

October 2006

Volume 2, Issue 2

SCEDD News

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Published Quarterly –
April, July, October &
January

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

Discover, Differentiate, and Deploy

The South Central Economic Development District invited their board members, county board members, and economic developers from the district to discover who is doing what in Economic Development in the District, Differentiate SCEDD's role from that of other organizations, and Deploy SCEDD to be in the most optimal position.

SCEDD Executive Director Sharon Hueftle kicked off the meeting by helping the 22 participants discover "What is an Economic Development District (EDD)?" She explained that an EDD is a designation from the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce of the US Government, and EDD's in Nebraska are established under Statutes 13-1901 thru 13-1907 which state, "Each Development District shall serve as a regional resource center and provide planning, community and economic development, and technical assistance to local governments which are members of the district and may provide assistance to industrial development organizations, tourism promotion organizations, community development groups, and similar organizations upon request." SCEDD is the newest and final EDD in Nebraska; all 93 counties are now covered by a development district.

Hueftle discussed projects SCEDD has been involved with and services provided to date including:

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)
- Business Facilitation
- Community capacity building including assistance w/ Facts Books, Economic Development Certified Community, LOIS/NEDI, access to resources, and partnering to see projects come to fruition
- Town Hall meetings
- Community Needs Assessments
- Promote and facilitate the development of EDGE and Entrepreneurial Coalitions
- Grant Application including CDBG Application and Administration
- Regional Communication and Networking such as participation in the Central NE Development Network, Development District Directors Meeting, NEDA, Rural Institute

Ron Tillery, President of The Development Council of Buffalo County, differentiated SCEDD's role from that of other economic developers in the district. He commended the group on the advancement since 2003 to get this regional approach to economic development rolling and applauded the many shoulders pushing this "rock" (SCEDD) towards progress. He proposed additional areas SCEDD could become involved such as the I 80 NE Corridor (8 counties from York to Ogallala working to promote and attract economic development projects to the area), and UNK's discussion regarding the reshaping of the Center for Rural Research and Development recently vacated by Kay Payne. Ron also emphasized that the local development groups in Kearney, Hastings, Grand Island work mainly with the cities and these counties need SCEDD to help the build capacity in the smaller communities. (Article continued on next page)



Ron Tillery of The Development Council



Herman Schuett of Merrick County visits with Randy Gunn of the South Central RC&D

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

Discover, Differentiate, and Deploy (continued from page 1)

Ron encouraged all the counties to put their shoulder behind this big rock (SCEDD) to increase economic development opportunities and reverse the population decline. According to Ron, the challenge for SCEDD is balancing and prioritizing the tasks – and it’s important for counties to continue to provide stable financial support for SCEDD. Time spent fund raising does not foster economic development.

Attendees were then asked to assist with the deploy stage by responding to the question, "What should SCEDD continue to do, do more of, or discontinue?" The consensus was that SCEDD should:

- Continue to Network with other resource providers and organizations to stay abreast of who’s doing what
- Engage in area recruitment, for example encouraging the ethanol plants debating between Nebraska and Indiana to locate in Nebraska
- Publicize successes that SCEDD had a hand in
- Provide more press releases – tell what SCEDD is doing
- Participate in Radio and Cable promotion of activities in the District and SCEDD’s projects

"This was the best meeting we have had; I learned and better understand our mission and role in economics", said Don Calkins, Harlan County Supervisor. Jerrell Gerdes, SCEDD President said, "The development of our district has taken four years, we are now poised to become a major player in our area of the state. The support from larger counties such as Buffalo, Hall, and Adams is appreciated also, these counties have their own economic staff, but they understand and demonstrate the belief that we are all in this together".



Jim Eriksen of Hall County, Randy Gunn of the South Central RC&D, and Don Calkins of Harlan County listen to Ron Tillery.

2 New EDGE Coalitions Created in the District

Two new NebraskaEDGE (Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs) Coalitions have been created within the South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD). Hamilton Strategic EDGE Coalition will be based in Aurora with the Aurora Area Chamber and Development as their lead agent, and PK EDGE, a partnership of Phelps and Kearney Counties, will offer their first class in Holdrege with Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce as the Lead Agent. Both coalitions will be offering the Entrepreneur class this winter, this is a comprehensive course designed to assist local business owners in increasing management skills that lead to new, expanding and profitable businesses. Participants of the 12-week course will learn in a hands-on manner, developing a comprehensive business plan that covers business concerns such as operational issues, financials, marketing techniques and more.

