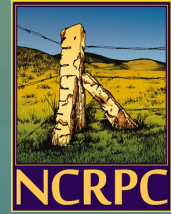


NCRPC NEWS

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 executivedirector@ncrpc.org.

Contact Us

109 N. Mill, PO Box 565
Beloit, KS 67420 | 785-738-2218
www.ncrpc.org
[facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit](https://www.facebook.com/ncrpcbeloit)

If you have a story idea or would like to update your address, contact us at: communications@ncrpc.org.

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RURAL VOICES WINNERS NAMED

TWO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS RECEIVE RURAL VOICES CONTEST AWARDS

Two high school seniors in North Central Kansas are being recognized with the John R. Cyr Rural Voices Award for submitting the top entries in the 2020-2021 Rural Voices Youth Contest sponsored by the NCRPC.

Avery Johnson, a senior at Beloit Jr-Sr High School, and Carrie Roe, a senior at Herington High School, submitted the winning entries in this year's contest. Each will receive a cash award of \$850. The contest awards are named in honor of John Cyr who served for 22 years as the NCRPC Executive Director. Since 2006, more than \$26,000 has been awarded through the Rural Voices contest.

Students had the option to submit an original essay or video reflective of this year's contest theme of "Rural Kansas... Tomorrow's Possibilities."

High school seniors in the 12-county NCRPC service area were eligible to participate.

"The Rural Voices Youth Contest provides an excellent opportunity for high school seniors to truly reflect on how living in rural Kansas has shaped their lives," NCRPC Executive Director Emily Benedick said. "In a time when recruiting our youth back to rural Kansas becomes increasingly difficult, I think the Rural Voices process leaves participants with a greater sense of appreciation for a rural upbringing."

Details on the 2021-2022 Rural Voices Youth Contest will be announced in the Fall. To view the winning entries or to learn more about the contest, visit www.ncrpc.org/ruralvoices.

From the Winners...



"As with all rural populations we face challenges that will test the progression of our community. However, we are blessed with strong community leadership, generational visionaries, and passionate citizens who are dedicated to the continued advancement of our small but mighty community. My vision of 2030 is following the road back home and leading my generation through the same continued excellence."

Avery Johnson | submitted top video entry



"I've enjoyed every moment of growing up in a small town, which is why it was so important that others understand that rural Kansas has so many opportunities for people to be successful and thrive. We need to protect our rural communities and give them the chance to prosper so they can do the same for future generations."

Carrie Roe | submitted top written entry

NEWS BRIEFS

CDBG Awards Announced

Good news came to several North Central Kansas communities last month in the form of a grant award. The awards will help complete a variety of improvement projects across the region. The funding comes from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce.

NCRPC staff assisted with the following projects and will provide project administration.

The City of Concordia was awarded \$48,975 for the demolition of dilapidated houses and garages/sheds. The city will contribute an equal amount in matching funds.

Lincoln County was awarded \$35,763 for three new warning sirens. The county will contribute an equal amount in matching funds.

The City of Mankato was awarded \$600,000 for water distribution system improvements. The city will provide \$2,399,857 in matching funds it secured through USDA Rural Development.

The City of Vermillion was awarded \$250,000 for a water source and distribution improvement project. The city will provide \$1,374,007 in matching funds it is securing through USDA Rural Development grant and loan funds.

The City of Wilson was awarded \$300,000 for housing rehabilitation and demolition. Local matching funds will provide another \$11,750 for the project.

For more information about the CDBG program, visit www.kansascommerce.gov/cdbg or contact the NCRPC staff.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

CITY OF TIPTON SOLVES DRAINAGE ISSUES

Perseverance paid off for the City of Tipton. When the first attempt to secure project funding for a storm drainage system improvement project was denied, the city council went back to the drawing board and narrowed the scope of work. Those efforts were rewarded with funding from the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in the community facilities category. The 2019 award of \$101,665 was matched with an equal amount from the city.

The resulting project improved the city's storm drainage system by installing new culvert pipes, a portion of enclosed storm sewer, area inlets, ditch grading and minor street repairs. It was completed in Fall 2020.

Residents and visitors alike have noticed and appreciated the changes. Prior to the project, there were significant problems with erosion, silting, drainage, standing water and mowing. This project eliminated those issues and solved a problem that had been on the city's radar for many years.

"When I started on the city council in 1993, one of the first requests I received was to do something about the ditch on Main Street," Tipton City Clerk Joanne Brummer said.

According to city council members, the project benefits have been numerous. The overall appearance has improved, the system is easier to maintain, safety issues with the deep ditches were resolved, and there is also potential for growth with improved access to empty lots.

Jessica Krier, a member of the Tipton City Council, is a homeowner on south Main Street adjacent to the recent project.

"We have been very pleased with the results of the recent drainage project in Tipton," Krier said. "Since moving in to this home, I have stressed about the water collecting in the ditch with younger children. Thankfully, this



A recent project in the City of Tipton improved the city's storm drainage system.



The addition of area inlets on Main Street help collect the water coming off of the road.

project has not only upgraded the appearance of our home, but it has also greatly improved the safety of our yard for my family."

Key partners involved with the project included Ron Schlaefli Construction and project engineers Schwab Eaton. NCRPC staff provided project planning assistance, grant writing and administration.

The City of Tipton, a small community located in the southwest corner of Mitchell County, is no stranger to improvement projects.

