



January 2020

The legendary college football coach, “Bear” Bryant, had three rules for coaching:

- Surround yourself with people who can’t live without football.
- Recognize winners. They come in all forms.
- Have a plan for everything.

Football may not have been in the 2019 SCEDD game plan, but the rest of Bear's rules hold true for what has taken place in our office this past year. Our *people* truly live and believe in what we do here at South Central Economic Development District. It is not just work, it’s a calling for our staff. They are passionate about helping rural Nebraska communities achieve and accomplish great things!

Our communities are *winners!* This newsletter will emphasize those that have been formally recognized. But winning is going on in many different ways throughout our District and we are excited about the growth and activities that are taking place.

2019 marked the beginning of a new *plan* as we implemented our 2019-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Much staff and citizen input and planning took place. We worked to establish priorities in the three areas of: Community Development, Housing Development, and Economic Development; and decided these would be an integral part of everything SCEDD would be about in the next five years. Planning was crucial for our Home*ME* activities as well. We extensively planned for different events and reached many different audiences. Connections made! Conversations started! The results are a springboard for 2020. I encourage you to take a moment to see what’s happening in our communities via this newsletter. Your SCEDD investment dollars are paying dividends across the District.

We are your partners for success!

National Recognition Given to Home*ME*!

At the Fall 2019 NADO conference, the National Association of Development Organizations recognized SCEDD with its prestigious *Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award*. SCEDD earned national recognition for its innovative Home*ME* Learning Network, which is designed to inform, engage and empower community leaders to tackle local housing issues. Consisting of monthly webinars and twice-a-year gatherings, each in a different host community, Home*ME* brings stakeholders around the table to share information and discuss ideas for achieving local housing objectives. To learn more about Home*ME* or to get involved, visit www.scedd.us/homene.



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HOUSING SUCCESSES

Five years ago, SCEDD hired its first housing consultant. Until then, capacity had not allowed for much emphasis or attention to be directed to this critical topic. At the end of 2019, we found ourselves with much to share and celebrate regarding housing in the District!

HomeME—2019 concluded the second year of this statewide learning network! Eleven webinars and two Gatherings were successfully completed.

The purpose of HomeME is to create an environment where community leaders, influencers and conveners from across the state can come together to participate in discussions on a variety of topics. 2019's webinars featured speakers on topics that included funding for programs, community leadership and success stories, the wave of change in rural housing that is coming, the role of the CRA in housing development, and more. All webinar recordings are listed on www.scedd.us/HomeNE



An informative discussion on Tax Increment Financing at the Schuyler Gathering.

Gatherings are also an important feature of HomeME. 2019's Gatherings were held in Schuyler (June) and Holdrege (November). Gatherings provide face-to-face interaction for attendees as well as opportunities to engage with each other through interactive discussion and activities. Presenters spoke about tax increment financing, modernizing existing housing stock for the next generation, leadership, etc. Local leaders also spoke about activities, projects, and successes happening in their communities. Tours of host communities were conducted showcasing the efforts of the people and community.

Housing Activities Across the District – SCEDD assisted several communities during 2019 in moving forward to meet housing goals.

- The community of Central City completed a housing study;
- The communities of Elm Creek, Franklin, and Alma utilized CDBG owner occupied housing rehabilitation dollars to improve existing housing stock;
- SCEDD's Rural Workforce Housing funds were invested in new construction housing units in St. Paul, Central City and Holdrege, as well as a rehab project in Holdrege.

Code Enforcement and SCEDD's Nuisance Abatement Program

Since 2012, 15 communities have utilized code enforcement through SCEDD's Nuisance Abatement Program as a proactive step in community clean-up. To date:

- 5,482—properties have been assessed
- 69—properties have been abated of nuisances
- 44—structures have been demolished and lots cleared

The removal of trash and debris from properties enhances and improves the look of a community. The demolition of uninhabitable, dilapidated structures creates opportunities for community leaders to redevelop those lots with residential improvements, including new affordable homes.



A dilapidated house being demolished in Axtell.

Housing Successes are happening across the District! Call SCEDD for more information on services we can provide to your community!

COMMUNITY SUCCESSES

2019 was a year for the record books in many ways! Weather wise, a “bomb cyclone” of immeasurable proportions ravaged the state of Nebraska in March, including many communities in our own District. Neighbors pulled together in others’ time of need and demonstrated the true spirit of Nebraska. Then again, in July, similar flooding struck again. Much of the State still is assessing damages and preparing for long term recovery.

The **Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED)** rose to the occasion and made disaster recovery funds and emergent threat funds available through the **Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** programs to begin aiding communities in recovery.

