



RDC Connection

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS:

Executive

Committee:

John Jordison, Chair
Gayle McClure
Marilyn Mecham
Larry Cooper
Edgar Hicks

Commissioners:

Richard Baier
Scot Blehm
Karl Elmshaeuser
Ross Garwood
Mary Gerdes
Robert Gustafson
Dan Hoffman
Greg Ibach
Charles Karpf
Tim Kenny
Marge Lauer
M.L. Martin
Senator V. McDonald
Lance Morgan
Bruce Neidig
Christine Peterson
Sandy Scofield
Tim Shafer

Volume 3, Issue 4

May 2008

COMMISSION GATHERS AT CURTIS

This issue is highlighting the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) in Curtis, Nebraska. The Commission and guests met there April 4, 2008, for an impressive tour of the facility and a sneak peak at some planned improvements prior to our Commission meeting. According to the campus brochure, "As an institution of higher learning, the mission of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is to serve the people of Nebraska by providing outstanding associate-level undergraduate experience in agriculture and related fields".

Commissioner Larry Cooper, a graduate and employee of NCTA, coordinated the tour and acted as host. An overview of the college and program highlights was provided by Dr. Weldon Sleight, Dean of NCTA.



Director's Comments

For those of you who have not visited NCTA, consider this a recommendation. You will find many state-of-the-art options available to students at this campus. Innovation and creation seem to be the central theme.

Speaking of innovation, the RDC with assistance from the UNL Nebraska Rural Initiative prepared an

online training for the current BECA application cycle. Look for more online trainings in the near future for the August BECA and October VAA grants. These trainings have the advantage of being available on your own computer right up to the grant deadline.

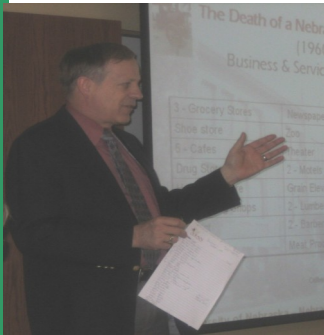
Linda

GRANT PROGRAM CHANGES

More NCTA highlights



Horticulture greenhouse



NCTA Dean, Dr. Weldon Sleight



Gary Horst demonstrates Frontier Technology's holographic ultrasound

Both the Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Agriculture grant (VAA) and the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA) will have significant changes in the next cycles.

BECA—the next deadline will be August 15, 2008. New for that cycle are expanded activities including providing marketing assistance to communities to attract new residents from outside the State of Nebraska. Marketing assistance may include the creation of new web sites, the improvement of existing web sites, creation and distribution of printed or electronic marketing materials, and programs which promote the community to new residents. (Note: it is important to notice that you must be marketing OUTSIDE the state.)

VAA— the next deadline will be October 3, 2008. There are significant changes in the VAA program :

- If a VAA grant is used to acquire or lease a building or equipment, the applicant shall match the grant with no less than 50% in money and in-kind contributions. No less than half of that shall be monetary.
- Priority of awards will go to those who match grants with money rather than in-kind contribution.
- There is now non-compliance language incorporated into the bill that will likely allow DED leverage if the equipment leaves the State of Nebraska within three years of the award.

FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES, LLC

More examples of innovation can be found on the NCTA campus in the Frontier Technologies building. According to their website, www.ftimage.com, they are working to harness the power of holographic ultrasound for use in veterinary medicine, food processing, and industrial applications.

Frontier Technologies is partnering with NCTA to provide a quality educational experience for technical agriculture students. Through the use of advanced technology, they will enhance the safety of the food supply and animal welfare. By teaming with NCTA, Frontier Technologies plans to demonstrate that innovation and entrepreneurship can flourish in rural communities.

ANGEL INVESTING COMES TO NEBRASKA

According to a recent news release, Invest Nebraska Corporation (www.investnebraskacorp.com) a non-profit committed to assisting emerging Nebraska-based businesses with fund-raising and business development efforts, announced that it has entered into a \$500,000 contract with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED).

Under the agreement, Invest Nebraska will carry out a state-mandated program to promote angel investment in Nebraska. The funding for the program is derived primarily from state appropriations, approved by the Nebraska State Legislature. Under the contract, Invest Nebraska will match at least one-third of the funds.

This goal is to create a state-wide angel investor network to help Nebraska businesses in the early stages of fund-raising. Angel investors are typically the first investor outside the scope of "family and friends", and allow emerging businesses to build up to venture capital and private equity investments.

Eligible candidates for angel investments include any individual, corporation, partnership, limited liability corporation, or joint-stock company, with its principal place of business in Nebraska. The program will also extend to start-ups elsewhere that are committed to basing their business in Nebraska.

As per the contract with the NDED, Invest Nebraska will commit to a two-year program consisting of three major components.

ANGEL INVESTMENT FUND NETWORK—Invest Nebraska will create a statewide network for angel investor groups, serving as a hub for communication, information sharing, and deal flow between individual angel groups in each community. Invest Nebraska will also build a library of templates and sample documents to assist angel groups with paperwork pertaining to organization, fund formation, and due diligence.

BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION—As part of the effort to identify plausible candidates for angel investments, Invest Nebraska will work with its partner the Hormel Family Foundation (www.hormelfamilyfoundation.com) to organize five business plan competitions in five Nebraska college cities. The finalists of these five competitions will later compete in a statewide competition, also to be organized by Invest Nebraska.

ANGEL INVESTMENT EDUCATION—In conjunction with each business plan competition, Invest Nebraska will organize local seminars to educate interested participants about the fundamentals of angel investment. The organization will actively seek angel investors and professional services providers to participate in these seminars. To further promote regional business growth, Invest Nebraska will create a statewide database of professional services providers.

For more information, visit www.InvestNebraskaCorp.com

Nebraska Rural
Development Commission
1101 Halligan Drive #10
North Platte, NE 69101

Linda Fettig
Executive Director
Phone and cell:
308-749-2291
E-mail:
Linda.Fettig@nebraska.gov

Sandi Kaskie
Assistant to the Director
Phone: 308-535-8018
Fax: 308-535-8019
E-mail:
Sandra.Kaskie@nebraska.gov

We're on the Web:
www.ruralnebraska.info



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

- May 9—BECA applications due**
- May 26—Memorial Day (office closed)**
- July 4—Independence Day (office closed)**
- July 16—DED briefing in North Platte**
- August 15—(noon CDT) BECA Applications Due**
- August 19—RDC meeting**
- September 1—Labor Day (office closed)**
- October 3—(noon CDT) VAA Applications Due**
- November 14—Governor's Conference on Rural Development in Kearney**

