



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

South Central Economic Development District's Community Assessment and Input Survey

What does your community need? Schools, housing, jobs, stores, agriculture, economic development, or what? In late summer 2007, South Central Economic Development District, in partnership with South Central Nebraska and Trailblazer Resource Conservation and Development Councils made available to citizens a community needs assessment survey in order to answer this important question. Community input will be utilized to develop and refine South Central Economic Development District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

The survey consisted of a series of statements presented to respondents who then rated them on a variety of attributes such as importance to the community, importance to agriculture, importance to business, importance to the community's future and importance/potential to increase tourism. Following is a summary of the issues ranked by importance to address:

Community

- Education - K-12 and higher opportunities
- Employment opportunities
- Water - Safe and supply
- "Care" - Health care, Elderly care, Child care
- Law enforcement and emergency volunteers
- Energy-renewable and conservation

Business

- Health insurance pools
- Regional partnerships for attraction purposes
- Economic development – Organizations and site identifying
- Public investment in infrastructure for business
- Training and assistance in marketing and financing

Agriculture

- Conservation – Water and Soil
- Replacement of trees and shelterbelts
- Development of regional marketing strategies
- Assistance/training - Marketing, financial, computer, telecom

Increasing Tourism/Recreation

- Improving community appearance
- Promoting local attractions
- Development of regional tourism and marketing of
- Promoting local historical assets
- Protecting fish and wildlife habitat

- Board of Directors**
Chairman
 Jerrell Gerdes
 Franklin County
- Vice Chairman**
 Bob Humiston
 Hall County
- Secretary**
 Vincent Reyes
 At Large
- 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
 Stakeholder Organization
- Dr. Wayne Bell
 Private Sector

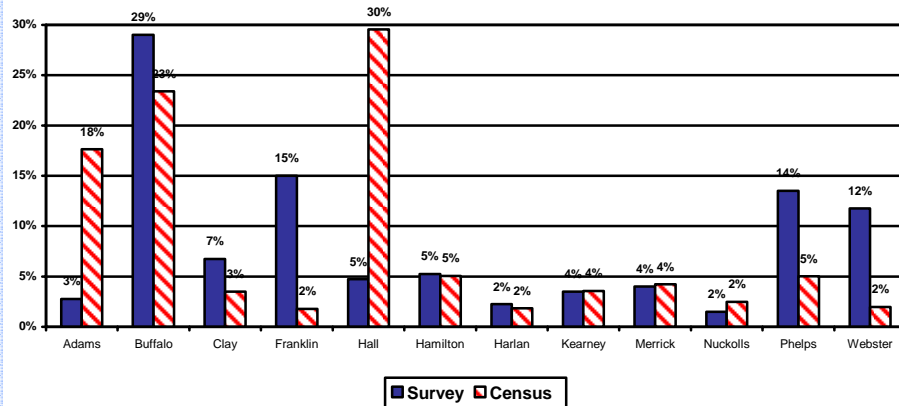
Deborah Murray
 Stakeholder Organization

Stu Wilsman
 Private Sector

Executive Director
 Sharon Hueftle
 sharonh@scedd.us

Newsletter Editor
 Natalie Nelsen

Published Quarterly –
 January, April, July,
 October



**County
 Survey
 Response
 Percentages
 Compared to
 County
 Population
 Percentages
 of Survey
 Area**

TWO EDGE CLASSES STARTING IN JANUARY

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

P*K EDGE and Hamilton Strategic EDGE will be starting **EDGE (Enhancing Developing Growing Entrepreneurs)** Classes in January of 2008. P*K EDGE will begin classes January 15, with Lois Thom instructing classes in Minden. Aurora EDGE Classes will be instructed by Nancy Eberle. In twelve sessions held over the course of 16 weeks, students will learn about the following topics and how to implement them into their current business operations:

- What it takes to be an Entrepreneur
- Planning & Research: Entrepreneurial Essentials
- Organizational Matters: Management & Legal Structure
- Marketing: Strategies, Tactics & Implementation
- Financial Overview; Books, Records & Controls
- Managing your Money: Financial Planning
- Managing your Money: Cash Flow Projections
- Understanding & Using your Financial Statements
- Financing your business-Alternate Sources
- Deal Making: Negotiating in the Real World & Managing Growth

At the conclusion of the EDGE Class, each participant will have completed a personal business plan. The cost to participate is \$375 which includes materials. Businesses that are starting, expanding, struggling, or designing options for an exit plan are encouraged to attend!

Those interested in enrolling in the Minden Class should contact Sharon Hueftle at 308-995-3190, sharonh@scedd.us or visit the P*K EDGE Website at <http://nebraskaedge.unl.edu/phelps-kearneyco.html>. To enroll in the Aurora Class, contact Shannon at the AACD office at 402-694-6911, chambersec@hamilton.net, or visit the Hamilton Strategic EDGE website at <http://nebraskaedge.unl.edu/hamiltonco.html>.

SCEDD Receives EDA Partnership Planning Grant

The South Central Economic Development District has been awarded \$50,000 from the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support the continued implementation of the comprehensive economic development strategy. This represents year one of a three year award period.

EDA's mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. EDA implements this mission by making strategic investments in the nation's most economically distressed communities that encourage private sector collaboration and creation of higher-skill, higher wage jobs. EDA investments are results driven, embracing the principles of technological innovation, entrepreneurship and regional development.

