

Volume 3, Edition 2
April 2011

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Thanks for Reading
You're reading the latest edition of *Rural Connections*, an e-newsletter from the Kansas Department of Commerce designed for rural development professionals like you. Feel free to [tell us what you think](#). Or

Grape and Wine Workshops

In cooperation with County Extension offices in Ellis, Crawford and Lyon counties, Highland Community College will host three workshops on growing grapes, making wine and the Kansas Grape and Wine Industry. Dominic Martin, Viticulture and Enology Instructor will conduct the workshops, discussing how to get started in the grape/wine industry as well as other topics including first spray application of the season, what/when/how to plant vines, vineyard air pocket mitigation, irrigation system cover crops for between rows, sprayer calibration, spray scheduling and five things that must be done before planting a vineyard or opening a winery.

The workshops will be held April 4 in Hays, April 18 in Gering and April 25 in Emporia. They are free to the public and run 6-8 p.m. To RSVP, please contact one of the following:

Scott Kohl, HCC-Wamego (785) 456-6006
Holly Dickman, Ellis County Extension Agent (785) 628-9443
Dean Stites, Crawford County Extension Agent (620) 724-8
Amy Jordan, Lyon County Extension Agent (620) 341-3220

CDBG Update

CDBG Application Workshop

Several training opportunities will be provided during 2011, including the CDBG Application workshop and the Kansas Interagency Advisory Committee (KIAC) meeting.

The CDBG Application workshop, a forum to discuss CDBG related issues, is scheduled for April 20 at the Celebration Centre Community building in Lyons. The workshop will provide a positive atmosphere that forges stronger alliances to successfully overcome challenges of implementing community development projects.

[forward it to a friend.](#)

How We Help

The Rural Development Division works with various community developers and rural producers. [Click here to learn more.](#)



Office of Rural Opportunity

The [Office of Rural Opportunity](#) serves communities of 5,000 or less through four regional offices.



This workshop will provide an excellent opportunity for local officials, regional planning commissions, certified administrators, outside consultants and state officials to exchange ideas and share experiences. Commerce will release information on CDBG applications for the upcoming year and this workshop will serve as the only application workshop for the year.

Kansas Interagency Advisory Committee

The Kansas Interagency Advisory Committee (KIAC) was established to provide better guidance and direction to communities seeking funding for water and sewer projects. The committee also facilitates better coordination and communication between agencies/organizations involved in water and sewer projects and issues as they counsel those communities.

The core KIAC group consists of those federal and state agencies involved in the financing, regulating and oversight control of water and sewer resources and projects, including:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (RD)
- Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE)
- Kansas Department of Commerce (Commerce)
- Kansas Water Office (KWO)

KIAC meetings are strongly encouraged for communities seeking funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The meetings provide guidance to communities regarding their proposed project, including the most appropriate source of funding, addressing alternative solutions and other relevant technical assistance. The number of participants per community is not limited; however, one official member of the entity, as well as the engineer, must be present at the meeting.

The KIAC meets on a bi-monthly basis, usually the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from May through August. Dates for the 2011 KIAC meetings are as follows and will be held in Topeka unless otherwise indicated:

May 10 & 24
June 14 & 28
July 12 & 26
August 9 (Hays) & 23

For further information on these training opportunities or the CDBG program, contact: Debbie Beck at (785) 296-3004 or by e-mail at dbeck@kansascommerce.com.

Small Communities Improvement Program - SCIP

SCIP sets aside \$500,000 each year for small communities that are undertaking improvement projects through sweat equity and volunteerism. The program is designed to assist communities with populations of 5,000 or less that are not eligible for other Department of Commerce assistance and might not have the capacity to provide matching funds. The maximum award for a single project is \$125,000.

Self-help requires communities to determine which parts of the project they can complete on their own. The community acts as the general contractor, organizing local labor and equipment and coordinating work that needs to be done by a subcontractor. The SCIP provides direction, technical assistance, guidance and the support to make it happen. Self-help and volunteerism must result in savings of at least 40 percent of the project's marketplace price.

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Arts
- Entertainment
- Theaters
- Historic Preservation Projects
- Walking Trails

Communities must be able to validate the impact the project will have on the quality of life for the residents of their city. The program is competitive and offered annually. In February, five Kansas communities were awarded a share of \$440,000 in funding from SCIP.

