

Archive - 2016 SVED Newsletters

Highlights of the January 21st, 2016 SVED meeting:

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Extended - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal Tax Credit available to employers who hire individuals from eligible target groups. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit helps people move from welfare to work and gain on-the-job experience by encouraging private employers to hire within one of several targeted groups of job candidates who traditionally face significant barriers to employment, reducing employer's federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified new worker in the first year of employment. The targeted candidates are:

- cash assistance recipients
- veterans receiving food stamps
- disabled veteran
- unemployed veteran
- disabled unemployed veteran
- 18-to-39-year-old recipients receiving food stamps
- 18-to-39-year-old residents living in a rural renewal county – Mitchell County is a rural renewal county.
- vocational rehabilitation referrals
- ex-felons
- SSI recipients
- Ticket-to-Work holders

This means if you hired an employee from any of the above categories in 2015 you might be eligible for a Tax Credit. This is a retroactive tax incentive for 2015 and has been extended until 2019. Please contact your tax preparer for more information about the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

NEX-GENERATION ROUND UP FOR YOUTH – Have you thought about having an intern at your business? Nex-Tech/Nex-Generation Round Up For Youth provides a grant of up to \$3,600 per business to help off-set its costs of a student internship. Your business could have a paid student intern work during the summer to learn professional skills and to broaden their perspectives on career options. It also enables your business an opportunity to "interview" students for potential future jobs; including succession planning for businesses that otherwise may close permanently. The grant is based on \$10/hour for 9 weeks.

- Each business is responsible for payroll/payroll taxes (the intern is an employee of the business, not of Nex-Generation).
- Nex-Generation will meet with each participating business to go over curriculum (basic outline of what the intern will be doing and knowledge, skills, or abilities he or she will gain from the experience).
- Nex-Generation will assist with the online application process, including notifying schools of the opportunity. After the close of the application process,
- Nex-Generation will provide each business with electronic copies of its applications. Each business will conduct its own interviews and make its selection.
- In order for the application to be complete and ready for students to apply, we will need the businesses secured by January 31 (earlier if possible).
- All questions and inquiries should be directed to:

Jacque Beckman, Executive Director
Nex-Generation Round Up for Youth, Inc.
785-567-4281, Ext. 1170 (Office)
785-567-3222 (Work Cell)
jbeckman@nex-tech.com

KDA – AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY – The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) has extended the deadline for Kansas agribusinesses, manufacturers and producers of agricultural products to complete the Kansas Agriculture Workforce Needs Assessment Survey through January 31, 2016. The survey will help KDA identify the number and types of jobs, and specific skills

required for those jobs, in agriculture, in an effort to help support growth in agriculture. Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey said finding employees who are trained and prepared for jobs is a key challenge in agriculture today. "We need to fully understand the gap between what the employers need and what potential employees have, whether that is technical skills, workplace skills or additional certifications," said Secretary McClaskey. "This survey will give us the necessary information to understand the gap and to further strategize with industry partners on how to address these challenges." McClaskey said this survey will be used as a catalyst to begin the work of creating or redirecting training programs in an effort to keep the workforce involved in agriculture locally and statewide. The survey is currently being offered online at www.tinyurl.com/kdaworkforce with the access code of GrowAg, but also can be mailed to those who request a paper version. KDA is keeping the survey open through January 31, 2016. KDA is focused on serving Kansas farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses and the consumers/customers they serve. A current priority is growing agriculture in the state, eliminating barriers to growth, developing workforce and building marketing activities in-state, out-of-state and globally. For more information on the survey, visit <http://agriculture.ks.gov/workforce>.

ISLE OF LIGHTS – Bob Severance was present to give an unofficial count from the Isle of Lights 2015. Over 10,000 people visit our Chautauqua Isle of Lights on a yearly basis. Here are a few highlights of the visitors that our spectacular display attracts.

- 9,983 visitors from 164 towns in Kansas
- 732 visitors from 33 States
- 23 visitors from 8 Foreign Countries

MITCHELL COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT - Mitchell County Convention and Tourism is looking to pay a special person to develop a budget and strategic plan including a detailed marketing plan for the development of Tourism in Mitchell County. The candidate must be a Mitchell County resident and the intention is that this contract could potentially develop into a part time Mitchell County Tourism Director position. Please submit questions to lorimay@outlook.com or call 785.738.3995 for an appointment.

SOLOMON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION - The Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce applications are currently being accepted for the second round of Dane G. Hansen Foundation Grant awards with a deadline of **April 1, 2016**. Through the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, an amount of \$50,000 for grants to charitable projects is available for distribution from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation through a competitive application process.

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation is utilizing the Greater Salina Community Foundation to distribute and monitor grants in the 16 counties that comprise the service area of the GSCF, making \$50,000 in grants available to each of the Counties. The grants will be awarded through a competitive grant application process. The Solomon Valley Community Foundation will be responsible for the selection and monitoring of grants in Mitchell County.

Grants will be awarded to projects or programs that address:

- Arts
- Community Beautification
- Education
- Environmental Programs or Projects
- Health & Human Service Needs
- Inter-generational Programs or Projects

Preference will be given to programs or projects that include community involvement and volunteerism. Grants are not intended to be for endowment or general operational expenses. Applications should be completed online at the Solomon Valley Community Foundation's website of www.solomonvalleycf.org under Dane G. Hansen Foundation Community Grants. Grant applications are due April 1, 2016.

GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP – Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to host a Grant Writing Workshop for the community. This workshop will be held on Leap Day – **February 29th, from 4:30-6:30pm** at NCK Tech Student Union Conference Room. Please join us for some tips on writing grant applications and get your questions answered.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY – Do you know of someone who needs accessibility improvements to their home? Mitchell County is the lead county for Dickinson, Ottawa and Saline Counties for a \$300,000 accessibility grant. These four counties will work together to provide needed handicapped accessibility improvement to their residents. The improvements that are eligible include bathroom modifications, ramps, utility rooms, driveways, sidewalks, doorways and other accessibility improvements. It is estimated that approximately 17 homes will be assisted to provide better mobility, with up to \$12,500 per each home. Please contact North Central Regional Planning Commission at 785.738.2218 for more information.

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments

Heather Hartman

Highlights of the **February 18th, 2016**, SVED meeting:

BUSINESS APPRECIATION MONTH (BAM) – Business Appreciation Month serves as a statewide tribute to Kansas businesses for their contributions to our state. The awards program takes place each spring and invites individuals and organizations to nominate the proud Kansas businesses that contribute jobs and support their local communities. Finalists are recognized at the Team Kansas awards ceremony in June, with the top nominee receiving the Governor's Award of Excellence which is the top award given to a business by the state of Kansas. The intent of the program is to recognize Kansas businesses for their contributions to the local and state economy. Kansas businesses continue to be the foundation of our economy, communities and overall quality of life, and Business Appreciation Month is the state's way of recognizing Kansas businesses for all they do to keep Kansas strong.

The first step of the process is for businesses to be nominated for the award. Solomon Valley Economic Development would like to once again nominate businesses in our area for recognition. If you know of a business that has the following qualifications please contact me.

Award qualifications include:

- Business expansion in Kansas
- Successful employee retention and recruitment practices
- Employee training/educational programs
- Capital investment in Kansas
- Support of local activities including school activities, community events, economic development and leadership programs

CAWKER CITY STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – *Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.*

I am happy to be helping host a Strategic Planning Session in Cawker City. We are seeking input from all sectors including elected officials, business owners, property owners, seniors, youth, healthcare sector, education sector and anyone interested in helping Cawker City plan for the future. Representatives from the Department of Commerce will lead us through a night of planning. Have some say in the future of Cawker City by joining us!

- When: Wednesday, March 9th, 2016 at 7:00pm
- Where: All-Purpose Room – Lakeside Elementary School
- Refreshments Provided
- Questions please call: Denelle Mick – 785.781.4713

NORTHWEST KANSAS ECONOMIC INNOVATION CENTER – A new entity is being formed to focus on economic development and innovation in Northwest Kansas. The Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc. (NWKEICI) will be led by Norton County native, Scott Sproul. Scott's work with the Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc. will begin with research regarding community needs. "We need to have conversations with residents in our communities about what is working, what has not worked, what ideas they have for growth and how communities might be able to work together with a regional approach when appropriate," Sproul said. "We need an accurate assessment of how the NWKEICI can be most effective."

