The Summer Music Program is scheduled for May-October 2014. They are currently looking at upper story housing in downtown Plattsmouth.

Tim Armstrong (Great Plans Communications) – State Operations Manager with Great Plans Communications. Great Plains Communications is transitioning their mission. A voice, video and data provider. Installed a statewide fiber network with ethernet and internet services.

Imelda Catalan (Rural Enterprise Assistance Project-Hispanic Business Center) – Creating a referral network in Southeast Nebraska. Visiting individual Hispanic business owners and providing technical assistance. Finding places to get trainings done.

Elizabeth Chase (Nebraska Main Street Network) – See the powerpoint presentation given earlier in the meeting, see link: <http://www.slideshare.net/elizabethchasenebraska/2013-nebraska-main-street-presentation>).

Jeremy Voss (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance) – Director of TCEDA. Welcomed everyone to The Acreage Steakhouse Hubbell for the SERN meeting. Will provide more info during the Community and Business Spotlight portion of the meeting.

Deb Craig (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance) – Associated with TCEDA, served as the interim director for a period until Jeremy was brought on. Also involved with the Arts Council of Thayer County (ACT).

Freda Wiedel (Thayer County Economic Development Alliance) – Member of TCEDA and a Hubbell resident. Attended the meeting to learn about programs and services offered by the attendees.

Harold Stone (Stones Thoreau) – Owner of Stones Thoreau in Davenport (population 300). Will be presenting in the afternoon session.

Community & Business Spotlights

Arts Council of Thayer County (ACT)

Deb Craig with TCEDA presented on the Arts Council of Thayer County. This volunteer organization was formed to operate the Majestic Theater in Hebron as a community theater. The Theater could not afford the required digital upgrades. Money was raised to replace the old projector, put in new seats, wall coverings and a new sound system. The movie theater is open and run completely by volunteers. The organization continues to reach out to all Thayer County communities to make this theater a county-wide project.

Thayer County Spotlight

Jeremy Voss, Executive Director of TCEDA highlighted some programs and activities that are being implemented or currently going on in Thayer County. A community orchard was put in on an old dilapidated lot in Hebron. The City purchased the land and handed over the orchard to be cared for by Eagle Scouts in Deshler. A JOBS grant was secured to put on a Classroom to Commerce program. A career counselor was hired in September to work with the three school districts in Thayer County. She travels to each school providing individual attention to students.

LUNCH – The Acreage Steakhouse

Adjourn SERN Business Meeting

SERN Business Meeting was adjourned at 12:55 P.M.

Feature Presentation: Community Cooperation – Stones Thoreau

Harold Stone – Stones Thoreau:

Harold is the owner of Stones Thoreau in Davenport. This business was formed from the ground up under the philosophy that ¼ section of ground can feed 25,000 people. This business focuses on the production, processing, and distribution of local, healthy foods. Through this business model he is attempting to bring economic and social self-reliance to Davenport Nebraska, which like many small towns is experiencing population decline. The project initially consisted of purchasing and rehabilitating a downtown building in Davenport, as well as purchasing farm ground for produce production. He has installed a community kitchen in his downtown Davenport building where he processes healthy food for distribution. Other expansions include purchasing a flash freezer, refrigerated trailer and increasing the size of his greenhouse. He has funded some of these expansions through acquiring various grants, including a recently obtained JOBS grant and a loan from Midwest Bank in Deshler.

Harold's plans are to expand operations in a larger scope of Thayer, Nuckolls, Fillmore and Clay counties with the goal of creating additional jobs. He encouraged everyone to check out his blog (<http://www.stonesthoreau.com/>) to learn more.