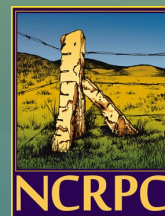


NCRPC NEWS

An update from the North Central Regional Planning Commission



ABOUT US

Our Mission

Advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.

Our Commitment

At the NCRPC, we are committed to giving our member Cities and Counties the best service possible. If you ever feel we are not putting our best foot forward, please reach out to Emily Benedick, Executive Director, at ebenedick@nckcn.com or 785-738-2218. Your feedback is always welcome!

Contact Us

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North Central Kansas Food Council Creating Local Foods Directory

The North Central Kansas Food Council (NCKFC) is developing a regional directory of growers/producers to highlight local businesses and better connect local food products and consumers.

The directory will be used to help promote local foods in the 12-county region the NCKFC serves – including the counties of Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline and Washington. It will also feature local markets, farmers markets, and food processors — essentially serving as a “one-stop shop” to find food resources in the region.

Local growers/producers in the region interested in promoting their business are invited to complete a directory form. The form is available at www.ncrpc.org/nckfoodcouncil.

The project is spearheaded by Taylor Stewart, a Dane Hansen Community Intern with the North Central Kansas Food Council. Her position is made possible through the Dane G. Hansen Foundation and K-State Research and Extension Community Intern program. The North Central Regional Planning Commission collaborates to administer the North Central Kansas Food Council initiative.

“This is a great opportunity for growers and producers to market their business and reach a wider audience of customers while there is growing momentum around local food due to COVID-19,” Stewart said. “There have



Taylor Stewart

been separate efforts to create food directories in the past, but our goal is to create a comprehensive directory and map specific to the region that is sustainable in the long-term.”

Originally from Gardner, Kansas, Stewart graduated from Kansas State University in May with a bachelor’s degree in Life Sciences, secondary major in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, and minor in Nonprofit Leadership Studies.

“This is a great opportunity for growers and producers to market their business and reach a wider audience of customers while there is growing momentum around local food due to COVID-19.”

Taylor Stewart, Dane Hansen Community Intern with the North Central Kansas Food Council

“Taylor brings energy and experience in community-based initiatives that are an asset to the North Central Kansas Food Council,” Emily Benedick, North Central Regional Planning Commission Executive Director, said. “We are pleased to host

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

TORKELSON CELEBRATES 40-YEAR MILESTONE WITH NCRPC

Change. That has been one constant in Carol Torkelson's 40-year career with the North Central Regional Planning Commission.

Torkelson celebrated the 40-year milestone on May 19. During her tenure, Carol has worn several hats. She hired on as a bookkeeper, which evolved to administrative assistant and personnel officer. She has been housing director since 2008. Technology has changed significantly during this time.

"When I started, I was using onion skin paper and carbon paper to make duplicates in a typewriter and we were doing ledgers by hand," Torkelson said. "Now, technology is so advanced that our staff could work remotely this spring when the office was temporarily closed."

She also recalls Internet discussions taking place early on at an annual meeting.

"Our executive director at the time, John Cyr, wrote a demonstration grant and North Central Kansas Community Network, also known as NCKCN, got its start," Torkelson said. NCKCN continues to connect rural households and businesses to the Internet through a variety of services.

Office staffing and location have been other key changes during her



Carol Torkelson has been with NCRPC since 1980 and has been housing director since 2008.

career. When Carol began with the organization in 1980, she worked under the very first executive director in the basement of the Beloit Municipal Building. The office moved to two different locations on Main Street before moving to its current location at 109 N. Mill Street in Beloit.

"When we moved to this building, there were empty offices. Now every office is full and some are even doubled up," Torkelson said. "In 2022, the NCRPC will celebrate 50 years and is under the leadership of just its fifth executive director since the organization was formed. To me, that really speaks to the history of the organization and the commitment of many long-term staff members."

According to Carol, the importance of people and relationships has remained constant.

"When I reflect back, I think about all of the people that have been

involved with the organization over the years — not only staff, but also local governments, board members, and many from agencies and other groups that we routinely partner with," Torkelson said. "The interaction with people has been special."

Originally from rural Osborne, Carol had just graduated from North Central Kansas Area Vocational-Technical School (now known as NCK Tech) when she applied at NCRPC. During her 40 years with the organization, Carol got married, raised kids, and is now enjoying grandkids and watching others in the office raise kids.

"So much life has happened here," Carol said. "I am thankful for the organization being family-oriented and flexible."

Torkelson has helped many individuals and communities in the region over the past 40 years.

"Carol's unwavering commitment to the NCRPC, as well as her big heart for helping and working with our communities, is aspirational," NCRPC Executive Director Emily Benedick said. "She has seen the NCRPC through all the ups and downs over the last 40 years never hesitating to step in where she is needed to help move the organization forward."

EVENTS & DEADLINES

Thursday, July 30, 2020*
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Beloit Office and via Zoom, 2 p.m.

Thursday, August 27, 2020*
NCRPC Executive Board Meeting
Ottawa County Courthouse
Minneapolis, KS, 2 p.m.

*Note: Given the uncertainties of scheduling events at this time, please check the website for the latest information.