NWKEICI will focus primarily on reversing the population drain, increasing economic opportunities and strengthening critical community services in the 26 most northwest counties in Kansas. Initial funding for the NWKEICI comes from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Logan, KS. The mission of the Hansen Foundation is to improve the quality of life in Northwest Kansas. "Mr. Hansen was an innovative businessman and a force for economic prosperity in northwest Kansas," said Cy Moyer, Phillipsburg, president of the Foundation's board of trustees. "The Trustees believe that the creation of an

organization dedicated to not just an individual community or county, but to the entire northwest Kansas area can bring value to existing businesses and help to bring new ideas to fruition.”

I was pleased to attend one of the first meetings of the NWKEICI this week with other Economic Development professions in our region. Even though we shared most of the same concerns, it was enlightening to come up with some common goals for the region. I look forward to the future of this organization and the positive impact it will have on Mitchell County.

Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership (KARL) – Beloit is proud to host a KARL ROADSHOW CLINIC –

**The Future of Rural Kansas Communities in an Era of Reduced Public Funding
Wednesday, February 24th, 2016**

North Central Kansas Technical College – Severance Student Union Conference Room
The Town Hall Clinics sponsored by the Graduate Program of Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership, Inc. provide background information through key leadership presentations and panels to assist with more informed decision making. Call to Action discussion sessions provide tools to better engage the community in decision making and problem solving.

General Itinerary: 11:50 a.m. – registration check-in; 12 noon Lunch / Introductions; 12:45 Session Presentations Begin; 5 p.m. End Workshop & Adjourn. \$50 per person

- 1 pm: Session #1 State of Affairs in KS Scott Poor Esq., Class VII/KARL Board
- 2 pm: Session #2 Revenue Issues
Alan Cobb, Sr. Political Consultant, Trump Campaign (KARL Class VIII Graduate)
Annie McKay, Executive Director – Kansas Center for Economic Growth
- 3 pm: Session # 3 The Peoples Voice – Perceptions of Government in Kansas
Dr. Chapman Rackaway, Professor, Fort Hays State – Department of Political Science
Dr Gary Brinker, Director of the Docking Institute and Associate Professor of Sociology,

FHSU

- 4pm: Call to Action – Communication and Collaboration
Coordinated by Nancy Daniels, Extension Community Vitality Specialist
Aliesa Woods and John Forshee

Registration is open to the public. RSVP jlierz@ksu.edu or by calling 785.738.7336

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GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP – Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to host a Grant Writing Workshop for the community. This workshop will be held on Leap Day – **Monday, February 29th**, from 4:30-6:30pm at NCK Tech Student Union Conference Room. Experts will be available to answer questions and provide assistance in developing quality applications. No registration needed, but please call Solomon Valley Community Foundation with any questions. 785.534.1126

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH – Career and Technical Education (CTE) has never been stronger in our communities and our nation. CTE exists to provide valuable opportunities to students across the nation, connecting each learner with his or her chosen career path and creating a strong, competitive workforce. CTE programs at the postsecondary level focus efforts and resources to prepare workers for careers in Kansas' highest-priority fields, such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing/aviation, energy and health sciences. Education and training in these critical industries will help ensure a strong Kansas economy long into the future. CTE is versatile, hands-on, and built around each student's strengths. Successful workforce development programs improve a student's employability and earnings potential and continued profitability for employers. CTE is also affordable and offers a great springboard for further education or immediate earning potential. Technical education and training prepares individuals with high skills for better careers and personal enrichment, provides employers with on-demand availability of skilled workers and supplies industry with a steady pipeline of talent development for a higher quality of life for Kansans.

BELOIT AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – The **Chamber Annual Banquet** will be held **Saturday, February 20th** at 6pm at Down Under. *"Rolling out the Red Carpet"* is this year's theme. The Chamber Banquet is the premier event of the year that keeps people talking about it for months and months. They can't wait until next year to come again! Don't miss out on this great opportunity to an evening of fun, food and entertainment! Major sponsors are AGCO/Sunflower Manufacturing, Beloit Auto & Truck Plaza, Mitre Construction & Nex-Tech. Call Gina today to get your tickets. 785.738.2717

GUARANTY STATE BANK CYBER SECURITY – Guaranty State Bank is offering a Cyber Security Seminar **Thursday, February 25th** from 11:30pm – 1:00pm at NCK Tech in Beloit. Lunch is provided and experts will be on hand to help you learn how to protect your computers, networks, and data from hacking. Please contact the Guaranty State Bank to RSVP 785.738.3501.

WEBSITE – The Solomon Valley Economic Development website has been hacked and has been taken down. We are working on plans for a new website soon. Hummm maybe we should go to the Guaranty State Bank Cyber Security lunch next week? ☺ In the meantime, please contact me if you would like the minutes of our meetings emailed to you.

NEXT MEETING – The next meeting of Solomon Valley Economic Development will be held *one week earlier* on **March 10th, 2016** at 12:30pm in the basement of North Central Regional Planning Commission.

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Heather Hartman

March, 2016 – No Newsletter

Highlights of the **April 21st, 2016**, SVED meeting:

BUSINESS APPRECIATION MONTH (BAM) – Business Appreciation Month serves as a statewide tribute to Kansas businesses for their contributions to our state. The awards program takes place each spring and invites individuals and organizations to nominate the proud Kansas businesses that contribute jobs and support their local communities. Finalists are recognized at the Team Kansas awards ceremony in June, with the top nominee receiving the Governor's Award of Excellence which is the top award given to a business by the state of Kansas. The intent of the program is to recognize Kansas businesses for their contributions to the local and state economy. Kansas businesses continue to be the foundation of our economy, communities and overall quality of life, and Business Appreciation Month is the state's way of recognizing Kansas businesses for all they do to keep Kansas strong.

SVED submitted two nominees this year as businesses from our communities to be recognized by the Kansas Department of Commerce for all their efforts.

- Cunningham Telephone and Cable
- The Port Library

Both of these entities are very worthy of this designation and should fare well through the state process. We compliment them in all they do for our region and we look forward to an opportunity to recognize them at an upcoming meeting.

CAWKER CITY STRATEGIC PLAN – This month the Kansas Department of Commerce hosted a citywide Strategic Planning Session at Lakeside Elementary School in Cawker City, Kansas. The session was designed to gather information and feedback from the community stakeholders on the future of the area. The session was facilitated by Dan Steffen and James Foster of the Kansas Department of Commerce. Nichole McDaniel, North Central Regional Planning Commission, and I were on hand to help host and take notes.

The evening was well attended by over 10% of the population of Cawker City (49 people) and a good representation of the community. The evening started by having the citizens list the strengths of the area. Then they moved to concerns/wants/needs of the area. After listing all these items we broke the audience into small groups. Those groups then came up with project ideas they would like to see happen in the area. Those items were listed and then voted upon by the entire group. It was a great way to see the top 5-8 projects that were wanted and needed in Cawker City. I will present all of those items and the next steps at the May Cawker City City Council meeting. I look forward to the progress that is being made in the area.

DANE G HANSEN NEWS– I attended the Dane G. Hansen Foundation Community Forum workshop in Hays. It was a large event and a great way to hear more about what the plans are for the 26 counties in the future. In the short term, the Trustees announced the commitment to renew grants in the amount of \$100,000 to each county for projects to be determined by local community foundations or advisory boards. The Trustees understand the local foundations will see the best use of these dollars.

In addition, Trustees announced a new initiative designed to encourage the growth of permanent funds in each county. Each community foundation will select a particular month in which it will host a matching event or campaign. For the selected month, the Dane G. Hansen Foundation will provide a 100% match for every dollar raised for the participating community foundation's endowed unrestricted community grant fund, up to a maximum of \$50,000 per county. Matching dollars from the Hansen Foundation will be also be added to the participating community foundation's endowed unrestricted grant fund.

In addition to the funding announcements, the event included sessions on community vitality efforts that are underway.

