



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Community of Champions - Wood River



**ACTIVITY
BREEDS
ACTIVITY**

ACTIVITY BREEDS ACTIVITY

SCEDD's internal motto for communities has been 'Activity Breeds Activity,' as a proven formula for success. This year we are featuring champions in our communities - those that reached out to start something special, extended beyond their comfort zone, and in some cases have taken repeated leaps over several years to invest in themselves.

In turn, these initial steps have led to greater accomplishments over many years. Momentum continues as good things happen in their communities. There are many champions we interact with daily, and some of those leaders will also be celebrated as we rally around our treasured Nebraska good-life and work to preserve it for generations to come.

WHAT'S INSIDE



Holdrege RWFH Ribbon Cutting

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 - Kim Felton-Canfield, Elementary Teacher & Wood River Vision 20/20 Member
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 - Jodi Powers, Hairy Situations Dog Spa, Owner, Aurora
 - Social Media Academy
- **SCEDD Team**

ACTIVITY ACROSS THE SCEDD REGION



\$17.9 M

in Grants currently managed in over 50 contracts with communities



\$225 K

Invested in City/Local Planning



\$5 M

for Public Facility and/or Public Infrastructure awarded to 4 Communities



59

Businesses Visited in 2021



38

Businesses received digital marketing assistance and/or training

32

Landlords received Direct Financial Assistance due to COVID-19 impact

9

Owner Occupied Units Rehabilitated

26

Rental Units received funding for rehabilitation 2020-2021

TOP 3 STEPS TO TAKE ACTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

with SCEDD as Your Partner

- 1 Assess your Community's Needs**
 - o Partner with SCEDD to facilitate a town hall meeting or conduct a Community Needs Assessment Survey
- 2 Identify Community Priorities**
 - o Community needs cleaned up? Consider Nuisance Abatement
 - o Downtown needs a facelift? Apply for a Downtown Revitalization Grant
 - o Need housing or improved housing? Explore the many options

- 3 Take the Next Right Step to Move Your Community Forward**



“ Every community has more needs than they can address at one time. **It's important to START somewhere.** SCEDD welcomes the opportunity to meet to discuss the next right step for your community.”

Sharon Hueftle,
SCEDD Executive Director

COMMUNITY OF CHAMPIONS WOOD RIVER



Once upon a time, not long ago, a town hall meeting was held in Wood River. The year was 2012 and members of the community felt it was time to jump-start for innovation, development, and growth. The writing was on the wall as a small bedroom community, Wood River was either dying or thriving.

“ Our involvement with SCEDD has impacted our community and helped us determine where we want to be in 5-10 years. ”

Sara Arnett,
Vision 20/20 Member

VISION20/20
WOOD RIVER·NE

From this town hall, ideas emerged and momentum built. The mindset of the residents shifted towards proactive thinking as a way of doing community.

Now, just 9 years later, **Wood River is a champion of community growth.** A timeline of large scale projects demonstrates the community’s commitment to progress. Their accomplishments exemplify the motto that Activity Breeds Activity and proactive thinking works!

“ It all starts with an idea and going for it. **If you don’t step up and get involved, who will?** ”

Kim Felton-Canfield,
Vision 20/20 Member



Wood River Volunteer Fire Department

“ The Community Needs Assessment Survey (CNAS) was worth it. It gave us objectives to meet and the tools to apply for our first grants and funding. ”

Greg Cramer,
Mayor since 2013, Council member since 2000

2012

- o Vision 20/20 Board created and hosted town hall meetings to ‘Set priorities for Progress’

2013

- o Community Needs Assessment Survey priorities implemented

2015

- o Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) grant for Housing Study awarded
- o Vision 20/20 Board - Aesthetics Committee successfully fundraised and purchased new Welcome signs for east/ west entrances
- o Trust Fund grant awarded for 13 Owner Occupied rehabilitation projects
- o Bond and Sales Tax passed to fund new Aquatic Center

2016

- o Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning grant awarded for downtown study
- o Designated a Nebraska Leadership Certified Community

2018

- o Participated in the Heartland United Way’s Go-Big-Give Campaign, raised nearly \$17 K for community fitness center in the high school
- o Vision 20/20’s Child Care Task Force formed
- o CDBG Public Works grant awarded for Stick Creek Kids Child Development Center
- o \$6.6 M Aquatic Center opened



Wood River Leadership Certified Community Award
Pictured: Tyler Doane, Greg Cramer - Mayor, Sara Arnett;
all Vision 20/20 members. Photo courtesy of Nebraska
Department of Economic Development.

