



**2022-2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



## 2022/23 Successes

**Communities received more than \$2.3 million in funding as a result of WCNDD efforts.**

- Implementation of new marketing plan
  - Increased social media presence
  - Increased social media followings
  - Updated website
  - Updated brochure and print materials
  - Quarterly e-news
- Focus on staff training and capacity building
  - Two new CDBG certified administrators
  - Three renewed CDBG certifications
  - Extensive ongoing education through in-person trainings
- Agency capacity grown with new projects
  - \$1.5 million Rural Workforce Housing Fund grant award
  - Digital Equity statewide initiative
  - American Rescue Plan Act administration

## BUDGET

The budget for the West Central Nebraska Development District, Inc. region has been designed to cater to the needs and priorities of the member communities and counties. Every effort to maximize each dollar by leveraging and matching funds is made.

The budget reflects the operations to be handled by six full-time employees of WCNDD. WCNDD is continuously exploring potential revenue streams to ensure that budget dollars are available for future needs.

Diverse revenue streams make up this year's anticipated income. Both the Nuisance Abatement Program and membership dues revenue are expected to remain steady. CDBG project revenue has increased on this year's budget. Several projects which have revenue potential are in discussion, but without solidified contracts or agreements, are not included in the current budget.

Training, travel and related expenses are a priority for this year's budget. Last year WCNDD capitalized on training, which had a direct result on the revenue side of the budget and the diversity of revenue streams. The budgeted expenses are based on actual expenditures from the previous year, with inflation being taken into consideration.

The financial and accounting system at WCNDD is based on Quick Books for Non-Profits. We follow record-keeping systems dictated by federal and state contracting agencies. An independent auditing firm performs an audit of accounts annually. Bookkeeping duties are performed by Johnson, Bergmeier, Wolf, and Cipperly.

Grant contracts often do not follow the WCNDD fiscal year, therefore the 2023/24 budget will continue to use

estimates of what will be drawn for administrative services during the period.

Estimates are based on implementations, information provided by staff, previous year actuals, and year to year comparisons. All budget figures are supported by contracts and professional service agreements.

### RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Director recommends that the proposed budget be reviewed, and the following motion be made:

"The Administrative Board approves the budget of \$495,700 with current cash reserve of \$104,390 for a total of \$600,090 and recommends that the budget be presented for approval by the General Membership at the June 21, 2023 Annual Meeting."

# NUISANCE ABATEMENT

By utilizing WCNDD as nuisance officer, it ensures that an impartial and equitable process is in place for all community members.



## 2023 NUISANCE

WCNDD began the 2023 Nuisance Abatement program in 18 communities. Nuisance officers have reviewed 1,898 properties this season.



## NEBRASKA DIGITAL EQUITY

REGIONS CONNECTING NEBRASKA

### Digital Equity

Digital Equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy.

Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

**51%** of NE farms and ranches use precision agriculture practices

**13%** of employed Nebraskans work from home; which is up nearly 3x from 2019

**11%** of Nebraska households have only a mobile cellular internet subscription.

## West Central Nebraska Development District, Inc.

is partnering with the State of Nebraska to create a plan to distribute federal funding that will improve digital access and connection quality across the state.

To date, WCNDD has participated in bi-weekly zoom meetings, weekly listening sessions, and will attend the statewide digital equity conference this fall.

WCNDD has formed a stakeholder committee to assist in collecting data, writing a plan, and spreading the word that Digital Equity is needed in the state of Nebraska.

WCNDD is a part of this statewide initiative that includes all NROC regions, Nebraska State Library Commission, and Nebraska Information Technology Commission.



# AWARDED GRANTS

## CDBG Awarded Applications Written and Administered by WCNDD

### **Economic Development, City of Ogallala and VK Design, LLC**

The City of Ogallala is providing a \$125,000 performance-based loan for direct assistance to VK Design, LLC, a manufacturer of custom high-end metal fabrication, including pewter countertops, furniture, lighting, architectural décor, and custom metal finishes to assist with working capital and equipment purchases for a new plant located at 820 East 1st, Ogallala. VK Design has been previously based in the Pacific Northwest, delivering their products nationwide to various commercial and residential projects. With the expansion to Ogallala, they will be centrally located to provide their clients with cost effective and timely delivery. The business will create five new full time equivalent (FTE) jobs, primarily benefitting Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) persons. The new jobs are to be maintained for twelve months and pay at least an hourly rate of \$14.25, with benefits. The project is expected to be completed within 30 months.

The City will conditionally grant \$125,000 to the West Central Nebraska Development District, Inc., a non-profit development organization (NDO). The NDO will then utilize such conditionally granted CDBG funds to loan \$125,000 to the business. The loan has a zero percent interest rate and is repayable to the NDO over 84 months, provided the business achieves job creation and other requirements. The loan funds paid to the NDO will be “de-federalized” and subject only to the approved Re-Use Plan of the NDO to be used in the future within the region for economic development purposes.