- Northwest Kansas Economic Innovative Center – A new entity is being formed to focus on economic development and innovation in Northwest Kansas. The Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc. (NWKEICI) will focus primarily on reversing the population drain, increasing economic opportunities and strengthening critical community services in the 26 most northwest counties in Kansas.
- First Impressions – A program that allows you to see your community through the eyes of a first-time visitor. A team of volunteers is assembled to make an unannounced visit to another community. The team members usually include business leaders, chamber of commerce members, leadership development members and other interested volunteers. Teams receive training to ensure evaluations are both thorough and standardized. The volunteers explore residential, retail and industrial areas, plus schools, government locations and points of interest. The idea is to take a look at a community with a fresh pair of eyes. Whether in one's own home or community, it's easy to pass by something without thinking about how it looks to others. For the first-time visitor, is the drive into town welcoming? Is there something unique that may help draw people to shop? Does it strike them as a community they would like to return to? Communities are sometimes complacent about both their strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes strengths are taken for granted, and weaknesses are accepted as part of the norm. Once completed, the assessment helps drive goal setting and priorities for new development, plus identifies ways to strengthen community services. The process promotes community vitality and enhances the environment for both the residents and the visitor.

CITY OF BELOIT SURVEYS – The Kansas Department of Commerce is offering Community Development Block Grant money for water quality improvements up to \$1,000,000.00. The Beloit City Council wants to precede with water facility improvements to address water quality issues that will benefit the community for generations to come. We are asking all residents who benefit from the city's water services to complete a confidential survey to qualify for this grant. This important survey could also qualify our community for more block grants in the future. *It is extremely important* that you take a minute or two to fill out this survey completely. Your response is kept completely confidential and is tabulated by a neutral third party. City employees and officials will not see the individual surveys. Surveys were mailed to each participating household. Please return your completed survey by **May 13, 2016**. Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out this important survey. Your answers are important in making future city improvements a success.

LEADERSHIP MITCHELL COUNTY – Leadership Mitchell County is dedicated to the development of future county leaders, helping to ensure the future viability of civic, religious, governmental and youth organizations in the area. LMC is now accepting applications for Class XVII. Now is the time to be involved. More information regarding dates, tuition, and an application can be found here: <http://leadershipmitchellcounty.org/appbrochure.html>

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Heather Hartman

Highlights of the **May 19th, 2016**, SVED meeting:

BUSINESS APPRECIATION MONTH (BAM) – 2016 Business Appreciation Month Winners Announced - The Kansas Department of Commerce announces 26 Regional Business Excellence Award winners and 63 Merit Award winners as part of the 2016 Business Appreciation Month. The Commerce Department uses the month of June for its annual celebration of Kansas businesses and the contributions made to their communities and the state economy.

“Business Appreciation Month gives the Commerce Department the opportunity to show its support, recognition and gratitude for the businesses who work hard to excel in the state of Kansas,” said Kansas Commerce Secretary Antonio Soave. “The 89 businesses that have been selected as winners of the 2016 Business Appreciation Month represent the dedication of Kansas workers, the resounding infrastructure that these businesses are built on and the level of support created by the state of Kansas, for every type of business.”

Five of the Regional Business Excellence Award Winners have been named finalists for the Governor’s Award of Excellence, the top award given to a business by the state. The Governor’s Award of Excellence winner will be announced June 22 at the Team Kansas Awards Banquet in Topeka. The five finalists are:

- CivicPlus
- Cunningham Telephone & Cable
- KanOkla Networks
- RedGuard
- Roto-Mix, LLC

Congratulations to Cunningham Telephone and Cable for being a top 5 finalist! There are also 26 Regional Business Excellence Award winners and **The Port Library** in Beloit has been given this honor.

Solomon Valley Economic Development is very proud of both of these businesses and the amount of time and energy they put back into our community. It is nice when others in the state recognize what we already know; we have the best people right here! Congratulations to both Cunningham Telephone and Cable and The Port Library!

CDBG HOUSING REHAB/DEMO – The City of Beloit Housing Rehab and Demolition grant is almost finished. When completed we will have 14 homes that have been rehabbed and the possibility of 14 demolished structures. What a difference \$440,000 makes in a community! Thanks to the NCRPC staff and the Housing Board for making sure the project runs smoothly!

The following addresses are the units that have been or being demolished in the City of Beloit. Please drive by and see what a difference it has made in our community.

- 600 East 4th
- 800 West Court – 2 in this block
- 500 East South
- 700 East Clinton
- 600 North Lincoln
- 600 North Woodland
- 200 South Lincoln
- 100 North Central
- 600-700 Clinton – 3 in this block

TRAVELING KANSAS – Coming soon **AGAIN** to a television near you **Mitchell County!** Smoky Hills Public Television takes their viewers traveling through Central and Western Kansas with their program *Traveling Kansas*. Each episode highlights two communities with events, attractions

and items that bring forth everyone's curiosity. "Helping support Smoky Hill Public Television's Traveling Kansas, helps to bring your community to the television screen in over 70 counties." Mitchell County Convention and Tourism has stepped up to sponsor Mitchell County for the Traveling Kansas program on Smoky Hills Public Television. This allowed Mitchell County to be highlighted during one of their programs last summer. The program aired in June 2015 and we have had positive responses about the community. I was surprised the geographical reach the program had and all the places we heard from after the airing. Traveling Kansas - Mitchell County will air on Smoky Hills PBS again this **Sunday, May 22nd, at 12:30pm.**

2016 HOMECOMING WEEKEND ACTIVITIES IN BELOIT

Friday, May 27, 2016

9:00 pm "the return of Billy Bob and the Belaires as Gamma Raze" at Down Under

Saturday, May 28, 2016

7:00 am Registration for S & S Drug Color Run to Cure Cancer
 8:00 am S & S Drug Color Run To Cure Cancer starts in front of S & S Drug
 Introductions 9:30 am Introduction of all 1966 graduates and veterans
 Parade Starts 10:00 am **North Central Kansas "Welcome Home Parade"**
 Please contact the Chamber at 785-738-2717 for further information & parade entries.
 11:00am to 1:00pm Monster Trucks Bounty Hunter, Iron Outlaw, Nitro Menace, JailBird & Warrior (Ride Truck) on display and signing autographs at Beloit Auto & Truck Plaza
 11:30 am "Picnic in the Park" at Chautauqua Park; food stands by local groups
 2:00 pm "Talking Tombstones" program at Beloit High School Commons Area
 5:00 pm STJ Alumni Memorial Mass at St. John's the Baptist Catholic Church
 6:00 pm STJ Alumni Social Hour at St. John's High School
 7:00 pm STJ Alumni Banquet at St. John's High School
 6:30 pm BHS Class of 1976 Dinner at Porter House Apartments
 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm Cruz'n Mill Street Reunion – time to hop in the car and cruise Mill Street.
 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm Listen to KD Country 94.1 FM or www.kdcountry94.com as you Cruz Mill. They will be taking song requests and will have trivia and prize giveaways.

Sunday, May 29, 2016

11:00am Monster Trucks on display and signing autographs. Warrior will be giving rides for \$5 at Solomon Valley Raceway
 11:00am BHS Booster Club Golf Tournament at Beloit Country Club
 1:30pm Monster Truck Show at Solomon Valley Raceway
 2:00 pm "Talking Tombstones" program at Beloit High School Commons Area
 2:00 pm Derby Mayhem, Demo Derby at Solomon Valley Raceway
 Following the Derby Monster Truck Show at Solomon Valley Raceway
 5:30 pm BHS Booster Club Benefit Dinner & Program at Beloit Country Club

Monday, May 30, 2016

9:00 am VFW & American Legion Memorial Activities
 Wreath Ceremony at the Solomon River Bridge on Highway 14
 9:30 am Veterans Ceremony at Elmwood Cemetery
 10:00 am Veterans Ceremony at St. John's Cemetery

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surveys. Surveys were mailed to each participating household. Please return your completed survey. Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out this important survey. Your answers are important in making future city improvements a success.

TOURISM – Mitchell County Travel and Tourism Council held their regular meeting and made the following grants:

- Mitchell County Fair Association for advertising
- Healthy Living Summit Project for advertising

The Chautauqua Isle of Lights held their annual meeting and election of officers. The opening day for set-up for the 2016 year will be on October 19th and the day for taking down will be January 2nd. The Isle of Lights board is looking for volunteers for the many efforts it takes to have this annual event in our community. If you like millions of Christmas Lights and humming Jingle Bells this might be the volunteer spot for you!