2019

- o CDBG Downtown Revitalization Grant awarded to improve commercial façades, downtown business district lighting, and removal of architectural barriers
- o Trust Fund Disaster Recovery funding received to provide assistance to flood impacted homeowners and rental units
- o CDBG Emergent Threat funding awarded to improve (flood water) Walnut Street drainage
- o USDA Rural Economic Development Grant awarded to City and loaned to Stick Creek Kids Child Development Center

2020

- o Civic and Community Center Financing Fund dollars awarded to study potential uses for the remaining portion of the vacant nursing home not used by Stick Creek Kids

2021

- o Stick Creek Kids Child Development Center opened with 10 K volunteer hours invested in Child Care Task Force
- o Community Needs Assessment Survey being developed for 2022
- o Re-certified as a Nebraska Leadership Certified Community



Stick Creek Kids ribbon cutting.

CHAMPIONS OF HOUSING



Holdrege RWFH New Construction

SCEDD's goal in 2021 was to see opportunities in spite of difficulties. Every community faces unique and difficult housing challenges that can limit economic growth. We are at work in many communities to help them overcome these challenges and develop solutions to address their unique housing needs.

RURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING FUNDS (RWHF) AWARDED

SCEDD provided preparation assistance for RWHF grants

- o Grand Island awarded \$1 M, local match \$1 M
- o Aurora awarded \$1 M, local match \$1 M

SCEDD received \$160K to bring its total RWHF to over \$1M to support community housing projects

- o 3 homes completed using \$677 K grant for a collective sale price of \$965 K - Central City, St. Paul, Holdrege
- o 2 homes in progress - Blue Hill and Holdrege

SCEDD accepts RWHF applications on an open cycle for new construction or rehabilitation.

PHILLIPS - *Housing Development*

- 8 parcels identified as 'out of compliance' through Nuisance Abatement Program - two parcels then sold for redevelopment and one offered for demo; all improved
- Darren Bartunek of Bartunek & Caudill Drywall Services, has invested in his community infrastructure and through new development

“ If you don't take action towards cleaning up your community, you run the risk of losing businesses. When community members don't take action to make improvements, the town will continue to dwindle down until finally you watch it disappear.

Activity does breed activity because the neighbors see you cleaning up a property.

If they had the nicest yard on the block before they try to out do you so theirs is the nicest on the block again. ”

Darren Bartunek,
business owner

“ Houses are where jobs sleep.”

Source unknown

BLUE HILL – Spec House

- Blue Hill’s Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and SCEDD partner for spec house on infill lot
- On the market in 2022



3 bedroom, 2 bath, family home in progress



HomeNE
Learning Network

HOUSING RESOURCES TO JUMP-START YOUR COMMUNITY

- 43 webinars since 2018
- 4,851 registrations and YouTube views
- HomeNE Gatherings for networking:
 - Showcased upper-story living in Hastings
 - Diverse housing developments highlighted in York

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Opportunity.
DEPT. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Funding in part from
Nebraska Department of
Economic Development*

FRANKLIN – Nuisance Abatement

- Over a 5 year period, every parcel assessed through the Nuisance Abatement Program
- In year 6, progress continues with clean-up of identified properties
- Construction and demolition landfill opened at no charge for a set time frame to encourage demolition of dilapidated structures



Before Nuisance Abatement



After Nuisance Abatement

“ SCEDD’s Nuisance Abatement Program has been the backbone of our efforts toward community development and has led to the revitalization of our City. Our annual six-week city wide cleanup this past year resulted in over 300 cubic yards of disposed items and 50 tons of construction materials were put into our C&D dump. We are thankful for SCEDD’s expertise! ”

Margaret Siel,
Franklin Mayor

COMMUNITIES TAKING THE INITIATIVE



HOLDREGE INFRASTRUCTURE

- \$3.05 M EDA CARES grant for the City and Phelps County Development Corporation
- Iron Horse Industrial Park infrastructure improvements to position region for recruitment of manufacturing to the site



