



RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

1101 Halligan Drive, Building #10
North Platte, NE 69101
www.ruralnebraska.info

Phone (308) 535-8018
Fax (308) 535-8019

Executive

Committee:

John Jordison
Gayle McClure
Marilyn Mecham
Larry Cooper
Edgar Hicks

Other

Commissioners:

Richard Baier
Karl Elmshaeuser
Ross Garwood
Robert Gustafson
Greg Ibach
Charles Karpf
Marge Lauer
M.L. Martin
Mark L. Matulka
Senator Arnie
Stuthman
Lance Morgan
Bryce Neidig
Tim Shafer

Staff:

Linda Fettig
Executive
Director

Sandi Kaskie
Assistant to the
Director

Rural Development Commission Meeting XV

April 17, 2009 -

Video Conferencing Sites (Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, North Platte and Omaha) Meeting Minutes

Chair John Jordison called the meeting to order with 10 Commissioners present. The meeting opened with self-introduction of guests (Joseph Young, DED; and Bobbie Kriz Wickham, DOA).

John Jordison stated that copies of the Open Meeting Law were available for viewing at the North Platte and Kearney sites and anyone with questions was to contact Sandi Kaskie at 308-535-8018.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda and Director's Report was made by Marge Lauer and seconded by Bob Gustafson. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call voice vote.

Telecommunications Committee Report

Chair Karl Elmshaeuser informed the Commission that he received an email from Director Linda Fettig advising of the Lt. Governor's request for a second telecommunications forum to discuss key broadband and telecommunications issues through the state.

Additionally, he advised that he has been researching other states to determine what systems or policies they have in place or what issues they are facing. Karl stated that at this time, other states are trying to define the key issues of unserved areas, underserved areas and mapping. Some states have good plans in place and that mapping appears to be where Nebraska needs to start. He informed the commission that he obtained a map prepared by Nebraska Telecommunications Association depicting which areas of the state are served by which providers; however, it does not contain specific information as to what areas receive what type of broadband service.

Discussion took place regarding what direction the RDC should take with this issue. The committee is going to schedule a time to meet with the Lt. Governor to determine what assistance the commission can provide.

Legislative Committee

At the request of Chair Ross Garwood, Joseph Young presented the following legislative bill updates:

- LB 231 – Change Rural Development Commission Membership Provisions – This bill has been signed by the Governor and should take effect in September .
- LB 646 – Adopt the Livestock Growth Act – Sitting in committee.

- LB 117 – Authorize an Income Tax Credit for Certain Retail Business Taxpayers – Killed in committee.
- LB 153 – Adopt the Tourism Liability Act – Sitting in committee; no action.
- LB 436 – Net Metering – On select file and should be debated on the floor.
- LB 164 – VAA & BECA sunset deadlines; passed on final reading the morning of April 17, 2009 and the Governor will be signing the bill.
- LB 533 – Change Expense Reimbursement Provisions for State Employees, State Officers, and Others – Passed; Commissioners will now be required to turn in meal and motel receipts if they would like to be reimbursed for those expenses.

Additionally, Joseph advised that the Budget is a priority for the senators at this time. The budget must be out by April 29, 2009 and passed by May 18, 2009.

New Business

Legislative Action Process - Ross Garwood advised the commission that Director, Linda Fettig has been researching committee recommendations for the legislative action process. He suggested that the commission implement a policy whereby the named commissioner or staff would be given the authority to take action on certain legislative bills or policies.

Motion made by Ross Garwood to move forward with the making of a policy and seconded by Tim Shafer.

Discussion took place and the Ross Garwood withdrew his motion.

Motion made by Ross Garwood and seconded by Tim Shafer to pursue a policy to enact a process by which the commission identifies areas of support, opposition, and/or neutral positions on possible legislative issues.

Discussion took place and it was determined that the Legislative Committee will prepare a draft of a policy that will be presented to the entire commission for suggestion and/or changes.

Motion carried with a unanimous voice roll call vote.

Rural Recognition Program – Chuck Karpf presented information about a proposed Rural Recognition Program for the commission to implement. This would be an award program consisting of two awards; “Friend of Rural Nebraska” award to be presented to an adult who exemplifies what the commission believes is the pinnacle of a rural Nebraska resident and an “Outstanding Rural Nebraska Youth” award to be presented to a person under 18 years of age who exemplifies what the commission believes is the pinnacle of rural Nebraska youth. Both awards will be presented during the noon luncheon of the Governor’s Conference on Rural Development.

The award committee consisting of Marge Lauer, Chuck Karpf, Tim Shafer and Linda Fettig will prepare a proposal and guidelines to be presented to the commission at the next meeting.

RDC role in proposed Teff seminar – deferred until Edgar Hicks is available to present information to the commission. Marge Lauer will work with Edgar and Linda.

Reports - Linda

Newspaper Articles and Rebuttal Letters – Linda advised the commission that rebuttal letters were drafted, reviewed by M.L. Martin and sent out addressing incorrect information that was printed in various newspapers concerning RDC grant funding cuts.

Listen and Learn Sessions – Positive reports have been received regarding the sessions that have taken place so far. Future sessions will be held in Norfolk, Geneva, Ogallala and Beatrice. These sessions are done in partnership with the PRN (Partnership for Rural Nebraska).

Reauthorization - The RDC has been reauthorized at the federal level as a federally recognized program.

Grant Program Updates – Linda presented the commissioners with a Grant Activity Report up to April 2009. Two large projects, one for \$75,000 (biodiesel) and another for \$25,000 (producer's coop.) never activated.

RBEG Application Partnering – Linda advised the commissioners that an RBEG application that listed the RDC as a partner was submitted without obtaining the commissioners approval. Discussion took place.

Motion made by Marilyn Mecham and seconded by several commissioners supporting Marge Lauer's request that the meeting minutes reflect that the action to list the Commission as a partner in the submission of an RBEG application was done without the knowledge and approval of the commission and therefore, not supported by the commission.

Upcoming Meetings

Linda will be polling the commission to determine when in August the next meeting should take place.

Meeting adjourned

Next meeting – August in Ogallala - Specific date and location to be determined

Minutes were prepared by Sandi Kaskie, and reviewed by Linda Fettig.

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Meeting April 19, 2009 – Video Conference**

COMMISSIONER	ATTENDANCE (X = Present)	MOTION #1 Consent Agenda	MOTION #2 Legislative Action/ Policy Process	MOTION #3 RBEG Liability Statement
	X	Y-N-A	Y-N-A	Y-N-A
Richard Baier	A			
Larry Cooper	A			
Karl Elmshaeuser	X	Y	Y	Y
Ross Garwood	X	Y	Y	Y
Robert Gustafson	X	Y	Y	Y
Edgar Hicks	A			
Greg Ibach	A			
John Jordison	X	Y	Y	Y
Charles Karpf	X	Y	Y	Y
Marge Lauer	X	Y	Y	Y
M.L. Martin	A			
Mark L. Matulka	A			
Gayle McClure	X	Y	Y	Y
Marilyn Mecham	X	Y	Y	Y
Lance Morgan	A			
Bryce Neidig	X	Y	Y	Y
Tim Shafer	X	Y	Y	Y
Sen. Stuthman	A			

***NOTE*: No vote received is indicated by a dash (-).**