LEADERSHIP MITCHELL COUNTY – Leadership Mitchell County is dedicated to the development of future county leaders, helping to ensure the future viability of civic, religious, governmental and youth organizations in the area. LMC is now accepting applications for Class XVII until **June 1st, 2016**. Now is the time to be involved. More information regarding dates, tuition, and an application can be found here: <http://leadershipmitchellcounty.org/appbrochure.html>

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Heather Hartman

Highlights of the **June 16th, 2016**, SVED meeting:

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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – The Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce the recent awarding of grants totaling more than \$53,000 to local projects in Mitchell County. Funding of the grants was made possible from the generosity of The Dane G. Hansen Foundation and the Founding Donors of Solomon Valley Community Foundation through its Community Impact Fund. The following projects received funding from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation:

- \$5,000- Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation – School Marathon Program to encourage and educate the youth of Mitchell County on the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle
- \$5,000- Solomon Valley Hospice- Medical Mattress Equipment to enhance quality patient care
- \$4,302 – St. John’s Catholic School – Upgrade Technology by purchasing 18 Chromebooks for student use at St. John’s Grade School
- \$920 – Beloit Community Orchestra – To Build a Collection of New Sheet Music
- \$3,460 – Tipton Heritage Museum – Air Conditioner project for Museum building in Tipton
- \$8,000 - City of Tipton – Entryway improvement to the Tipton Community Center
- \$3,000 - Mitchell County Hospital Health Systems – Inter-generational Community Partnership through joint collaboration with Mitchell County Partnership for Children in fostering companionship & learning that connects school age children with elderly resident patients
- \$2,050 – Port Library – for Construction and Design of an indoor & portable Mini Golf Course
- \$1,500 – Post Rock Extension District Master Gardeners – Research and Demonstration Garden Plot to record relevant data on best plant varieties for local area

- \$1,349 – NCK Genealogical Society - External Computer Hard Drive to protect genealogical data on computer files
- \$4,000 – Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation – Purdue Hospitality Home exterior accessibility and beautification
- \$5,000 – St. John the Baptist Catholic Church – Bell Restoration
- \$3,013.92 – USD 273 Beloit Schools – Two (2) Automatic External Defibrillators for USD 273 buildings that are in need of Defibrillators
- \$2,500 – Glen Elder Senior Center – Accordion Doors to separate 2 large rooms
- \$1,000 – Solomon Valley Transportation – To increase the public knowledge & usage of the transit services provided by Solomon Valley Transportation
- \$640 – Cruise the Blues – Mountain Bike Race and Festival and 10K Trail Race
- \$3,000- Tipton Christian School – New Copy Machine with Wi-Fi capabilities

Do any of these grant funded projects look like something you are involved with? Well, now is the time to get those applications together! The Community Foundation announces grant applications are currently being accepted with a deadline of **August 1st**. Through the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, an amount of \$50,000 for grants to charitable projects is available for distribution from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation through a competitive application process. Preference will be given to programs or projects that include community involvement and volunteerism. Grants are not intended to be for endowment, general operational expenses or repairs. Mitchell County Organizations are encouraged to complete an application online at the Foundation's website of www.solomonvalleycf.org

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION – Mitchell County uses the Neighborhood Revitalization Program to encourage capital improvements. The plan is intended to promote the revitalization and development of Mitchell County by stimulating new construction and the rehabilitation, conservation or redevelopment of the area in order to protect the public health, safety or welfare of the residents of the County by offering certain incentives, which include tax rebates. Neighborhood Revitalization in Mitchell County is 10 years old and here are some outstanding numbers:

- 316 total projects have been a part of the program over 10 years
- Residential Capital Improvements - \$23,900,648
- Commercial Capital Improvements - \$37,131,386
- Agriculture Capital Improvements - \$4,025,051
- Total Receipts for completed projects - \$65,057,085
- Other capital improvements that are not in the Neighborhood Revitalization program - \$27,787,972
- **GRAND TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN 10 Years - \$92,845,056**

The following is the details about the Neighborhood Revitalization Program:

PROPERTY ELIGIBLE FOR A TAX REBATE:

Residential Property:

1. New Construction or rehabilitation, alterations and additions to any existing residential/agricultural structure, including the alteration of a single-family home into a multi-family dwelling, shall be eligible.
2. Eligible residential property may be located anywhere in the neighborhood revitalization area.

Commercial/Industrial Property:

1. Rehabilitation, alterations and additions to any existing commercial structure used for retail, office, manufacturing, warehousing, institutional or other commercial or industrial purposes shall be eligible.
2. Construction of new commercial structures, including the conversion of all or part of a non-commercial structure into a commercial structure, used for retail, office,

manufacturing, warehousing, institutional or other commercial or industrial purposes shall be eligible.

3. Improvements to existing or construction of new structures used for public utility or railroad purposes shall not be eligible.
4. Eligible commercial or industrial property may be located anywhere in the neighborhood revitalization area.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY:

1. There will be a two (2) year application period ending on November 1st, 2016. Those approved during the two-year period will continue to receive the tax rebate for the full term of the rebate period. Construction of an improvement must have been commenced on or after November 1st, 2014, the effective date of enactment of the tax rebate program.
2. The minimum investment shall be \$10,000 (and must also reflect a \$10,000 increase in value) for residential, commercial and industrial property. Cost estimates of the proposed investment must be submitted with this application.
3. Construction must be completed in one (1) year from the date the application is approved.
4. An extension may be granted up to one (1) year for commercial properties and six (6) months for residential/agricultural properties.
5. Applicant must be deeded owner of the property listed in the application.
6. Any property that is delinquent in any tax payment and/or special assessment shall not be eligible for any rebate and shall forfeit continuation in the program.
 - No applicant having delinquent real, personal or special assessment taxes due Mitchell County will be eligible for this program. In the event any such taxes become delinquent during the qualified abatement period, all current and future tax rebates shall be forfeited in full. Tax payment DUE dates are December 20th and May 10th. Taxes are delinquent if paid after those dates.
7. Prior to the commencement of any construction, the property owner will complete the application. Requests must be received and approved before commencement of construction.
8. Tax rebate is only applicable in the participating taxing units (USD 272, USD 273, the Cities of Beloit, Cawker City, Glen Elder and Tipton, and Mitchell County). Tax rebate will be based on the increase of appraised value due directly to the improvements made.
9. Each year the property owner may appeal the property value at the informal level (within 30 days of CVN mail date – typically March 1st) and Payment Under Protest (protest of taxes).

IF THE PROPERTY OWNER DECIDES TO PAY UNDER PROTEST, ANY YEAR DURING THE REBATE PERIOD, THE PLAN WILL BE VOIDED AND ALL FURTHER REBATES WILL BE FORFEITED

10. The Tax rebate will transfer to subsequent owners if they comply with the plan rules. The participated owner is responsible for passing on the rules and general information of the plan.

TAX REBATE SPREADSHEET:

The following table illustrates the refund percentages for both Commercial and Residential. **Refund is based on the rebate value only, NOT the total tax bill.** Rebate will only be refunded from the following municipalities within your taxing unit which adopted the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan: USD 272, USD 273, Cities of Beloit, Cawker City, Glen Elder, Tipton and Mitchell County.

YEAR	TAX REBATE
1	95%

2	90%
3	80%
4	70%
5	60%
6	50%
7	40%
8	30%
9	20%
10	10%

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Application will be picked up and returned to the County Appraiser’s Office, with a non-refundable application fee based on the size of the project

Estimated Project Cost	Application Fee
\$10,000 - \$50,000	\$50
\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$100
\$100,001 - \$300,000	\$150
\$300,001 - \$500,000	\$200
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	\$250
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	\$300
\$5,000,001 and up	\$500

1. Applicant must complete an NR Application; Mitchell County Commissioners must approve application prior to commencement of construction. The County Clerk’s Office, within fifteen (15) working days, will notify the applicant with an approval or denial of project. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.
2. The owner will file Part 2 of the application with the County Appraiser for any improvement that is completed, certifying the completion of construction; the applicant is required to provide receipts and/or an itemized statement of costs. This documentation is required to be eligible for participation in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.
3. The County Appraiser will conduct an on-site interior and exterior inspection of the construction project. They will take measurements and photographs.
4. Upon payment in full of the real estate tax for the subject property for the initial and each succeeding year through the specified rebate period and within thirty (30) day period following the date of tax distribution by Mitchell County to other taxing units, a tax rebate of the eligible amount will be made to the owner.