CENTRAL CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FEMA GRANT

- \$3.1 M Federal Emergency Management Administration grant awarded for construction of a community safe room in accordance with federal standards
- Will serve as Activity Center for high school and shelter and safe room during an emergency

RED CLOUD CDBGs AWARDED

- Community Development Block Grants awarded for three projects
- \$475 K to City in partnership with Webster County Community Hospital
 - o Facility enhancements for urgent need to treat COVID patients and rehabilitation
- \$288 K for unique flood control drainage improvements
- \$53 K for Downtown Revitalization Planning Study



Communities for Kids
nebraskachildren

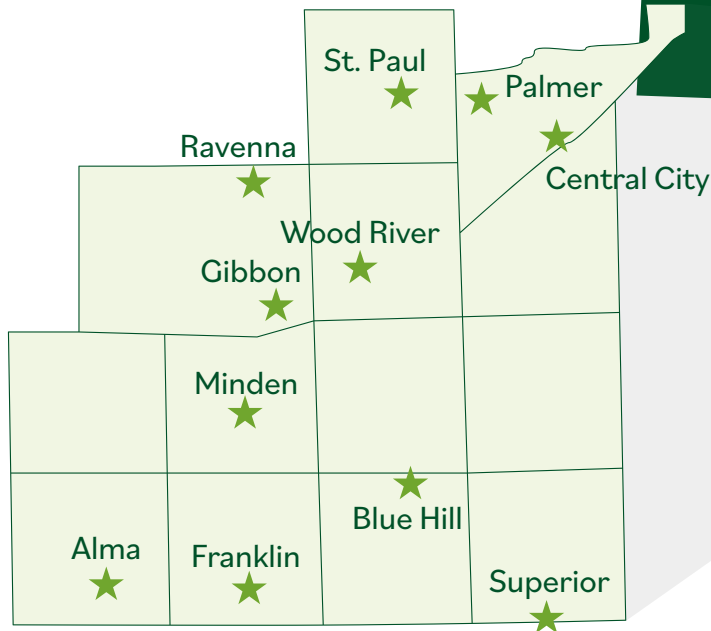
C4K GRANTS – COMMUNITIES FOR KIDS NEBRASKA CHILDREN & FAMILIES FOUNDATION

- SCEDD supports Bertrand as fiscal sponsor
- Adams County, Buffalo County, Giltner, Grand Island, Red Cloud, Wilcox-Hildreth, and Wood River also host C4K programs

THE NEXT RIGHT STEP

BEING A LEADERSHIP CERTIFIED COMMUNITY IS A STEP TOWARD FUTURE GROWTH

NEBRASKA
LEADERSHIP CERTIFIED
COMMUNITY



SCEDD is home to 11 of the
31 Nebraska Leadership
Certified Communities!

LEARN MORE - VISIT:

www.opportunity.Nebraska.gov

or contact Kelly.Gewecke@nebraska.gov



A speed test from your home
computer to capture accurate results
for future projects is needed!

LOG IN TODAY

BROADBAND MAPPING & EXPANSION INITIATIVES

- Working with Clay & Nuckolls Counties to educate on the gaps in broadband capabilities and importance of infrastructure improvements
- Partnering with Glenwood Communications and South Central Public Power District to apply for grant funding to enhance infrastructure
- Future initiatives expected as federal funding devoted to broadband infrastructure expansion

The Nebraska Broadband Speed Test is sponsored by the Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC) and funded through a U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) CARES Act grant.

CHAMPIONS OF BUSINESS



Pictured: Alex Mahundi facilitating with Loomis High School Seniors, September 2021.

TRAINING YOUTH TO MEET THE WORKFORCE DEMANDS OF TOMORROW

- Pilot program 2020-2021 school year served 47 high school students
- 2021-2022 school year to serve 102 students in Loomis, Bertrand, Holdrege, and Wilcox-Hildreth

“Hearing their (SCEDD’s) wisdom encouraged me to open the door, go through those conversations, review a budget, how can the business be sustainable, who I need to reach out to. They helped me think about all the angles, compensation, and how to go for funding. They connected me to the people so I could get started and get going, someone in my corner, SCEDD was it.”

