



RDC Commission

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS:

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GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Excitement is building for the first Governor's Conference on Rural Development to be held in Kearney on November 13 and 14. Conference registration deadline is October 24 with conference rate lodging registrations due by October 17.

This year's conference is a joint effort combining the former Rural Institute and the Nebraska Community Improvement Program (NCIP) conferences into one coordinated activity. November 13 kicks off the event with a choice of pre-sessions which include technology training or a tour of communities.

Friday's keynote speaker is Richard Karlgaard, publisher of *Forbes*. Richard's monthly column, *Digital Rules*, covers topics of technology, entrepreneurship, regional and economical development, and the future of business and work.

Another highlight is the luncheon speaker, Matt Deighton, from Greensburg, Kansas. After a devastating EF5 tornado destroyed the community, Greensburg has decided to become a "green" community—the first in the nation building to these standards. Recipients of the "Connecting Nebraska" awards will also be announced at the luncheon. Each of the Partnership for Rural Nebraska regional groups across the state has been invited to select a regional winner of this award.

The conference offers a special youth track for ages 8-16 helping them develop leadership skills which they can take back to their community.

As if that isn't enough activity, the 45th Annual NCIP awards banquet will be held on Friday evening. Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy will present the awards recognizing communities for outstanding efforts in community, economic, and leadership development. Contact Lindsay.Papenhausen@nebraska.gov for more information.

Director's Comments

October 3 was the deadline for the current round of Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Agriculture grants. We received 28 applications requesting almost \$1.4 million in assistance with \$850,000 to award. These awards should be announced by the holidays.

I hope you are making plans to attend the first Governor's Conference on Rural Development in Kearney on Nov. 13-

14. The Partnership for Rural Nebraska is excited to revive the *Connecting Nebraska* regional awards.

The RDC is collaborating with the Rural Initiative and the Partnership for Rural Nebraska to offer "Listen and Learn" sessions statewide. See Page 2 for complete story.

Linda

State for Business

A recent article in *Forbes* magazine lists Nebraska as one of the ten best states for business moving from 17th to 10th place in the 2008 list. *Forbes* cites Nebraska's better quality of life, better regulatory environment and lower business costs than most states.

Nebraska ranked ninth in quality of life and twelfth for its regulatory environment (including incentives for businesses, level of regulation, transportation, and bond rankings). Cost of labor, energy and taxes are part of the business cost ranking where Nebraska placed thirteenth. Virginia was touted as the best state for doing business.

Note: Richard Kilgaard, editor of *Forbes* magazine is the keynote speaker at the Governor's Conference on Rural Development.

Listen and Learn Sessions

The Partnership for Rural Nebraska (PRN), Rural Initiative from UNL, and the Rural Development Commission are collaborating on a series of "Listen and Learn" sessions to be held across the state. Initially, one summit will be held in each of the PRN regions.

The Sandhills Summit (Old West region) is the first session scheduled and will be held in Stapleton on the evening of October 14 starting at 7:00 pm in the Bronco Room of the Stapleton High School. Anyone interested in community and economic development for the region is invited to attend. There is no registration fee.

The session will include a short overview of the local economy by using the interactive "rusty bucket" process. Resource providers will listen to the development concerns of the participating public as each audience member lists one major resource needed for their community or business. Resource providers will briefly outline their programs and services with time set aside for participants to visit one-on-one with resource providers. A variety of local, state, and federal resources will be represented including (but not limited to) Nebraska Business Development Center, Rural Enterprise Assistance Program, Sandhills Resource Conservation and Development, Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism, Nebraska Community Foundation, GROW Nebraska, Department of Environmental Quality, housing programs, USDA— Rural Development, Department of Economic Development, and the Rural Development Commission.



The information gathered at the meeting will be used to help the Resource Conservation and Development organizations fulfill some of the requirements of their five-year strategic planning requirements. It will also be used by all of the collaborating entities to help set policy and develop work plans.

Make plans to attend the Sandhills Summit or watch for the announcement of upcoming sessions in your region of the state. These meetings are open to anyone interested in development in their region.

PARTNERS FOR RURAL AMERICA

The National Rural Development Partnership and the Partnership for Rural America held their annual conference in Montpelier, Vermont in early September. RDC Chair, John Jordison attended and shares this report.

It was an extremely informative opportunity to attend the PRA conference in Montpelier, Vermont, along with rural economic developers from across the country, including Nevada, Wyoming, Minnesota, Maryland, New Hampshire, Colorado, and, of course, Vermont. There were a lot of “veterans” and a lot of knowledgeable people attending. One of the messages that reverberated in the State Capitol for the morning meeting the first day was the need to “find a niche” for your own state agency/organization to fill—and then to fill it. Whether it be providing technical assistance for rural business start-ups, enhancing the availability of venture capital, or assisting with marketing and promotion—speakers urged rural developers to focus narrowly in order to be effective, rather than trying to be “all things to all constituents.”

The afternoon sessions were targeted toward intergenerational wealth transfer, and the common issue of broadband deployment. Nebraska is in an enviable position with regard to making broadband available in virtually every community in the state, while Vermonters struggle due to private companies being unable to tackle both the mountainous geography and the lack of population centers. Even cellular telephone coverage is spotty in Vermont.

It was a pleasure to be able to represent the State of Nebraska at this conference, and to get a sense of what a different kind of “rural” means, as well as to share the success stories our RDC has provided.



Director's Note: The Nebraska Rural Development Commission director serves on the executive board of the PRN as the representative of the region that includes North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Nebraska. Linda was re-elected to a second term of office at the national conference.

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NEBRASKA RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

COMMISSION DUTIES:

According to the statutes, the duties of the RDC are:

- Focus attention on and increase awareness of opportunities and needs of rural Nebraska
- Strengthen community sustainability and growth in rural Nebraska through increased community-based wealth creation, expanded economic opportunity and improved quality of life
- Stimulate rural development innovation and foster information transfer to, from, and within rural Nebraska
- Ensure that rural Nebraskans are afforded the opportunity to determine rural Nebraska's development agenda
- Foster community-based development initiatives through multi-community partnerships

*The Rural Development Commission advocates for effective
development in rural Nebraska.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

October 13 - office closed—state holiday

October 14—Sandhills Summit—Stapleton

October 21-23—Travel Conference— Kearney

October 28—Nebraska Research and Innovation
Conference—Lincoln

November 4—Election Day

November 9—11, National Rural Economic Devel-
opers Association Conference—Kansas City, Mo

November 11—Veteran's Day

November 13—RDC meeting—
Kearney

**November 14 - first Governor's Conference on Rural
Development - Kearney**

November 27-28 - office closed—state holiday