JOB FAIR – This is from the Cloud County Economic Development Director, Ashley Hutchinson. I would encourage you to contact Ashley if you have a job/jobs open that you would like her to list. This is a local, long-time employed, highly skilled workforce.

Dear North Central Kansas Employers:

As many of you know, employees at Arvos were notified of potential permanent layoffs starting in July. The Cloud County Employee Task Force in partnership with Kansas Workforce One will be hosting a job fair on Tuesday, June 21st from 1:00pm-7:00pm at the Cloud County Fairgrounds Commercial Building.

This job fair will be for Arvos employees and their spouses only. This will be your opportunity to meet with this highly skilled workforce.

Employees that are laid off will be eligible for workforce training dollars. This means they qualify for training dollars for school (up to \$3000 a semester) or their new employers are eligible for a \$3000 stipend for on the job training. Displaced homemakers are also eligible for retraining or on the job training dollars.

If you would like a booth at the job fair, please email me at ashley.hutchinson@cloudcorp.net. Tables and chairs will be provided. Deadline for booth space is Friday, June 17th. If you cannot make it but have a job you would like to list with us, please also email. We will be communicating with employees throughout the next few months with job opportunities as they arise.

Please consider having a booth, even if you only have one job to offer. Your show of support lets our guys and gals know that we want to keep them here in the community. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

UPCOMING DATES:

- July 14th, 12:30pm – The July SVED meeting (this is moved up one week)
- August 18th, 12:00pm – Field Trip to HeBrews in Glen Elder with details to follow. In the meantime, please check out their Facebook page or better yet, stop in to see them! [HeBrews](#)

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Have a safe and successful harvest!

Heather Hardman

Highlights of the July 14th, 2016, SVED meeting:

BUSINESS APPRECIATION MONTH (BAM) – Dan Steffen, Regional Project Manager for the Kansas Department of Commerce was in town to present the Business Appreciation Month Awards. Every year in Kansas we celebrate Business Appreciation Month in June, which gives the Commerce Department the opportunity to show its support, recognition and gratitude for the businesses who work hard to excel in the state of Kansas. The Kansas Department of Commerce announces 26 Regional Business Excellence Award winners and 63 Merit Award winners as part of the 2016 Business Appreciation Month. The businesses nominated for these awards represent the very best of their communities and the State of Kansas. It is a well-deserved “thanks” for not only investing in our Kansas Communities, but also for the commitment to our communities through their involvement in activities, civic organizations, volunteerism and service.

Solomon Valley Economic Development is very proud to have nominated two of our local business for recognition during Business Appreciation Month; Cunningham Telephone and Cable and The Port Library. We value the amount of time, energy and resources both of these businesses put back into our communities. It is nice when others in the state recognize what we already know; we have the best people right here! Congratulations to Cunningham Telephone & Cable and The Port Library.

· **Cunningham Telephone & Cable – Top 5 Finalists in the State of Kansas**

“We don’t have nothing to sell but customer service. Let’s get to it.” Those were the first words to his employees in 1946 when Dean Cunningham purchased the dilapidated telephone exchange in Glen Elder, Kansas. Old aerial lines were strung along anything that would hold them up, including fence posts, the system and service was in dire need of care when it was purchased. Four generations later, Cunningham Telephone & Cable still carries the personal commitment of Dean Cunningham, now to a six county area in North Central Kansas. Serving over 6,000 homes and businesses with telecommunications and broadband services, the company has expanded its reach to help develop some of the most rural parts of Kansas.

Heavily involved in their local communities, Cunningham Telephone & Cable understands smaller rural communities rely on help from each other. The company donates to many community events and provides extra support to local schools through elementary reading programs, safety books, technology expertise and infrastructure to help schools operate more efficiently in the current budget constraints. Cunningham’s Helping Hands program allows its customers to give back to the community by bringing in food items for the local food pantries. As a founding member of the Solomon Valley Community Foundation, Cunningham developed new scholarships for the North Central Kansas Technical College. Cunningham believes that continued community partnership and involvement is key to the success of the smaller Kansas communities.

As a key employer in North Central Kansas, Cunningham Telephone & Cable provides a family environment with technology job opportunities that are rare to this area. By partnering with North Central Kansas Technical College through an internship program, the college students and the company both benefit by the additional resources each can provide.

Congratulations to Cunningham Telephone & Cable and their entire staff on being named a Finalist for the 2016 Governor’s Award of Excellence.

· **The Port Library - Regional Business Excellence Award**

Established in 1932, The Port Library is the Public Library of Beloit and serves patrons in and around Mitchell County. Their mission statement says it all, “Strive to create an environment where lifelong education flourishes, for self-directed learning, research assistance, guided instruction and life enriching activities for the greater community.”

Programs include: Summer Library programs for the public and after school story times and other events for children in conjunction with the Early Learning Center. Other events include: Classic Movie nights, E-Reader how-to's, Author book signings and community meeting and work space, as well as free Wi-Fi access. Coming soon to the Library is an indoor mini-golf course!

The Library staff is also graduates of Leadership Mitchell County and provides various programs to the Boy Scouts, Lions Club and Rotary.

The Port Library has also invested over \$1Million in the Beloit facility over the last 10 years and looks forward to continuing to serve the Mitchell County Community. Congratulations to Rachael Malay and the entire Port Library Staff on this honor.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – The Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce the recent awarding of grants totaling more than \$53,000 to local projects in Mitchell County. Funding of the Grants was made possible from the generosity of The Dane G. Hansen Foundation and the Founding Donors of Solomon Valley Community Foundation through its Community Impact Fund. The following projects received funding from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation:

- \$5,000- Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation – School Marathon Program to encourage and educate the youth of Mitchell County on the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle
- \$5,000- Solomon Valley Hospice- Medical Mattress Equipment to enhance quality patient care
- \$4,302 – St. John's Catholic School – Upgrade Technology by purchasing 18 Chromebooks for student use at St. John's Grade School
- \$920 – Beloit Community Orchestra – To Build a Collection of New Sheet Music
- \$3,460 – Tipton Heritage Museum – Air Conditioner project for Museum building in Tipton
- \$8,000 - City of Tipton – Entryway improvement to the Tipton Community Center
- \$3,000 - Mitchell County Hospital Health Systems – Inter-generational Community Partnership through joint collaboration with Mitchell County Partnership for Children in fostering companionship & learning that connects school age children with elderly resident patients
- \$2,050 – Port Library – for Construction and Design of an indoor & portable Mini Golf Course
- \$1,500 – Post Rock Extension District Master Gardeners – Research and Demonstration Garden Plot to record relevant data on best plant varieties for local area
- \$1,349 – NCK Genealogical Society - External Computer Hard Drive to protect genealogical data on computer files
- \$4,000 – Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation – Purdue Hospitality Home exterior accessibility and beautification
- \$5,000 – St. John the Baptist Catholic Church – Bell Restoration
- \$3,013.92 – USD 273 Beloit Schools – Two (2) Automatic External Defibrillators for USD 273 buildings that are in need of Defibrillators
- \$2,500 – Glen Elder Senior Center – Accordion Doors to separate 2 large rooms
- \$1,000 – Solomon Valley Transportation – To increase the public knowledge & usage of the transit services provided by Solomon Valley Transportation
- \$640 – Cruise the Blues – Mountain Bike Race and Festival and 10K Trail Race
- \$3,000- Tipton Christian School – New Copy Machine with Wi-Fi capabilities

Do any of these grant funded projects look like something you are involved in now? Well, now is the time to get those applications together! The Community Foundation announces grant applications are currently being accepted with a deadline of **August 1st**. Through the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, an amount of \$50,000 for grants to charitable projects is available for distribution from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation through a competitive application process. Preference will be given to programs or projects that include community involvement and volunteerism. Grants are not intended to be for endowment, general operational expenses or repairs. Mitchell County Organizations are encouraged to complete an application online at the Foundation's website of www.solomonvalleycf.org

ECONOMIC GARDENING –

The Kansas Economic Gardening Network is a program designed to provide significant sophisticated technical assistance to identified second stage companies that have the intent and capacity to grow their business. Selected businesses will consult with an experienced economic gardening team who will deliver economic gardening services tailored to address each business's specific needs. The economic gardening team is comprised of individuals and organizations who provide high-end, high-speed technical assistance tools that meet the needs of companies who have moved beyond the startup phase and are ready to grow. Economic gardening embraces strategies to grow existing second-stage businesses. It is an innovative, entrepreneur-centered, economic growth strategy focused on providing tools to grow existing businesses that possess the characteristics of second-stage businesses.