"This grant funding will have a significant and tangible impact on the quality of life in these communities," said Commerce Secretary Pat George. "We know they have the capacity and desire to complete their projects."

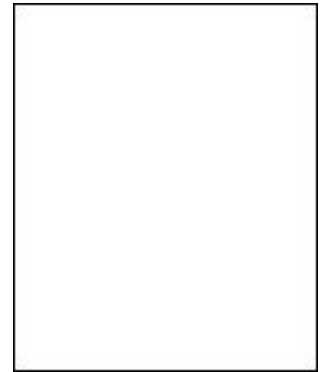
The five communities and funds awarded include:

- Larned (\$125,000) - Renovations to Doerr-Vernon Park
- Erie (\$105,065) - Phased improvements to the city park, including new playground equipment, multi-sport courts and a walking trail
- McFarland (\$70,102) - Improvements and new equipment for the city park
- Tampa (\$64,126) - Building a new city park
- Ashland (\$75,617) - Building a new community fitness center

For additional information, contact Chris Harris at (785) 296-6815 or charris@kansascommerce.com.

Marketing Kansas Foods to the World

Seven Kansas specialty food companies showcased their products and connected with industry members from around the world January 16-18, 2011 at the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco. The seven companies were: Original Juan Specialty Foods (Kansas City), New Grass Bison Co. (Shawnee), The Pantry Shelf Co. (Hutchinson), Rabbit Creek Products (Louisburg), Cocoa Dolce Artisan Chocolates (Wichita), KC Innovations (Kansas City) and Grandma Hoerner's Foods (Alma). These businesses were located in the Kansas Pavilion, which is sponsored by the Kansas Department of Commerce, Rural Development Division.



The Winter Fancy Foods Show in San Francisco is regarded as one of the premier specialty food shows in the nation, drawing 19,000 - 32,000 attendees and more than 1,000 exhibitors from around the world showcasing more than 100,000 specialty foods.

Business booms at these trade-only shows, in a unique decision-maker-to-decision-maker environment. Nearly 90 percent of attendees either authorize or recommend purchasing decisions. [Click here](#) for details.

This is the fourth consecutive year the Kansas Department of

Commerce has organized a delegation of companies and sponsored a Kansas Pavilion at the Winter Fancy Foods Show, but this pavilion is the largest showing of Kansas companies to date.

Plans are already underway for the Kansas Pavilion at the Summer Fancy Food Show. It will be held in Washington, D.C. and consists of 12 booths, the largest pavilion to date.

Summer Fancy Food Show - Buyers Mission
July 9 - 12
Washington, D.C.

The 2011 Summer Fancy Food Buyers Mission is a great opportunity to meet one-on-one with a number of buyers representing international specialty food, beverage, gift and department stores, supermarkets, restaurants and other related businesses. In 2010, the event generated over \$1.2 million in projected future sales.

For 2011, buyers have expressed interest in a wide variety of U.S. fancy foods including high-end specialty and gourmet products. Participating in this Buyers Mission can help you produce immediate export sales without the expense of overseas travel. For information about participating in the Fancy Food Show Kansas Pavilion, contact Becki Rhoades at (785) 296-1847 or brhoades@kansascommerce.com.

Atlas of Rural and Small-Town America

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service has introduced an online Atlas of Rural and Small-Town America that captures a broad range of demographic, economic and agriculture data on rural areas across the United States. The tool maps a number of variables by county relating to people, jobs and agriculture. You can zoom into Kansas or your region and see how you compare."

[Click here](#) to see the atlas.

New Workshops Offered by Kansas Historical Society

The Kansas Historical Society has added several new workshops to a growing list of educational opportunities available

for those interested in historic preservation. [Click here](#) to see the full list. Four Heritage Trust Fund (HTF) grant workshops have been scheduled for May in Chanute, June in McPherson, July in Hays and August in Topeka. [Click here](#) for details. Don't forget to reserve a space.

Three pre-conference sessions exploring some of the basics of preservation programs in Kansas will be held at the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka just before the beginning of the annual state preservation conference on June 2. No registration is necessary for these pre-conference sessions.

Staff from the Kansas Historical Society will present information of particular interest to local historical societies, historic sites and museums during a two-day class held in conjunction with the 2011 Kansas Archeology Training Program (KATP) near Westmoreland, Kan. on June 9-10. Registration fees apply and prior registration is required.

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