### **Floodplain Mapping Planning Project, Village of Arthur**

The Village of Arthur is preparing to submit a letter of map revision (LOMR) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that would revise the official floodplain map and potentially remove the majority of affected parcels from the special flood hazard area. Currently, more than 50% of the parcels or 77 of 146 parcels, within the village limits of the Village of Arthur are affected by the FEMA floodplain, which has prohibited development of the area. The total project area covers approximately 42 acres within the village limits, which is a strip approximately 900 feet wide that runs northeast to southwest through the village limits. The majority of residences and businesses within the Village are within this floodplain. The surrounding land uses are primarily residential, commercial, and agricultural.

Project activities include an environmental study involving mapping by a professional firm to include hydrologic and hydraulic study, floodplain mapping, and technical analysis to meet FEMA requirements for LOMR. These technical studies and documents will allow the Village to submit the LOMR to FEMA which could greatly affect many aspects of development in the village to include housing development and commercial development as well as benefit current citizens who are currently classified as in a floodplain. Due to the current floodplain classification, citizens have difficulty obtaining financing and the required insurance for properties in the Village. Total project costs are estimated at \$48,000.

## CDBG Projects Being Administered by WCNDD

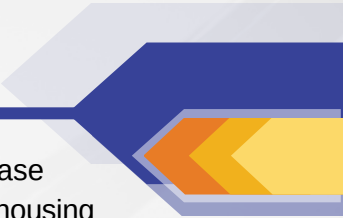
### **Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Regulations, and Housing Study Planning Project, Village of Mullen**

The Village of Mullen is updating their comprehensive plan, zoning regulations, and are developing a housing study. Mullen has experienced a decrease in population and the updated planning tools will assist the village with properly planning for economic development, assist village stakeholders with future decisions, preserve appropriate land uses, and assess current housing stock. Total project costs are \$43,000.

### **Downtown Revitalization, City of Benkelman**

The City of Benkelman is implementing a downtown revitalization facade improvement project which will help repair, replace and renovate failing facades. The average age of the downtown buildings is 87 years old, many of which need repair or have fallen to below average conditions. Project activities include renovating facade, upgrades of windows, doors, signs, awnings, lighting, brick and masonry work. A minimum of 15 businesses will be impacted by the project. Total project costs are estimated at \$635,000.

# AWARDED GRANTS



WCNDD is focused on matching community goals with innovative solutions. Through listening to our communities, we are able to provide them with potential funding opportunities and programs that will support them in building their ideal future. This year WCNDD worked with the City of Imperial to identify and create the vision the community saw for itself. The community pinpointed a desire to improve their city square and also determined that the housing situation in Imperial was holding back development. WCNDD analyzed these needs and selected grants that targeted these projects. Imperial's progressive mindset and proactive pre-planning allowed for quick turnaround

in aligning funding opportunities with community needs. WCNDD, in partnership with the City of Imperial, applied for and received a Rural Workforce Housing Fund grant for \$1,000,000, which the community matched with \$500,000 of its own funds.



This \$1.5 million grant will fund the construction of at least five new homes in the city, creating a

domino effect that will increase movement within Imperial's housing market. Additionally, with the goal of an improved city square, WCNDD wrote a Community and Civic Financing Fund grant for a downtown renovation project. The funding opportunity was awarded to the city for \$562,000 and will enable the city to host events, benefit from tourism, and maintain important public amenities. WCNDD helps communities, like Imperial, continue to write their own story for the future of their town. Through the process of identifying needs, finding opportunities, and getting projects across the finish line, WCNDD is prepared to support communities in their next chapter.

## SCRAP TIRE

### WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING INCENTIVE GRANTS FUND

WCNDD assisted two communities within the region in applying for funding for recycling tires. Both communities were awarded funding through the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grants Fund through Nebraska Department of Economic Development!

**Furnas County | 150 Ton | \$30,752.00**  
**McPherson County | 150 Ton | \$31,216.00**

## CCCFF

### CIVIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER FINANCING FUND (CCCFF)

WCNDD assisted two communities within the region, Arapahoe and Imperial.

Imperial, Nebraska applied for a CCCFF construction grant for their downtown square. Imperial will use the funds to improve the city block which hosts several annual events and three important public amenities.

Arapahoe, Nebraska applied for a CCCFF planning grant for the Crystal Theatre and senior center, which will enable the city to plan and raise funds to preserve and upgrade these city owned public buildings.

**Imperial, NE | \$562,000.00**  
**Arapahoe, NE | \$30,000.00**

# PLANNING AND ZONING

## KEITH COUNTY

June 2022 - May 2023

160 Zoning Permits

\$92,227 Zoning Permit fees collected

\$16,385,429 estimated cost of improvements

14 Conditional Use Permits

5 Vacation Rental CUPs

## ARTHUR COUNTY

June 2022 - May 2023

1 Zoning Permit

## PERKINS COUNTY

June 2022 - May 2023

8 Zoning Permits

1 Conditional Use Permit

## -WCNDD- MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

*When a community pays yearly dues it receives the following:*

- Discounts on fee-based services
- Priority scheduling
- Be the first to know about funding and other resources to improve your community
- Receive housing development guidance
- The chance to contribute to the economic growth of the region
- Your community's needs represented on a regional, statewide, and national basis



WE ARE

## CDBG CERTIFIED

We are a professional team ready to help your community apply or administer your CDBG grant!