You know more about your company than anyone else. But like most CEOs you could probably use some help when it comes to decisions about new markets, generating sales leads or deriving more value from your website. We realize you wouldn't typically look to economic development or entrepreneur support organizations for this type of help but that may be changing with the Kansas Economic Gardening Network. Economic gardening represents a new way of thinking about supporting growth companies and letting business owners know how important they are to our local economies. So instead of offering traditional incentives like tax credits or real estate discounts, we're offering something that might be even more valuable to you: information — strategic information — gathered with your guidance and specifically for your company. We've observed this model in many other areas around the country and seen what kind of impressive results it produces.

Who should apply? To be eligible for the program, participants must:

- Be a for-profit, privately-held company that has been headquartered in the state for at least the past two years.
- Generate annual revenue or working capital of between \$600,000 and \$50 million.
- Employ between 5 and 100 full-time employees.
- Demonstrate growth in employment and/or revenue during two of the past five years.
- Provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or global markets.
- Be referred by a participating economic development or entrepreneur support organization. Please contact me, I can refer you for this program!

What to know:

- Fees: Costs are covered by regional or state organizations that have pooled funds to support this program.
- Time: Accepted companies will spend 8 to 12 hours collaborating with their research team. The team, in turn, will be spending additional time behind the scenes working on your company's issues.
- Potential issues: Identifying and prioritizing sales leads and business opportunities; refining your core strategies and business model; and using social media to connect with customers and create buzz about your products or services.
- Logistics: You don't even have to leave your office. All communications are handled through the phone and a secure online portal where a workspace will be assigned to your company.
- Better information, better decisions — and a better way to help your company!

Here's how it works: Partnering with the National Center for Economic Gardening, we've set up a statewide network to provide virtual access to teams of highly skilled research specialists that will be matched with a select group of qualifying companies. Using private conference calls and a

secure online workspace this team will interview the company to help identify specific issues. The team devotes about 35 hours to each company over the course of a few weeks as they work quickly to deliver action-oriented information. We emphasize the phrase “select group of qualifying companies” because this program is available only to companies that meet certain criteria — and is offered to them at no cost. As a growing company, you make a positive impact on our local economy. We want to help you make an even bigger impact. Economic gardening services are specifically designed to help growing companies make better decisions while navigating the challenges associated with growth.

How to get started:

1. To ensure that you understand how the program works and if you would benefit businesses must be referred by one of our participating organizations. I can refer you if this is something you would be interested in pursuing.
2. Complete the online application. Among other things, you'll be asked to submit revenue and employment numbers for the past five years. You'll also be asked to list strategic business issues you need help with. [Economic Gardening Application](#)
3. Someone from our organization will contact you within 24 hours.
4. Your application will be reviewed by the selection team.
5. Once accepted into the program, we'll schedule an interview between you and the research team to start the process.

LEADERSHIP MITCHELL COUNTY CLASS XVII – Congratulations to the newest Leadership Mitchell County Class!

- Janelle Remus Farmway Co-Op
- Kendall Gasper Farmway Co-Op
- Apryl Badger AGCO
- Ingrid McMillian Solomon Valley Hospice
- Jacki Kile AGCO
- Keegan Bailey NCRPC
- Rick Horn Mitchell County
- Travis Ray Guaranty State Bank
- Luke Hansen Hansen Auction and Reality
- Tony Salcido AGCO
- Kim Cheney Optometrist
- Drew Cheney Moore Buick Chevrolet
- Kayla Schwerman AgMark, LLC
- Terry Cunningham Cunningham Telephone & Cable
- Tyler Bailey City of Beloit
- Lindsey Rut Hays Medical Center
- Janelle Domoney The Kettle

OPEN HOUSE - Schroeder Building & Supply

Schroeder Building and Supply will be hosting an open house for their new showroom on Thursday, July 14th.

Schroeder Building & Supply is located in North Central Kansas on Willow Springs Way just off of US Highway 24 near the Super 8. Phone number: (785) 534-1365. Things around the house eventually get older and need some repairs. Schroeder Building & Supply, LLC and Premier Cabinetry & Design can provide you with an excellent home repairs service so you can keep your house up and running. We will help you transform an outdated room into a modern comfort with our many remodeling services.

With Schroeder Building & Supply, LLC and Premier Cabinetry & Design, your general contractor will be skilled in many areas and will gladly come to your home to fix anything. If you are in need of anything from custom cabinets or window installation, we are the company that can help you. Our home improvements and repairs service has earned us a recognizable reputation in Beloit, turning visions into reality. With our experience and expertise, you can trust that all of your repairs and home renovations are in good hands with us.

When you are looking for an excellent general contractor, contact Schroeder Building & Supply, LLC and Premier Cabinetry & Design in Beloit, KS for expert advice and service. Schroeder Building & Supply, LLC can provide you with excellent upgrades! Let us draw up plan for your bathroom or kitchen remodeling project. Along with building new homes and remodels we build our own custom cabinets where other contractors order their cabinets. Building our own custom cabinets allows us to be cheaper than our competitors. We have been in business since 1967 building and provide quality custom homes, remodels, and cabinets. We will work with you to design and build your building projects just the way you want.

Our Services:

- *Custom New Homes*
- *Custom Cabinetry*
- *Kitchen Remodels*
- *Bathroom Remodels*
- *Window & Door Installation*
- *General Contractors*

UPCOMING DATES:

- August 18th, 12:00pm – Field Trip to HeBrews in Glen Elder. Details to follow. In the meantime please check out their Facebook page or better yet, stop in to see them! [HeBrews](#)

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

I will be out of the office until July 25th. 20 years of marriage = a few days away. ☺

Heather Hartman

Highlights of the **August 18th, 2016**, SVED meeting:

FIELD TRIP – Solomon Valley Economic Development members were welcomed to Glen Elder by the HeBrews Café owner, Candi Kusler. The café not only had fantastic food but also a great message. Candi credits her faith and also Leadership Mitchell County for the boost to get started on her dream. The Kusler's truly want to be a part of the community and are looking for ways to give back. During the spring the tips gathered during the day are donated to local charities. Candi and her crew are not only providing a gathering place, but also good food, employment and community spirit. I encourage you to stop by and check out HeBrews Café in Glen Elder and talk with the owners Randy and Candi, it is well worth the stop. Café hours are Tuesday – Saturday 7am-2pm.

NEW BELOIT CITY ADMINISTRATOR – I am very excited to announce Jason Rabe of Fairfax, Iowa has been appointed as the new Beloit City Administrator. Mr. Rabe has experience working with a city that saw significant growth in a short period of time. His expertise in the private sector in banking and finance will be beneficial to the community as we are looking at some major improvement projects in the future. Jason and his wife Julia have 3 children and are excited to move to Beloit. Jason will start with the city on September 6th.

TOURS – I helped with the Tours for the City Administrator search. I thoroughly enjoy conducting these tours. I am reminded to look at things in our community with new eyes, both the good and bad. It is great to see what excites prospective residents, and also what is concerning to them. I am available to give tours to prospective employees or spouses of your company. Please contact me if I can help.

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP – The Dane G. Hansen Foundation is partnering with Solomon Valley Community Foundation on a new grant program. It is called the Dane G. Hansen Community Clean-Up Fund.

Counties and/or communities have the opportunity to apply for grant funding to accomplish any of these objectives:

- Beautify communities for current residents and to help with recruitment of new residents.
- Eliminate financial barrier to clean-up projects such as land fill fees and equipment rental.
- Promote community pride and encourage volunteerism.

Applications are available from August 1, 2016-June 1, 2017, and funding is available up to \$20,000. I will be working on this project and if you have ideas for collaboration, please contact me.