Alex Mahundi,
Axios Workforce & Talent Development Inc, owner



DIGITAL MEDIA MARKETING

- Developed by SCEDD to connect small businesses with marketing experts to aid in recovery and resiliency utilizing CARES funds
- 17 businesses partnered with regional professional marketing agencies to develop their digital presence

“As a small business owner there are resources at your fingertips, whether its sales, marketing or your digital presence. There is so much knowledge to gain without spending a bunch of money. It has helped grow my business. I’ve gained 25 more Facebook followers in the first 3 months!”

Jodi Powers,
*Hairy Situations Dog Spa
owner, Aurora;
on working with a
marketing specialist*



SOCIAL MEDIA ACADEMY

- Partnered with Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP)
- 7 training modules created to help businesses leverage social media resources
- 21 businesses participated in training
- Digital Front Door training provided at Aurora Chamber event



Programs funded through
EDA CARES Act grant.

PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

“ Reaching out to SCEDD is a positive step in achieving the goals of a community, in financial help, and utilizing grants to improve their community activities and future plans. By serving on the Board, I can see there is help and assistance available. We encourage communities to reach out to SCEDD to explore their options. ”

Barb Barnett,
SCEDD Executive Board President



Pictured: Chamber Forum, Kearney, April 2021

SCEDD BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Dale Curtis	Adams County Board Member, SCEDD Vice President
Timothy Higgins	Buffalo County Board Member
Barb Barnett	Clay County Zoning Administrator, SCEDD President
Raquel Felzien	Franklin County, Franklin City Clerk, SCEDD Secretary
Mary Berlie	Hall County, Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation
Roger Nunnenkamp	Hamilton County Board Member
Christian Schluntz	Harlan County Board Member
Michael Coghlan	Howard County, St. Paul Economic Developer
Robert Swanson	Kearney County Board Member
Edward Dexter	Merrick County Board Member
David Mussman	Nuckolls County Board Member
Theresa Puls	Phelps County Board Member, SCEDD Treasurer
Marilyn Alber	Webster County, Blue Hill City Council Member
Gene Horne	Webster County, Red Cloud City Council Member
Linda Glause	Mortgage Loan Officer, Five Points Bank
Keith Dubas	Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Da-Ly Realty
Marni Danhauer	Associate Dean of Extended Learning Services Training, Central Community College

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There are great things happening in the SCEDD Region!

We invite you to call or email us with your questions - even to simply ask how to get started. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your community needs, plans and initiatives.

LET US HELP YOU TAKE THE NEXT RIGHT STEP.

SCEDD IMPACT

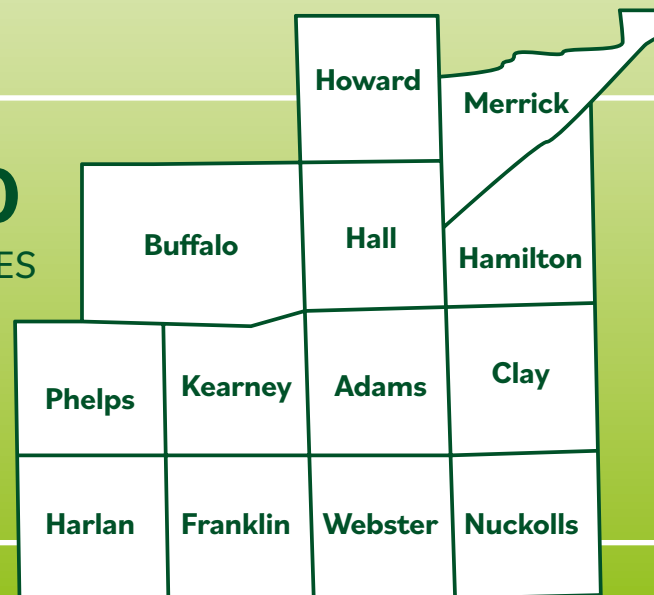
13
COUNTIES

86
COMMUNITIES

7,600
SQUARE MILES

207,768
PEOPLE

10.9%
OF NEBRASKA



MEMBER OF



NROC
Nebraska Regional
Officials Council

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