"Tipton's citizens demonstrate a great deal of pride and commitment to solving problems and continually improving their community," NCRPC Community Development Representative Amanda Horn said.

The Tipton City Council says they have been fortunate to receive a number of grants over the years to help fund various projects.

There are many great things happening in North Central Kansas. Project Spotlight shares stories from communities around the region and how they solved challenges.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT REFLECTS ON TRAINING EXPERIENCE

BY ELLEN BARBER

Leadership has many definitions, but I like the one the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) uses — “It’s an activity that mobilizes others to make progress on difficult challenges.” Anyone can do that sort of leadership; they don’t have to have a title. I guess that speaks to me too, because what I do, economic development, is all about doing the hard things, and not doing it alone, because that’s just impossible.

I was able to attend the KLC’s Leadership Edge Class via Zoom recently on the Doug McKinney Scholarship from the North Central Regional Planning Commission. It was a unique covid-safe experience with nearly 200 people sharing the screen and being “dropped” into small groups for fleshing out the concepts.

Something I learned was that there are two parts to leadership and choosing the skills that go with each type becomes crucial to success. One type is the how-to or technical skill side. I deal with this having to follow rules in speaking to city councils, in writing a grant, or finding research. There isn’t usually a lot of conflict or different interpretations here.



Ellen Barber is Executive Director of Marshall County Partnership 4 Growth and was the first recipient of the McKinney Leadership Scholarship.

But the other leadership part is adaptive. It requires “new learning with stakeholders engaged in smart experimentation.” Lots of interpretation here! That’s where the leadership gets hard. Cultures at work, home, and community don’t always care to experiment or try new things. There is unwanted conflict that comes from the “unspoken motivations” involved with changes to a system. Yet an open mind and a willingness to learn and grow and try new things to benefit others is a key to any progress. Challenging the status quo and asking good questions helps people grow their viewpoints.

For more lessons learned from Barber’s Leadership Edge experience, see the full article at www.ncrpc.org/leadershiptrainingexperience.



Applications Being Accepted for Leadership Scholarship

Applications are now being accepted for the second annual McKinney Leadership Scholarship. The award sponsors an individual to attend the “Your Leadership Edge” training program offered by the Kansas Leadership Center, Wichita. The training is being offered virtually in 2021.

The scholarship will be awarded to an individual living and/or working in the NCRPC 12-county service area who has shown commitment to improving their community or work place. Preference will be given to those serving local government or non-profits and those who do not have the option of being sponsored by their employer. The award is named in honor of past NCRPC Executive Director Doug McKinney.

The deadline to apply is June 1. To learn more or view the application, visit www.ncrpc.org/leadershipscholarship.

EVENTS & DEADLINES

Wednesday, March 24, 2021
Thursday, April 29, 2021
NCRPC Executive Board Meetings
Beloit Office and via Zoom, 2 p.m.

Events: www.ncrpc.org/news/events

Did you Know?

We maintain a list of funding opportunities potentially available for various projects in the region. Find the resource here: www.ncrpc.org/resources/funding

MEET THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Ron Copple recently joined the NCRPC Executive Board after being elected to the Cloud County Board of Commissioners. As a commissioner, he also serves on the boards of Pawnee Mental Health Services and the Cloud County Resource Center.

Copple is Director of Public Works for the City of Concordia. In this role he oversees the day-to-day operations and prepares budgets for the Street, Parks, Pool, and



Ron Copple

Cemetery departments. He has been in his current position for 20 years and with the city for 36 years. A native of Cloud County, Ron is active in his community. He also enjoys bow hunting deer, riding his Harley Davidson, traveling and spending time with family.



North Central Regional Planning Commission

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NCK BUSINESS RELIEF LOAN PROGRAM UPDATE

SECOND PHASE ANNOUNCED FOR BUSINESSES LESS THAN 2 YEARS OLD

A second phase of the NCK Business Relief Loan Program is now available — this time for businesses less than two years old.

“This next phase was developed to help businesses that have not been eligible for some of the other COVID-19 economic relief programs that are available due to the start date of the business,” NCRPC Business Finance Director Debra Peters said.

The newest loan funding will assist start-up businesses in North Central Kansas adversely impacted by COVID-19. Businesses must be less than 2 years old and have started no later than August 1, 2020. Funding requests for the program are being accepted on qualified applications on a first come, first served basis until funds are exhausted or the program ends on



December 31, 2021. All owners must have a credit score of 700 or greater prior to the pandemic.

The new program provides loans on favorable terms for response and recovery needs due to the COVID-19 crisis. For-profit businesses less than 2 years old in Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Washington counties are eligible for the program. Loan funds may be used for operating capital/inventory and asset purchases needed to pivot operations/increase productivity.

Phase 1 of the NCK Business Relief Loan Program launched in November

2020. The NCRPC is administering the program. Phase 1 was made possible through funding from the U.S. Department of

Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). Program demand was high and all funds were allocated by December 31, 2020.

Funding for the new phase was made possible through generous donations from area banks and the NCKCN-Four Rivers Business Loan Pool.

To learn more about the NCK Business Relief Loan Program for Businesses Less than 2 Years Old, contact Debra Peters at 785-738-2218 or businessfinance@ncrpc.org or visit the website at www.ncrpc.org/services/nckbusinessreliefstartups/.