NEW TEACHER WELCOME – I spent some time doing New Teacher Welcomes. I like to go to the orientations and just welcome the new staff to the area. I talk about our programs and also give them a community profile from the Chamber. This year I was able to talk about the community foundation and opportunities to enhance the experience of our students.

BELOIT AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – The Chamber is hosting a Luncheon Sponsored by H&R Block.

Tax Update!

- Find out if you are impacted by Overtime policy changes
- Heard about the PATH Act? Discover how this will impact your Business and Personal Taxes
- Learn about SHOP – Employer Group Insurance through the Marketplace and what happens if Employees take Marketplace coverage if you offer Health Insurance

- **When:** Wednesday, September 21, 2016 11:30am-1:00pm
- **Where:** NCK Tech Student Union Conference Room
- **Fee:** Chamber Members \$10 Non Members \$12
- **RSVP:** Reservations are required and are due Friday, September 16th at 5:00pm
- **Contact:** To make reservations contact the Chamber office at 785-738-2717

NCK TECH COMMUNITY FAIR -

We would like to invite you to our Community Fair at North Central Kansas Technical College on **Monday, August 29th from 11:30 am until 3:00pm!** Set up will be available from 10:30 - 11:30am. Some of you may have gotten the opportunity to come to this last year and we have decided to continue it after we had such positive feedback from businesses, students, and faculty.

- What is the purpose of the Community Fair and why would I be interested? Great question! It will give our students a chance to meet you and learn more about your business to see what opportunities our great community has to offer them as a student here in Beloit, KS. The majority of our students are from outside communities and may not know everything we can offer. It is our vision to be able to show them all areas of the community that they potentially will need at any given time while they are here attending NCK Tech and possibly start their career after graduation here with you.
- Will lunch be provided? Of course it will! We will offer lunch and an informational session to learn more about our students and the college during what we like to call "Lunch & Learn". We have had lots of exciting changes over the past few years and want to make you aware of everything going on now! This will begin at 11:30am with lunch that we will provide for you and any staff that you would like to participate.
- What should we bring? Students love free stuff...but seriously, who doesn't!? Please feel free to bring prizes and/or promotional giveaway items, but more importantly bring information of services you provide. If you are looking to hire, bring applications with you or information on how they can apply. Placement of businesses for the Fair will be first come first serve. Each business will be given 1 eight foot table plus chairs for staff.
- How can we register for the NCK Tech Community Fair? Registration and lunch will be free to you and your staff attending. Call 785-738-9037 or email Jayme File at jfile@ncktc.edu with the following information:
 - Name: Business: Best way to contact you:
 - Number of other staff attending:
 - Special accommodations:
 - (A more detailed schedule will be provided later.)

TOURISM – The Mitchell County Tourism committee would like to introduce Lucille Heller as their new partner. The committee has contracted with Lucille to come up with a new strategic plan and budget for tourism. Lucille has been an integral part of our community and has vast knowledge of the area. I am excited to watch what she comes up with to help with Tourism! Please welcome Lucille into this new venture.

CHAMBER & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES ARE MOVING!

It is with great pleasure we announce the Chamber and Community Development offices are moving to a new location! We will be moving to the Porter House where the old coffee shop was located. Some renovations will be taking place before our arrival and we are so very excited about this new location. We are also on the search for some new furniture for our new space! I don't think my furniture from college will make one more move! ☺ The Chamber currently owns the building we are in now. If anyone is interested in the current Chamber building, please contact a Chamber Board member or Gina Broeckelman. 785.738.2717

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Heather Hartman

Highlights of the **September 15th 2016**, SVED meeting:

MITCHELL COUNTY PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN (MCPC)– Mitchell County Partnership for Children Executive Director, Brady Dean and Kelly Shamburg were present to discuss the needs of MCPC. This organization supports early childhood education in our communities through the following programs:

1. Social Emotional Lessons
2. Professional Development
3. Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children
4. Parents as Teachers
5. Parent Training and Support
6. Early Learning Center Support
7. USD 272 Preschool
8. Tuition Assistance for at-risk Children and Families

The benefits of providing high quality early childhood education programs have been well documented. According to the National Education Association, “early childhood education is one of the best investments our country can make”. The HighScope Perry Preschool cost benefit analysis showed a \$12.90 return for every \$1 invested in early childhood education. This study found that individuals who were enrolled in a quality preschool program earned up to \$2,000 more per month than those who were not. Children who were in preschool programs were more likely to graduate from high school, own homes and have longer marriages. Other studies have demonstrated that children in quality preschool programs are less likely to repeat grades, need special education or get into future trouble with the law.

Mitchell County Partnership for Children was successful in receiving the Kansas Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) but the grant requires a cash match that must be raised locally. The match requirement is \$40,000 and will be a critical component in getting the grant renewed for the next three-year cycle. The MCPC programs listed above provide valuable and needed services to five area preschools and serve over 300 children and families on a yearly basis.

Solomon Valley Economic Development voted to donate \$1,000 to Mitchell County Partnership for Children to help achieve the cash match goal and continue to provide the essential services that improve our communities. If you would like to donate towards the cash match goal, please contact:

Brady Dean
Executive Director, Mitchell County Partnership for Children
PO Box 583
Beloit, KS 67420
bdean@usd273.org
785.738.3055

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT -

What is WIA?

WIA is a Federal legislation designed to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and to afford job training to economically disadvantaged individuals, to assist workers who have been dislocated and other individuals facing serious barriers to productive employment.

What is On-the-Job Training?

On-the-Job Training - allows for the **employer to be reimbursed for up to 50 percent of a participant's salary** for a negotiated period of time as compensation for the extraordinary costs of training new hires and for the costs associated with lower productivity of participants while they are being trained. The training is provided by the employer while the participant is engaged in productive work that provides knowledge or skills essential to performing the job.

How Does On-the-Job Training Work?

An Employment Specialist will visit with both the job candidate and employer to confirm eligibility, establish the training tasks to be completed, and sign a contract. Upon approval, a simple On-The-Job Training monthly timesheet is submitted for hours that the employee participated in On-the-Job Training activities. The employer will be reimbursed based on the hours reported on the timesheet. The Workforce Investment Act minimizes administrative paperwork in order to maximize your time and productivity.

What are some eligibility requirements in order to benefit from On-the -Job training?

- The company has been in operations in the state of Kansas for the past 120 days
- Is compliant on all Local, State and Federal obligations
- Has not had any lay-offs in the past 12 months - Exceptions to this policy can be made for seasonal lay-offs or if recalls have occurred

For more information, contact an employment specialist, listed below.

*In order to receive funds, it is very important that you meet with an employment specialist prior starting a new employee.

Kansas WorkforceONE
Tucky Allen
500 North Main,
Suite 109
Newton, KS 67114
316-303-2906
tucky@kansasworkforceone.org

NEX-GEN YOUTH ROUNDUP – You are invited to join us for coffee and conversation about the Nex-Generation Round Up for Youth programs and how we can partner with you and your local businesses to invest in our area youth! Learn the benefits of the Nex-Gen student internship and career programs. See how you can partner in making a positive impact on youth and our communities!

September 29th, 2016

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

North Central Regional Planning Commission

109 N Mill St. - Beloit

Please R.S.V.P. Mendi Alexander - 877-625-7872, Ext. 1618

malexander@nex-tech.com

www.nex-generation.org

SOLOMON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – The Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce the recent awarding of grants totaling more than \$50,000 to local projects in Mitchell County. Funding of the Grants was made possible from the generosity of The Dane G. Hansen Foundation and the Founding Donors of Solomon Valley Community Foundation through its Community Impact Fund.