CALL US TODAY!

 308.284.6077

 [WWW.WEST-CENTRAL-NEBRASKA.COM](http://WWW.WEST-CENTRAL-NEBRASKA.COM)

### THE CDBG GRANT

program provides funding for community and economic development projects in order to encourage additional federal, state and private resource investment.

**WCNDD can assist in making big ideas come to life. Call us and we can discuss your community's unique project.**

Some innovative ideas may include:

- Improved community facilities
- Ongoing citizen engagement required for grant applications
- Community Needs Assessments or surveys
- Housing studies
- Fiscal Agent for CRA loan funds
- Vacant property registration administration



# WCNDD TEAM:

## AMBER KUSKIE



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

- Administration
- Development

Amber enjoys chasing her two kids and doing home improvement projects in her free time. Amber is an avid sports fan and enjoys watching the Huskers.

## AMY SAUER



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

- Housing
- CDBG Economic Development

Amy loves spending time with her family. She also enjoys spending time in her garden and with her chickens and ducks.

## ERICA BUSH



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

- CDBG Grants
- Community Development

Erica enjoys reading, music and spending time with her family. She also enjoys travelling.

## TAYLOR PROVOST



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

- Marketing and Promotions
- Digital Equity

Taylor is newly married and enjoys spending time with her husband on the golf course and at Lake McConaughy.

## SAMANTHA REDFERN



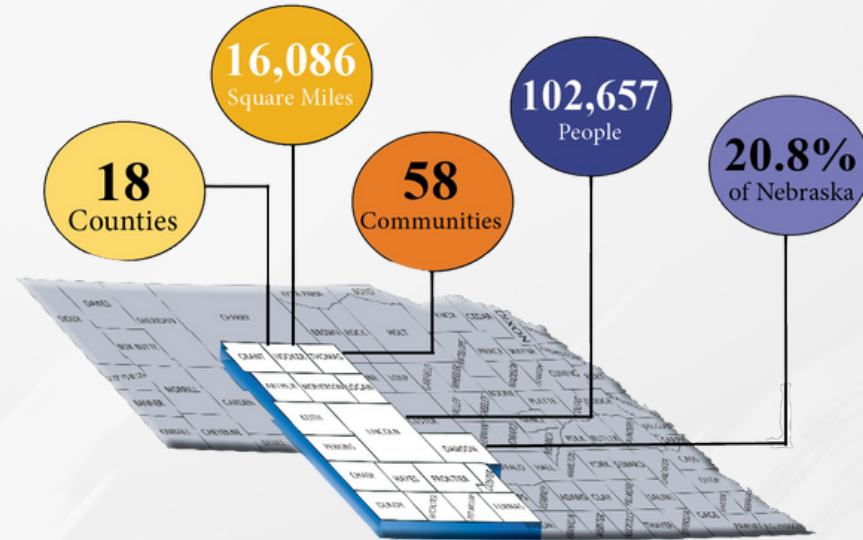
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

- Government Services
- Grant Writing

Sam enjoys traveling and golf. Sam is new to Keith County and is enjoying getting to know the area and the golf courses.



## Local Solutions Regional Impact



### Is your community ready to take the next step?

We invite you to call or email WCNDD with your questions. Our agency welcomes the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your community needs, plans and initiatives.



West Central Nebraska  
Development District  
333 E 2nd St., PO Box 599  
Ogallala, NE 69153  
308.284.6077



*As the end of the 2022/23 fiscal year is upon us, I find myself thankful for my first full year serving as the Executive Director for West Central Nebraska Development District, Inc. (WCNDD). WCNDD's most important asset is the well-qualified and passionate staff. I am also grateful for a dedicated Administrative Board made up of knowledgeable leaders. The WCNDD team has embraced disruptive leadership, which has exponentially created opportunities for WCNDD.*

*This year, WCNDD was successful in obtaining more than \$1.8 million in grant funding for the region. The team wrote and administered grants, served as nuisance officer in 18 communities, carried out contracted projects, all while making staff training a priority and focusing on capacity building. By concentrating on these things, WCNDD has been able to maximize the agency's impact. I am privileged to witness firsthand the impact our collective efforts have on the communities we serve.*

*Again, these milestones are a testament to the dedication, hard work and collaboration of the exceptional team and the strong partnerships we have forged. As I look at the trajectory that WCNDD is on, I am extremely proud of the outlook and promising future. As we enter the new fiscal year, I am excited about the opportunities to come. WCNDD will continue to innovate, collaborate, and adapt to the evolving needs of the communities in the region, ensuring that programs and services create lasting positive change.*

- Amber Kuskie

