



MEETING MINUTES

DATE: November 12, 2013

TIME:

LOCATION: Curtis

PURPOSE: Membership

The Executive Committee and membership of the South Platte United Chambers of Commerce met in Curtis on November 12, 2013 in the education facility at Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

President pro temp Rex Nelson, Nancy Herhahn, Kevin Poppe, Betty Sayers, Dena Beck, Sharon Hauser, President of Medicine Creek Chamber, Andy Long, Vice President McCook Community College, Dr. Rosati, Dean of Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture participated in the meeting.

Rex Nelson called the meeting to order. He reported \$16, 747 in the South Platte United Chambers of Commerce savings account.

The first order of business was reviewing and confirming locations and speakers of meetings in 2014.

**Old Business**

Future meetings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Responsible</u>
Dec. 10, 2013	virtual	Retreat	Kevin Poppe
Jan. 14, 2014	Minden	open	Dena Beck
Feb. 11, 2014	Hastings, Bowling Alley	Richard Baier	Tim Anderson
March 11, 2014	Bieroc Café, McCook	State Sen. Forum	Rex Nelson
April 8, 2014	Holdrege/Speakeasy	Gubernatorial Candidates	Betty Sayers
May 13, 2014	Alma, Navigator	Jim Douglas Game & Parks	Tim Anderson
June 10, 2014 Family Inn	Burchell's White Hill	Senator Hadley	Dena Beck
July 8, 2014	Cambridge	Golf	Ashley Rice-Gerlach
Aug. 12, 2014	no meeting		



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Sept. 9, 2014	Hastings	Tim Miles	Tom Hastings
October 14, 2014	McCook	Lieutenant Governor, Heidemann	Rex Nelson
November 11, 2014	Holdrege	Nebraska Tourism	Twila Witt

**New Business**

Ideas to Revitalize the South Platte Organization

- Write, edit, print and mail a quarterly newsletter
- Survey membership on topic of programs at meetings
- Survey members on their reasons for paying membership dues to the South Platte organization
- Connect with the wide variety of economic development entities in rural Nebraska
- Strengthen its representation of rural Nebraska's issues in the legislature
- Connect with college age and 30-40 year old people who live and work in rural Nebraska on issues important to them and projects that may interest them

Obstacles – The South Platte needs leadership for the organization

Nancy asked if anyone was receiving the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Legislative Report. The report accompanies the membership to the South Platte organization. Only one of the people present currently receives the report via email. Nancy volunteered to research the question.

The meeting was adjourned, and President pro temp, Rex Nelson asked participants to describe new events and opportunities in their communities.

Kevin Poppe, District Manager for Great Plains Communications, the longest privately owned communications service in the state of Nebraska, said that fiber based Ethernet services is an expanding service provided by Great Plains Communication. He attended a meeting in Sidney about the Cabella development for housing in Sidney. Cabella purchased 440 acres and is developing 750 lots as well as building a 74 unit apartment complex and adding 800 sq. feet of office space. Cabella's architects said that rural developments of this size cost more because all supplies and labor force need to be brought into Sidney.

Rex Nelson, Economic Development Director, McCook said that McCook needs housing and innovative housing ideas using TIFF funds soon will be presented to the McCook Economic



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Development Board. Apartments in the upper floors of the Keystone projects for homes and apartment rentals are among the avenues for housing that will be explored. Rex added that the McCook economy is strong and main street is thriving. The city and the McCook Economic Development are working together, and all aspects of the city benefit from their collaboration.

Andy Long, V.P. McCook College, McCook Community College is exploring recruitment strategies including highlighting the opportunities to play sports at the community college level. The college also is researching core technical programs to offer at the college. Data shows that students who graduate with a 2-year college degree are more likely to be employed throughout their working years and achieve higher salaries than those who acquire short-term training certificates.

Sharon Hauser, President Medicine Valley Chamber of Commerce Medicine Valley Chamber is preparing the Home for Christmas Celebration. Businesses invite visitors to an open house during the holidays when families in the Medicine Valley region return to celebrate with friends and relatives. The college students volunteer their time and bring ideas to the project. College students also volunteer to work at the Star Theater and are an asset to the Chamber. The Chamber and the community work together to offer community events throughout the year, some of which are the Halloween Community Rodeo, Fall Festival, Easter Pageant and 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic and parade.

Betty Sayers, co-director of Nebraska Rural Living and the Chicken Dance Trail in Holdrege, is developing a project called 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Street Art. A building on highly visible 4th Ave. and Highways 6 & 34 has been standing empty and looking shabby for many years. The Holdrege Chamber of Commerce and area artists plan to acquire photos of artist's paintings that will be transferred to a sturdy fabric. The paintings on fabric will be hung in the windows of the building and the thousands of people passing through Holdrege will note the colorful, playful and impressive paintings on main street and may see the building as a desirable space instead of an eyesore.

Dena Beck, Center for Rural Affairs said that the Center for Rural Affairs has completed a rigorous two-year process to acquire for Federal certification as a Financial Institute for Community Development. She said that the certification among other things will "strengthen our stance and broaden our reach." Dena also reminded the gathering that REAP services are available monthly in McCook and Broken Bow.

Following the business meeting, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) served a tasty buffet. Dr. Rosati, Dean of NCTA spoke on **New College Initiatives for a Changing Student Environment**. Among the information Dr. Rosati presented are the following: facts about current and projected enrollments, programs that employers request, trends in agriculture, demands for graduates of agriculture programs, college tuition facts and opportunities to access higher education, current budgets at NCTA, scholarships available for students at NCTA (90% of NCTA students have **no** out of pocket tuition costs due to grants and scholarships available to them).



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Future programs and the advantages of links with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln School of Agriculture offer opportunities for NCTA Associate Degree graduates.