The **City of Wood River** received disaster recovery funds from **DED** to assist in the flood recovery of eligible home owners. The City hopes to invest the funding in approximately 13 properties throughout Wood River. The City also received emergent threat funds from **DED** to be used in the repair or replacement and improvement of flood ravaged infrastructure sustained as a result of the disasters endured in 2019.



Wood River residents rally to prevent flood damage.

Communities throughout the District successfully received funding for a variety of projects:

The **City of Wood River** received funds from the **US Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Rural Economic Development Loan Grant (REDLG)** program to create a revolving loan fund. The first recipient of these funds will be the Stick Creek Kids Child Development Center

The **Cities of Hastings, Sutton and Wood River** received **Community Development Block Grant** funds from **DED** to undertake implementation of Downtown Revitalization programs.

The **Village of Shelton** received a **Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) grant** from **DED** to undertake an owner occupied rehabilitation program for eligible homeowners within the Village. The Village will also utilize some of its funds in the demolition of uninhabitable dilapidated structures to make room for future residential redevelopment.

The **City of Superior** received funding from **DED** as part of the inaugural **NAHTF Innovation/Demonstration grant** fund. The City went through a very competitive process, including a 30 minute presentation and interview with the Department to introduce their plans and goals. The City will utilize the funds to construct six new single family housing units within the City as a pilot project to provide affordable housing for qualified buyers. As funds are repaid, more housing will be built either by the City or local developers. The project funds may also be utilized for direct homebuyer assistance in the purchase of one of the homes. A unique feature of the project is the construction of a “container housing unit” which caught the eye of DED reviewers.



Central City Officials celebrate recognition for their efforts.

The **City of Central City** was named the **2019 Governor’s Showcase Community Award** winner for their outstanding ability to identify community development goals and strategies that have resulted in outcomes and resources mobilized to achieve their goals. This marks the fourth consecutive year that a SCEDD community has received the award. Central City joins the communities of Red Cloud, Hastings and Superior as an award recipient. Central City was the first recipient of this award in 2000 and is the only Nebraska community to receive this award twice.

Does your community have a goal in mind? Not sure where to even start? Many of these projects began with an idea and a “what if”. Give our staff a call and we can begin to formulate your next step of success!

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2020 Board Meeting Dates & Locations

- ⇒ March 26 Howard County
- ⇒ May 28 Kearney County
- ⇒ July 30 Merrick County
- ⇒ Sept 24 Nuckolls County
- ⇒ Nov 19 Phelps County

SCEDD Board Meetings are regularly scheduled beginning at 5:30 PM on the last Thursday of odd numbered months. All meetings are open to the public.

More information can be found at www.scedd.us



www.facebook.com/scedd

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUCCESSES

SCEDD played a role in seeing many businesses successfully launch in 2019. Whether the need was business consulting, loan funds, or grant preparation, several wonderful and exciting businesses opened their doors to greater dreams for their companies. Here is a sample of the businesses assisted in 2019:

SHABRI, LLC – Hastings Through a **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** awarded to the City of Hastings, Shabri was awarded \$200,000 from the Nebr. Department of Economic Development. Shabri is the dream of Rakesh Srivastava owner of Innovative Prosthetics. Renovation of the old Village Inn in north Hastings will provide a fresh, inviting location for the business. Once up and running, Shabri will manufacture 3-D printed prosthetics and orthotics for patients. Project partners are the City of Hastings, Hastings Community Redevelopment Authority, Hastings Economic Development Corporation, SCEDD, and a local bank. Six full-time jobs will be created and added to the community of Hastings.



Rakesh Srivastava, Visionary and Owner



Royal personnel welcomed DED and City Staff to the facility in October.

ROYAL ENGINEERED COMPOSITES – Minden Royal Engineered Composites excels as a fully integrated manufacturer of advanced composite structures for the aerospace community. Through a \$500,000 CDBG, Royal successfully grew their manufacturing capacity, creating an additional 20 jobs in 2019.

ZABUNI SPECIALTY COFFEE AUCTION – Grand Island Some of the world's best coffee is grown in Kenya and SCEDD is proud to have played a small role in making Zabuni a reality in Grand Island. Zabuni facilitates the direct trade of wholesale green specialty coffee beans from Kenyan farmers to coffee roasters in the U.S. SCEDD provided business consulting and financial assistance through our non-profit development organization (NDO) revolving loan fund.



Kenyan farmers harvesting coffee fruit.

Do you have a business idea? Do you own a business and would like assistance in growing or transitioning? Whatever the need, SCEDD has the knowledge and resources available to help you achieve and succeed. Contact Sharon @ 308.455.4770 or www.scedd.us.



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