Events: www.ncrpc.org/news/events

Funding sources and deadlines:
www.ncrpc.org/funding

DIRECTORY



NCK FOOD COUNCIL

GET ON THE MAP

THE NCK FOOD COUNCIL IS IN SEARCH OF REGIONAL GROWERS/PRODUCERS FOR A WEBSITE DIRECTORY

Fill out the Form if you want to connect your business to local Kansas consumers!

<https://bit.ly/37UbVYB>

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Taylor this summer and encourage local growers/producers to reach out to her to be included in the directory."

For more information, visit www.ncrpc.org/nckfoodcouncil, contact Taylor at nckfc@nckcn.com or like North Central Kansas Food Council on Facebook. Stewart's internship ends August 7.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

MULTIPLE PROGRAMS INVOLVED WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO ELLSWORTH HOME

When Elizabeth George purchased her Ellsworth home, the list of needed improvements was long. Fortunately for her, the timing was perfect to participate in the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing rehabilitation project.

The City of Ellsworth was awarded funds for a CDBG housing project in 2018. The CDBG program is administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

George also participated in the First Time Home Buyer Program and received Weatherization Assistance. Both programs are administered by the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation.

"The George home really showcases what can be achieved when multiple programs are involved," NCRPC Housing Director Carol Torkelson said.

North Central Regional Planning Commission completed the inspection for the First Time Home Buyer program and administered the CDBG project for the City of Ellsworth. It also operates the Weatherization Assistance Program

in a 41-county service area — including Ellsworth County.

"The timing of all three programs worked out really well," Torkelson said. "Running the Weatherization Assistance program along with the city's CDBG Housing Rehabilitation project also helped maximize the use of funds for both programs and helped get a home up to the state standards."

The City of Ellsworth was awarded a previous CDBG housing rehabilitation project in 2014 and understood the potential benefits for its citizens.

"A lot of times, citizens have full intentions and desire to update or fix problems with their homes, but it is just not financially feasible," Ellsworth Mayor Mark Kennedy said. "For a small financial commitment from the city, we can see tangible evidence of benefit in an area of need."



Multiple programs were involved in the recent improvements to this Ellsworth home. (Courtesy Photo)

The majority of the work done on the George home included replacing windows, replacing exterior doors as needed, and various insulation measures to improve energy efficiency. The improvements have helped lower George's utility bills while increasing her peace of mind and pride in her home.

"I feel as a resident of a community that has taken part in the CDBG program, it has only improved our community," George said. "It is a great thing to see neighborhoods come back to life and know that you had a part in it."

PLANNING KEY TO PROJECT SUCCESS

COMMUNITIES CONSIDERING CDBG WATER/SEWER APPLICATIONS SHOULD BEGIN PLANNING NOW

Project planning is essential for funding success. Communities with water or sewer project needs that are considering an application to the Community Development Block Grant program should start planning now for next year's funding round.

Beginning with the FY 2021 competitive round of funding due this fall, all water and sewer projects over \$3 million total cost must have final design plans and specs submitted to KDHE before the application deadline. This new guideline could add to the timeline for applying.

"Cities will need to be in communication with their engineers

much earlier on in the process in order to get the design submitted to KDHE before applying for CDBG grants in the fall," Amanda Horn, NCRPC Community Development Specialist, said. "Our advice would be to get in touch with us and the engineers as soon as possible if they have any water or sewer needs for the FY2022 year to start the process for full Preliminary Engineering Report and design."

The NCRPC staff can also help cities determine if they meet Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) eligibility criteria, discuss potential funding options, procure an engineer if needed, and make an informed decision when

the time is right. Examples of eligible activities for the water and sewer funding category include water distribution systems, sewer systems, lagoons, wastewater treatment plants, and water treatment plants.

All applicants for water or sewer grants must also meet with the Kansas Interagency Advisory Committee (KIAC) prior to the application due date. These meetings can fill quickly — another reason for early planning.

To learn more, visit www.kansascommerce.gov/cdbg or contact Amanda Horn or Emily Benedick at the NCRPC to discuss your project needs.



North Central Regional Planning Commission

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Finance Program Assists in Concordia Business Transition

A passion for the car business has led Darell Gallegos on a journey to achieve his dream of owning a dealership. Gallegos purchased the Concordia, Kansas, Ford dealership, previously known as Womack Sunshine Ford, in late 2019.

The new name of the dealership is Farm Country Ford — a name Darell says is meant to honor the community's agricultural roots. It is also a Kawasaki franchise and offers a lineup of motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and utility/recreational vehicles.

Darell's roots to a Ford dealership begin at the age of 18 when he worked for local Ford dealers while attending Hutchinson Community College and Wichita State University. He went to work for Ford Motor Credit Company after graduation, which is where he met Steve Womack Sr., owner of the

Concordia Ford franchise. The two connected and, in 2018, Gallegos became the general manager at Womack. Darell purchased the dealership in late 2019 when owners Steve Sr. and Judy Womack were ready to retire.

The project to transition the business to new ownership was made possible with investment by the owner as well as funding from The Citizens National Bank and the NCK-Four Rivers Business Down Payment Assistance Loan Program. For more information about the financing programs used, contact NCRPC Business Finance Director Debra



Darell Gallegos (left) purchased the Concordia Ford dealership, located at 1510 E. 6th Street, from owners Steve Womack Sr. (right) and Judy Womack in 2019. (Courtesy Photo)

Peters at 785-738-2218 or visit www.ncrpc.org/services/business. For more information about the business, visit www.farmcountryford.com.