

NCRPC NEWS

A publication of the North Central Regional Planning Commission

■ Sept. 2018
www.ncrpc.org

Region Represented in New Initiative

“Land in Kansas” is a new statewide economic development initiative that launched in July with the goal of attracting investment and promoting business expansion.

Key components of the initiative, according to a Kansas Department of Commerce press release, include a new state marketing campaign, a review of economic development programs in the state, and a pilot program to enable communities across the state to better target specific areas for economic growth.

North Central Kansas is represented in the new strategic planning process. CloudCorp Executive Director Ashley

Hutchinson, Concordia, KS, has been named co-chair to lead a full evaluation of Kansas’ economic development strategy. Economic Development

Director for the City of Lenexa, Blake Schreck, also serves as co-chair.

According to Hutchinson, her role is to create a Request for Proposal (RFP) to analyze and audit the Kansas Department of Commerce Development programs and incentives. Three different stakeholder groups—including economic development professionals, business and industry leaders, and legislators—will be consulted to determine what to include in the RFP.



Logo courtesy of Kansas Department of Commerce.

“Our ultimate goal is to take a look at the programs we have now and see what is working and what isn’t. We are also interested in looking at successes in other states and seeing if those are a good fit for us and our industries,” Hutchinson said. “The completed report will create a guide for policy makers as we all work to Land in Kansas and Grow in Kansas.”

Hutchinson views this strategic

process as a positive step toward growing the state.

“I am excited about this initiative because it’s a chance for us to really look at the

whole picture instead of piecing together solutions,” Hutchinson said. “I am very excited to be representing rural communities. Our needs are sometimes much different than our counterparts in urban parts of the state and my co-chairman position is a signal that the Governor, along with the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture, are taking rural economic development very seriously.”

Contact Ashley at 785-243-2010 if you would like to provide input. ■

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— Ashley Hutchinson
CloudCorp Executive Director

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ABOUT US

Our Mission

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

Our Vision

By 2024, communities in rural Kansas will favor choices that embrace innovation, increase prosperity and demonstrate resilience.

Contact Us

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Internships Benefit Student Intern, Host Organization

An internship is a way for young adults to get credit for real-world experience. Interns work with an organization engaging in activities that provide them with new learning while benefiting the host organization. One funding source for internships is the Dane G. Hansen Foundation Community Intern Initiative. It matches Northwest Kansas communities or organizations that have a specific need with upper-level college students to address that need during a summer internship.

Communities or organizations first identify a community improvement project — such as downtown revitalization planning; community website/marketing; park or trail improvement; design for re-purposing an old building; or a host of other possibilities — and then apply to host an intern to assist with the project beginning in late May and ending in early August. Hosts in 2018 were City of Belleville, Jewell County Economic Development, Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation, North Central Regional Planning Commission, Ad Astra Music Festival of Russell and Wallace County Community Foundation.

Emily Reno, 2018 Hansen Intern for NCRPC, focused on food system information gathering as part of a regional food system assessment the NCRPC is doing in 2018 and 2019.

“While the first day on the job gave me somewhat of an indication of



Doug McKinney has been NCRPC Executive Director since 2008.

what my summer would look like, it in no way prepared me for the friendships I was to form in just a short period of time. And little did I know that I would soon find myself immersed in rural culture down to every last county fair, harvest festival, and Fun Day,” Reno said. “North Central Kansas is truly a unique place. Enough for me to consider it as a place I could come back to and call my home.”

Two interns with Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation focused on downtown building façade improvements. Some of the signage and improvement ideas they laid out will occur yet this year.

“It was definitely worthwhile,” Kelly Larson, Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation Executive Director, said.

Russ Piroutek, Belleville City Clerk, said the city hosted an intern who was able to work on community center concepts for the downtown area and gain a great deal of public feedback about the ideas generated.

Jewell County hosted two interns in 2018. They worked on deteriorating building and spatial

development options in various downtown areas. They also worked with the Jewell County Health Coalition on fitness center options.

“It was a great project with lots of value,” Jenny Russell, Coordinator for Jewell County Community Development Association, said. “Hansen support was imperative!”

Another example of a successful internship program is the Nex-Generation Student Internship Program. In 2018, 56 businesses across Northwest and North Central Kansas hosted 68 high school and college interns.

“One of our main objectives is to expose students to Northwest and North Central Kansas workforce opportunities at an early age and encourage them to look for jobs right here at home,” Mendi Anschutz, Nex-Tech’s Economic Development/Networking Specialist, said. “We launched this program through Nex-Tech in 2011 with 6 interns. Three years ago, we opened up the program to local businesses, and a true culture shift has begun.”

At the conclusion of her internship, Emily Reno wrote a Letter to the Editor at the Beloit Call. To read the letter, visit www.ncrpc.org/2018intern.

For more information about the Hansen Intern Initiative, visit <https://bit.ly/2CW814J>. For more information about the Nex-Generation Student Internship Program, visit <https://bit.ly/2OkqVEP>. ■

Rural Voices Contest Open to NC KS High School Seniors

High school seniors in North Central Kansas are invited to compete for a chance to win \$850 by submitting an essay or video in the 2018-2019 Rural Voices Youth Contest. The NCRPC sponsors the contest and has awarded more than

\$20,000 to seniors from around the region since 2006.

Students submitting the top entry in each category will receive a cash award of \$850 and the winning entries will be published on the NCRPC website. Entries are to be reflective of

this year’s contest theme, which is “Rural Kansas...My Community.”

