

July 2007

Volume 3, Issue 3



A Quarterly Publication of the South Central Economic Development District - (308) 995-3190

Board of Directors

Chairman

Jerrell Gerdes
Franklin County

Vice Chairman

Bob Humiston
Hall County

Secretary

Vincent Reyes
Private Citizen

Treasurer

Rodale Emken
Phelps County

Board Members

Eldon Orthman
Adams County

Timothy Loewenstein
Buffalo County

Barb Barnett
Clay County

Wally Driewer
Hamilton County

Lonny Hanna
Harlan County

Rex Weller
Merrick County

Roger Watson
Nuckolls County

Laura Roybal
Webster County

Merrill Duntz
Public Service

Executive Director

Sharon Hueffle
sharonh@scedd.us

Newsletter Editor

Natalie Nelsen

Published Quarterly –
January, April, July,
October

Attend the 2007 Nebraska Rural Institute in Holdrege, September 17-19!

Winners Working Together

Working together will be a centerpiece for workshops throughout this year's Institute. Whether it's deciding when and how to collaborate on issues of local interest or finding ways to reach a consensus in a group setting, Institute participants will truly explore creative collaborative capabilities.

With a program featuring two keynote speakers, Mark Drabenstott, Director of the RUPRI Center for Regional Competitiveness, and Jerry Nagel, President of Northern Great Plains, Inc., this year's Institute has the winning combination of presenters and workshops.

Mobile workshops at this year's Institute include a water and ecotourism workshop and also a regional successes workshop at local businesses. Several workshops will also highlight how to implement technology such as podcasting in community projects.

Why attend the Nebraska Rural Institute?

The Rural Institute is a place to share ideas with other professionals, develop new skills and knowledge in the area of rural development and network with peers.

Your Input is Vital!

The South Central Economic Development District, Inc. (SCEDD), in partnership with the South Central Nebraska and Trailblazer Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, is in the process of bringing together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. Your input is invaluable to this process. Please take ten minutes to complete the online survey at www.scedd.us, available now through August 15, 2007. All individual responses will remain anonymous.

Business Succession Workshops

Small business means big things for rural Nebraska towns and communities. All businesses will transfer at some stage of their life cycle. Two out of three firms lack a written strategic plan for business transition, and most companies have no plan of any kind. A coordinated team of professionals can help business owners move forward with a positive comprehensive approach, a well-reasoned plan and a buy/sell agreement that works for all parties.

A seminar designed for community leaders and professionals and based on “**Business Succession: The Business Trek**” materials developed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Creighton University School of Law and the Nebraska Business Development Center-Wayne State College, was conducted on Wednesday, June 13, 2007, at the City Auditorium in Nelson. Thirty-six bankers, lawyers, accountants and service providers interested in serving clients and promoting community awareness about transferring a business attended the workshop. Comments from attendees included “Necessary information that business owners must hear.” and “Very educational and helpful – this is a huge issue.”

A Business Succession seminar for farmers, ranchers and business owners will be held in the Holdrege/Minden area the evening of Monday, September 24, 2007. Contact the Holdrege Chamber of Commerce, 308-995-4444 or chamber@holdrege.org, or Sharon Hueftle, 308-995-3190 or sharonh@scedd.us for more information. Pre-registration will be required.

Get Your Community Thinking About Business Succession

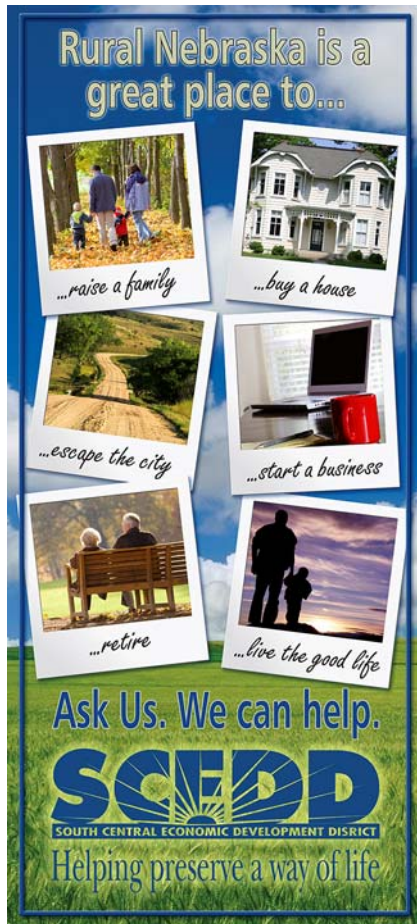
The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City-Omaha Branch has put together a presentation to raise community awareness about business succession. Sharon Hueftle with SCEDD and Dena Beck with REAP are available to bring this presentation to your community group. Please call the SCEDD office if you are interested in having Sharon or Dena present this material at an upcoming meeting of your Economic Development, Chamber, Rotary, etc.