SCEDD is honored to receive this grant, which was made available only after receiving official economic development district status. This grant will be matched with a \$50,000 investment from the District, and will be utilized for the advancement of economic and community development projects in the District. Anticipated results from this funding include increased awareness of local and global business opportunities and entrepreneurial activity, business retention and expansion, greater collaboration of resources, increased business succession, increased tourism, community capacity building, and the creation of an inventors and entrepreneurs organization.



News from the District



Chuck Birgen welcomes participants to the workshop

Business Succession Workshops

Small businesses are the lifeblood of many rural Nebraska communities and without proper planning and knowledge of the business transition process many of our small businesses will cease to exist after the current owners decide to leave or close their business.

P*K Leadership in conjunction with Principal Financial and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City-Omaha Branch addressed this issue by holding a Business Succession Training Seminar on Tuesday, September 25 at The Speakeasy. Approximately 40 people attended this evening seminar to learn the importance of developing a transition plan for their business.

Guest speakers for the evening were Steve Baker, Director of Development for the Mountain Plains Business Center for Principal Financial and Glennis McClure, Senior Community Affairs Advisor for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City-Omaha Branch.

Baker started off the seminar by telling the participants that every business reaches a point where transition is necessary and sometimes coming up with the right exit plans takes 3 to 5 years. Almost every business owner has the same three objectives: when to retire, what income they will need after leaving the business and who they should sell the business to. Many business owners devote a great deal of energy to running their business effectively, but do not think about how they can then leave that same business effectively.



Glennis McClure discusses business valuation

McClure concluded the evening by discussing the repercussions of losing the small businesses in our communities. Not only will our communities lose tax revenue, but they will also lose potential leaders within the business community. Even with transition plans in place, only 35% of second generation businesses actually survive. McClure then walked the participants through the process of valuing a business.

Communities or organizations interested in hosting a Business Succession Seminar can contact the South Central Economic Development District, 308-995-3190 or sharonh@scedd.us.

Grant Writing Training

Red Cloud Nebraska was the site of a Grant Writing USA workshop attended by 75 Nebraskans. This 2 day workshop held in August was funded by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and a USDA Rural Community Development Initiative Grant (RCDI). Participants spent two days learning key points to finding, applying for, and receiving grants. John Cannan of Chico State University in California was the trainer and he covered government, private, and corporate grants. The SCEDD area was well represented with forty-two participants from sixteen communities taking advantage of this free training.



Sam Clark, Mike Delka, Lisa Stadler and Monica Boyken are engaged in the training

2007 Nebraska Rural Institute: *Winners Working Together*

The 2007 Nebraska Rural Institute was held in Holdrege, Nebraska on September 17-19, 2007 at the Phelps County Ag Center. This year's theme, *Winners Working Together*, exemplified the primary objective of the Institute—to share resources, contacts and ideas that participants can use in their communities and organizations. The Rural Institute was hosted by the Nebraska Development Network, Central Region.

Here are some of the highlights from the Institute:

- Opening keynote speaker Jerry Nagel, president of Northern Great Plains, Inc., led an interactive session that sparked conversation about the future of Rural Nebraska, with the highest focus being recruitment and retention of young people. On Tuesday, Jerry Nagel presented on the Importance and Methods of Quality Community Dialogue. This discussion of collaborative communication techniques will help foster community buy-in for development projects.
- On site sessions Tuesday included Tools and Skills for Appreciative Facilitation held by Alan Baquet, Department Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Belinda Rinker from the Community Development Institute and CDI Head Start, and Make a Winning Podcast led by Connie Hancock from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension.
- The Future of Water and Eco-Tourism mobile workshop focused on the water issues in the Republican Valley and the efforts being made to address them.
- Regional Successes tour focused on successful and duplicable projects. Participants on this tour learned about the Holdrege successes such as the New Neighborhood Initiative Housing Project, the Tassel, and the YMCA of the Prairie. A tour of Allmand Brothers was followed by a road trip down Hwy 23 to learn about Elwood's Wheatfield Edition housing projects, and Eustis' utilization of the CDA program to offer free housing lots. Participants heard from Village Pie Maker Judith Larsen on growing her pie business and heard about Dawson County's ABLE program bringing businesses and high school students together.
- Randy Cantrell, Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Panhandle Research and Extension Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln discussed their research to determine where new residents in the panhandle are coming from, why they are moving to the area, and what will keep them.
- Jay Knobbe, Monica Boyken and Kara Mueller shared insights on Leveraging Technology to Help Your Community.
- A panel of entrepreneurs shared their business start-up stories, obstacles they've overcome and the successes they've had while creating successful businesses. Panelists included Dan Shundoff of Intellicom, Doug Keller of Eustis Body Shop, and Phil Soreide of One Good AdGuy.
- Lieutenant Governor Rick Sheehy shared how to promote collaboration that will benefit rural Nebraska. He also discussed the implications of technology on the future of Nebraska and the role that working together will play in moving toward the future.

If you missed the 2007 Rural Institute, you missed a great opportunity to energize your community projects, partner with resource providers, and network with comrades. As Lisa Stadler of Kearney County Economic Development Agency stated, "It's exciting to know that organizations such as Partnership for Rural Nebraska can identify the skills and information that are important and necessary to the professionals attending the conference and bring information and speakers specific to those topics. They provided a great variety of speakers and seminars by adding area mobile tours. I definitely plan to attend again, and next time, I would like to bring some representatives from my KCEDA Board to some of the seminars."

**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



Rural Institute participants

"I gained so much perspective about the rural community and what needs to be done to attract businesses and people to be a part of rural Nebraska. I now have a large network of colleagues to go to for advice and suggestions about how to improve our community."

Shannon Hans
Aurora Area Chamber & Development