Any senior in high school who lives in or attends a school in the 12-county NCRPC service area is eligible. The deadline is November 30. For details, visit www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices. ■

Claiming Your Google Place Listing

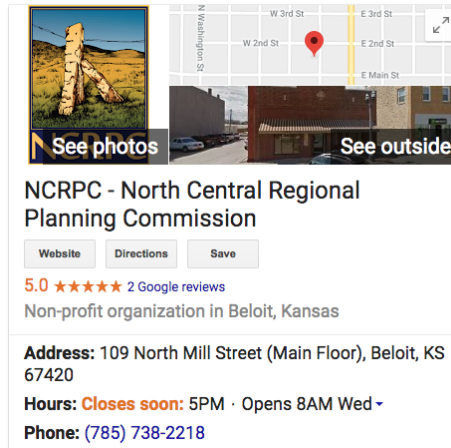
Written by the Kansas State University
Center for Rural Enterprise Engagement

One of the easiest, but most overlooked aspects of online marketing is claiming your Google Place listing. This is a feature that allows information about your business to populate on the right-hand side of the Google search results page. Claiming your business's online identity in this way allows potential clients to find you and know that you are currently operating. Photos will help them know what your storefront looks like, so it can be identified when they plan a visit. Filling out all sections of the form will allow searchers to click directly into your website or social media pages, reducing the level of searching required to learn about your business.

Claiming your business's Google Place will allow people to view quite a few details about the business when they search with Google, particularly contact information and hours of operation. This is a simple, yet crucial part of getting a business started out on the right track online. While creating a presence on social media is important, the majority of people still search for a business on Google first to find information. We do not want to lose them at the beginning before they get a chance to see any of the social media on which a business may have worked so hard.

Let's Get Started!

- 1 Visit www.google.com/business and click the green Manage Now button.



This partial screenshot is an example of what it looks like to have claimed your place on Google.

- 2 You will be prompted on the next page to add the name of your business. Be sure it is accurate and click Next.
- 3 Now add in your business location and then it will bring up businesses around the address you provided.
- 4 Next it wants you to categorize your business, then add the phone number and website.
- 5 You're finished! Select Finish and be sure to verify your location.
- 6 You will then be directed to your business page dashboard and here you can manage it further.

Claim your business today and do not miss out on another customer!

For more information about online marketing with new-media tools like websites, e-newsletters, social-media, and e-commerce, visit our learning resource at RuralEngagement.org. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Thursday, September 27, 2018
Thursday, October 25, 2018
Thursday, December 6, 2018
NCRPC Executive Board Meetings
Beloit Office, 2 p.m.

Friday, November 9, 2018
NCRPC/NCKCN Banquet
Life's Finer Moments Lodge
Clay Center, KS, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
RSVP by November 2.

NEWS BRIEFS

Make Plans to Attend Banquet November 9

The NCRPC Banquet is Friday, November 9 at Life's Finer Moments Lodge located just outside of Clay Center.

This year's event will be a noon luncheon preceded by a brief social beginning at 11:30 a.m. The featured speaker will be Ed O'Malley, Kansas Leadership Center President & CEO.

The bi-annual banquet is also hosted on behalf of NCRPC's affiliate, North Central Kansas Community Network (NCKCN).

The cost is \$10 per person. RSVP by November 2 by calling 785-738-2218 or emailing kfinney@nckcn.com. Current and past board members and spouses are invited to attend at no cost. ■

Hotspot Locations Added

NCK-WiFi, the free Internet service provided by Cunningham Telephone & Cable (CTC) and NCKCN, continues to expand throughout North Central Kansas.

Locations such as Blosser RV Park in Concordia



and Emerson Lake in Jewell are among a few new hotspots and there are plans for more. NCK-WiFi is now available in 15 areas within six cities/towns. For a list of locations, visit www.nck-wifi.com/about/locations.php.

NCK-WiFi was also made available at many summer events such as Cloud County Fair in Concordia, Mitchell County Fair in Beloit, and the NCK Free Fair in Belleville. CTC and NCKCN hope you enjoyed this free service during these festivities! ■



North Central
Regional Planning Commission

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NCRPC/Bank Complete Homebuyer Assistance Project

NCRPC/Wilson State Bank has completed a \$20,000 project that assisted buyers in purchasing homes in Wilson, KS. The program was made possible through a FHLBank's Joint Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) Program award of \$25,000 to the bank on behalf of North Central Kansas Community Network, Co. (NCKCN). NCRPC Business Finance Director Debra Peters prepared the application; however, the funding source is no longer available. The remaining \$5,000 of the project award was granted to local restaurants to install grease traps to comply with new city requirements and to create a new housing brochure available at City Hall.

Homebuyers applied for project funds through the Wilson Housing Down Payment Assistance 0% Loan/

Grant Program available exclusively from the Wilson State Bank at its Wilson location.

Project funds were used to assist in the purchase of four homes in Wilson totaling \$233,600, with \$20,000 coming from the FHLBank JOBS Program.

The recently completed housing project resulted in a leverage of \$11.68 of local funds for each \$1 of program funds and employment impact of four jobs within the City of Wilson. Geneva Myers and Irv Mitchell of Wilson State Bank facilitated the program locally.

The program was developed and administered by Peters/NCRPC and its 501(c)3 affiliate, NCKCN.



The Wilson State Bank FHLBank JOBS award assisted homebuyers. Photo courtesy of Shelly Whitmer/Princ Appraisal

Recaptured funds will become a part of the NCKCN-Four Rivers Down Payment Assistance Loan Program that is available to businesses located in Wilson, Ellsworth County, and the remaining 11-county NCRPC service area in North Central Kansas.

For more information about this or other NCRPC business finance programs, contact Debra Peters at dpeters@nckcn.com. ■