SCEDD Receives Official EDD Designation

The South Central Economic Development District, Inc. received word from the United States Department of Commerce that it has been officially designated as an EDA Economic Development District in accordance with Section 401 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. 3171). Culminating nearly four years of work, this is an important milestone for the District. This designation provides an important avenue for federal funding for SCEDD, Inc. as well as the communities within the District. Kudos to all those who worked diligently to ensure this designation!

SCEDD also received notification of approval of IRS 501(c)(3) status for the organization. This will enable the District to apply for grant funding only available to tax exempt organizations and also receive tax deductible gifts. Another milestone!

The South Central Economic Development District exists to develop and promote a positive economic climate, which supports regional growth.



News from the District



Photo courtesy of the Aurora News Register

Aurora EDGE Class a Success

From the Aurora News Register by Kurt Johnson

A program designed to help nurture and guide new small business owners graduated its first class of entrepreneurs May 1.

“Entrepreneurship is certainly needed in rural Nebraska,” class instructor Nancy Eberle said in a celebration ceremony at the Bremer Center. “It is something we all need to support and I just can’t say enough about this unique group of individuals.”

This year’s program began Jan. 9 and included 12, 3-1/2 hour sessions over a 16-week period.

The Hamilton Strategic EDGE program, which stands for Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs, challenged nine area individuals to improve their chances of succeeding by writing a detailed business plan. It was demanding work, Eberle said, forcing those with an idea or young business to think about their dreams from a different perspective.

“No pain, no gain,” she said, “and there was a lot of pain that went with this class. The homework was tremendous and it required a lot of effort, but they hung in there tough and got it done.”

Eberle noted, for example, how some class participants put the lessons to immediate use in their businesses. One took a big step and opened a storefront for his business. Several updated their accounting systems, realizing how important financing is to a new venture. And some realized they were spreading themselves as owners too thin.

“I saw a lot of personal growth,” she said. “Going through the material, writing their goals, mission statement, objectives and what they’re trying to accomplish is huge for an entrepreneur. Many times they like one facet of the business but don’t look at the other facets and that is just so important.”

The first-year program, coordinated by Carli Robles, was made possible by contributions from 13 coalition members who donated a combined \$6,000. Robles thanked those supporters, as well as many area business people who volunteered their time to share their expertise through guest speaker presentations.

The speakers talked about legal issues, financing and also shared personal experiences on what worked and what did not in their own business ventures.

Class members included Matt Arndt of Hampton, owner of H2Grow Landscape and Sprinkler Service; Wendel Fettig, owner Wendel’s Electric in Grand Island; Valerie George of Aurora, who is planning a spring 2008 opening for Masterpiece Landscapes, a new retail greenhouse and nursery; Lynelle Johnson of Aurora, owner of The Scrapbook Page; David May of Hampton, owner of A-MAY-ZING Construction, LLC; Brett Nunnenkamp of Sutton, owner of The Country Pumpkin; John and Shauna Pursley of Aurora, co-owners of Greenwig Enterprises; Dane Schafer of Hampton, owner of Danish Oak; and Stan Valasek of Aurora, owner of Overtime Bar & Grill.

There is already a waiting list for a second class, which the AACD’s Entrepreneurship Committee will soon begin to consider.

“This was a test run to see how much interest there was and how successful it might be and by all indications it was a terrific class,” said AACD president Syd Widga. “I don’t see any reason why we wouldn’t continue it next year.”

News from the District



PK Edge Participants

PK EDGE

PK EDGE (Phelps and Kearney Counties) wrapped up its first EDGE Class in Holdrege April 24 with a celebration at the Holdrege Country Club. Fourteen businesses and five auditors completed the training, with eleven businesses meeting the requirements for graduation. Here are comments from the participants regarding the EDGE Class:

“Learning how to look at all aspects of the business helps to see clearly through the ‘rosy glasses’ that we often wear when dreaming about owning our own business.”

“Continue to make it (EDGE Class) available—it is a goldmine of information for business owners.”

“The class provides all the information that I wish I would have had before starting my business. With a basis like the class provides, a new business will have a much better chance of surviving.”

“You have to know this stuff to survive!”

“It lays your business out in from of you before you start.”

“The course covers all aspects of business operation, other than specifics to industry. I don’t see how a business can be successful unless the operator understands all aspects, i.e. marketing, operations and finances.”

Through the support of fifteen PK Leadership coalition members donating \$7,750 as well as in-kind services and eleven guest speakers, this was a very successful class! PK Leadership is making plans for the next EDGE Class to begin January 2008 in Minden. Call Sharon Hueftle, 308-995-3190, or Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce, 308-995-4444 to register for the next PK EDGE Class.



PK Edge Coalition Members

**South Central
Economic
Development
District**

1320 Valerie Drive
Holdrege, NE
68949

PHONE:
308.995.3190

E-MAIL:
sharonh@scedd.us

We’re on the Web!

See us at:

www.scedd.us



Janel Anderson-Ehrke,
keynote speaker for the PK
Edge Celebration

*“SCEDD – Dynamic
Economics.”*