Sharon Hueftle, Executive Director for SCEDD, praised the formation of the coalitions stating, "This is how the economies in our small communities will grow – by growing and strengthening their own businesses. Any business owner that is starting, expanding, struggling, or looking to exit their business needs to be in this class." Hueftle has been working with communities and encouraging the formation of EDGE Coalitions, and hopes to have at least one more in the district by next year.

For more information on getting an EDGE Coalition started in your area or to participate in the Entrepreneur Course contact Hueftle at sharonh@scedd.us or 308-995-3190.

News from the District

Hueftle Hosts Meeting of Development District Directors

“Information moves at the speed of light, but communication still only moves at the speed of sound.”

*- Karl Elmshausen,
Executive Director
of WCNDD*

In an effort to connect the Economic Development Districts across Nebraska, Sharon Hueftle, Executive Director of South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD), hosted a meeting of the Directors of each District. The group met in North Platte on August 31, 2006, with four of the eight districts represented. Jerrod Haberman of Panhandle Area Development District (PADD), Karl Elmshaeuser of West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD), George Frye of South East Nebraska Development District (SEND) and Hueftle participated.

The similarities and differences in the entity organizations such as board make-up, dues structures and handling of non-paying members, size, and membership were topics of discussion. Frye shared a wealth of information regarding the history of the districts in Nebraska and changes during his 30+ year tenure with SEND. According to Frye, Development District Directors and EDD Board Members used to meet quarterly and also met with the Nebraska Departments such as Roads and Economic Development.

For those attending, the meeting was informational and beneficial and it was unanimous that meetings among EDD’s should continue. The group agreed a top priority will be to hold a meeting with the Director and Department Heads at the Nebraska Department of Economic Development after elections.

South Central Economic Development District Receives Grant

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) has approved an EDA investment for the South Central Economic Development District, Inc., totaling \$30,000. This grant, along with a \$30,000 match from the development district, will fund the preparation of an updated comprehensive economic development strategy to lay the foundation for future economic growth and diversification in the south central region of Nebraska, as part of President Bush’s commitment to keep America working.

The South Central Economic Development District, Inc. (SCEDD) is the newest development district in Nebraska, and exists to develop and promote a positive economic climate which supports regional growth. SCEDD encompasses twelve counties in the south central region of Nebraska, including Adams, Buffalo, Clay, Franklin, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Kearney, Merrick, Nuckolls, Phelps, and Webster.

According to SCEDD’s Executive Director, Sharon Hueftle, “Over the next 16 months, this funding will provide for a continuing economic development process, developed with broad based and diverse community participation. It will contain an analysis of economic and community problems and opportunities, and set goals and objectives for taking advantage of the opportunities and solving the economic development problems.”

News from the District

Imagining Your Community's Future, Setting Priorities for Community Improvement



Blue Hill participants share ideas

The South Central Economic Development District sponsored five Town Hall meetings facilitated by the Heartland Center for Leadership using Appreciative Inquiry process. These meetings were funded by a Rural Communities Development Initiative grant through USDA Rural Development and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Appreciative Inquiry encourages participants to look at past successes in their community and use the lessons learned from these successes to propel the community into the future. The process leads participants through developing priorities, implementing plans, building consensus and collaboration and increasing visibility of community projects.

Community members in Bertrand, Blue Hill, Doniphan, Oxford, and Ravenna shared past success stories then turned their focus to discovering the lessons learned from these achievements and successes. Dreaming future possibilities for their community – 20 to 25 years into the future was the next step, including preparation of a vision statement. Finally the communities designed their short-term future through priority goals for community improvement. Each Town Hall meeting concluded with committees established to address their top five priority goals.

What did participants learn from these Town Hall meetings? Responses included, "A lot can be accomplished by a group if they follow through.", "Many of us had the same ideas—now we need to get together and make it happen.", and "More about my neighbors—and all in a short, action-packed, positive evening." As a result of these meetings what will participants do? Respondents agreed they would "Find more people that share our positive ideas!" and "Try and find ways to get more involved in community-based interests and follow-through."

Communities interested in a Town Hall meeting should contact Sharon Hueftle.



Bertrand participant lists "Where they see Bertrand in 20 to 25 years"



Sheryl Vollertsen ponders the "Lessons Learned" during the Oxford meeting



Troy Stickels of Glenwood Telephone shares ideas with Blue Hill participants

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"SCEDD – Dynamic
Economics."