The following projects received funding from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation:

- Asherville Achievers 4-H Club – \$4,100 for new additions to the 4-H building including door awnings and sidewalk
- Beloit Parks and Recreation- \$4,855.07 for North shore beautification and safety around the walking bridge at Chautauqua Park
- Cawker City Volunteer Fire Department – \$1,525 for personal fire protection equipment
- Glen Elder Community Club – \$8,000 to build a new public restroom facility on the town square in Glen Elder
- Glen Elder United Methodist Church - \$3,000 for audio/visual display to be used for church and community events
- Heart Choices – \$2,500 for Smart Parents/Safe Kids safety program
- Mitchell County Courthouse – \$5,000 for landscaping and beautification
- Mitchell County Courthouse – \$3,000 for Christmas Courthouse beautification
- Post Rock Extension District – \$2,524.50 for youth health promotion through OrganWise Guys Elementary Kit
- Post Rock Extension District – \$2,100 for Extension education outreach digital equipment
- St. John's Catholic School – \$3,956 for science equipment for STEM research and labs
- St. John's Catholic School – \$6,000 for High School Gym sound system
- Senior Citizen Center in Glen Elder – \$300 for wireless internet installation
- Tipton Recreation, Inc. – \$3,582.02 for walking paths, approaches and exits

"It is very exciting for the Board of Directors of Solomon Valley Community Foundation to be able to award these grants due to the generous support of individuals, companies and the Dane G. Hansen Foundation," said Barb Wise, Board Vice President. Solomon Valley Community Foundation was established in 2013 to allow our communities to plan long term for our families and friends.

The Foundation will accept the next round of grant applications online beginning November 1 with a due date of February 1st.

TOURISM – Bob Severance was on hand to discuss the efforts of the Mitchell County Tourism committee. Bob presented a snapshot of the grant funding that has been dispersed in Mitchell County over the past two years. Approximately **\$46,000** has been granted to various organizations involved in the tourism efforts since 2015. If your organization is promoting an event or project that will increase tourism into our area, you would qualify for grant funding to help with advertising or project startup costs. For more information, please see the Transient Guest Tax application located on the Mitchell County Website: <http://mcks.org/>

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION NCRPC – Mark your calendar and make plans to join us for the 2016 NCRPC Banquet on Thursday, November 3 in Abilene at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.

The banquet is open to the public and will begin with a social hour at 5:15 p.m. followed by dinner at 6 p.m. and the keynote address immediately following. National Bio and Agro-defense Facility Liaison, Dr. Ron Trewyn, will be the featured speaker. Before assuming his current post as full-time liaison to the National Bio and Agro-defense Facility, or NBAF, in August 2014, Dr. Trewyn was K-State's vice president for research, leading the university's multiyear efforts to bring the 580,000 square foot, \$1.25 billion federal research laboratory to Kansas. Trewyn works with the university president and others inside and outside the institution to facilitate and leverage NBAF-related opportunities for the university, the region and the state.

Reservations are required and may be made by calling the NCRPC at 785-738-2218 or

emailing ncrpc@nckcn.com by October 27. A registration form is attached or you may visit the website for more information (www.ncrpc.org/news/events/). The cost is \$10 per person. Current and past Board Members and spouses are invited to attend at no cost.

Be part of the 2016 Banquet marking the 44th Anniversary of the Planning Commission and take advantage of this opportunity to connect with many stakeholders from around the region.

CHAMBER & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES ARE MOVING!

It is with great pleasure we announce the Chamber and Community Development offices are moving to a new location! We will be moving to the Porter House where the old coffee shop was located. Some renovations will be taking place before our arrival and we are so very excited about this new location. The Chamber currently owns the building we are in now. If anyone is interested in the current Chamber building, please contact a Chamber Board member or Gina Broeckelman. 785.738.2717

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Leather Hartman

Highlights of the **October 20th, 2016**, SVED meeting:

WEBSITE – I was pleased to give a demonstration of the *Discover Solomon Valley* website that we are creating. Even though this is a work in progress, it was nice to show where the site is now and gain feedback. This is a larger project than first anticipated, but I really like how easy it is to navigate and also the way we have incorporated county-wide information. We will have a place for our SVED minutes and also a place to become a member. Please let me know if you would like a “sneak peek” and I will send you the link. Otherwise, be on the lookout for the site to go live soon!

MATCHING DAY with SOLOMON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – The Solomon Valley Community Foundation is excited to share that the Dane G. Hansen Foundation has offered us a challenge grant opportunity. The Hansen Foundation will *match dollar for dollar* any money locally raised. This challenge is to host a Matching Campaign to raise funds for our unrestricted account called the Community Impact Fund. The Community Impact Fund awards grants annually to local groups and projects for community betterment. The challenge from the Hansen Foundation will allow our Foundation’s Impact Fund to grow sizably. Every donation, no matter how small, is important. If our drive is successful, it will mean \$10,000 can be given to worthy projects each year, forever! During the first weeks of November, the Solomon Valley Community Foundation will be hosting events across Mitchell County. We encourage and welcome you to attend any one of these events to learn more about this fantastic opportunity to provide for our local communities. If you have any questions, please contact us or check at our website: www.solomonvalleycf.org 785.534.1126 Thank you for thinking of others!

- November 2nd, 7pm @ Porter House Lobby, 209 East Main, Beloit
- November 2nd, 7pm @ Community Center, Main Street, Tipton
- November 5th, 7pm @ Community Center, 109 West 1st Street, Hunter
- November 6th 2pm @ Museum, 721 Lake Drive, Cawker City
- November 6th, 7pm @ Hebrews Café, 120 South Market Street, Glen Elder

PRESENTATIONS - I had a short presentation this month to kick off the BHS Service Learning Day. I spent a little time talking about what the community does for the school and I stressed the importance of Shopping Local! Afterwards the students spent time in a variety of activities around town to help the community. I also taught a class at NCK Tech in their Business Department on writing a Business Plan. I enjoyed discussing entrepreneurship with this class of eleven students. I am a member of the Business Advisory Board at NCK Tech and have been amazed at the growth of this department. I am excited about some of the things going on currently and also about other possibilities coming in the future.

ROZ – The Rural Opportunity Zone student loan repayment program was discussed as well. There are six participants who are receiving a half state matched and half county matched total of \$3,000 toward student loan repayment. There are 12 individuals who are a half state and half employer match. There are 21 people currently on a waiting list to join the program.

REGIONAL FOOD AND FARM POLICY COUNCIL –

Hi Everyone -

The North Central Regional Planning Commission is in the very beginning phases of working with Live Well Saline County to determine the feasibility of and hopefully develop a regional Food and Farm Policy Council in our 12 county service area in North Central Kansas.

Our executive director, Doug McKinney, and I are starting to develop lists of local producers who might be interested or instrumental in developing a Food Policy Council. We are not just looking for local growers but anyone from food distribution representatives to farmer’s market coordinators to agricultural producers to representatives from health/medical fields to economic development directors to local government reps who have an interest in local food and everyone in between.

If you know of any local representatives who might be interested in being a part of the food policy council, I would really appreciate names and contact information! As I mentioned earlier, we are at the very early stages of this undertaking but any information or help you may be able to provide would be very helpful!!

Emily Benedict
 Community Development Representative
 North Central Regional Planning Commission
ebenedick@nckcn.com
 785.738.2218

HAPPENINGS IN MITCHELL COUNTY –

- **TIPTON**– Tipton has 3 projects they are working on, including some clean up and renovation of items at the ballfield. They are also looking into the idea of an electronic sign for main street.
- **CAWKER CITY** – Cawker City is looking at the idea of a Splash Pad in their park. There is a committee that has been appointed by the City and will begin meeting soon.
- **GLEN ELDER** – Glen Elder public restroom project is in the planning and fundraising stages. They have been awarded some grant funding from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation.

MEDIAN WAGE LEVELS -

COUNTY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2105	2016
JEWELL	\$11.39	\$ 8.98	\$ 9.06	\$ 9.37	\$ 11.36	\$ 10.20	\$ 9.31
PHILLIPS	\$12.22	\$ 10.43	\$ 11.72	\$ 11.84	\$ 13.19	\$ 11.43	\$ 12.59
RUSSELL	\$12.02	\$ 11.23	\$ 11.96	\$ 12.45	\$ 12.40	\$ 13.94	\$ 13.67
RUSH	\$14.52	\$ 13.97	\$ 12.21	\$ 13.01	\$ 13.56	\$ 13.59	\$ 13.88
BARTON	\$13.19	\$ 13.52	\$ 13.65	\$ 14.22	\$ 14.76	\$ 15.49	\$ 14.11
LINCOLN	\$10.74	\$ 11.37	\$ 11.51	\$ 12.38	\$ 13.08	\$ 14.52	\$ 14.57
OSBORNE	\$13.00	\$ 13.30	\$ 14.36	\$ 15.99	\$ 16.88	\$ 16.49	\$ 14.64
MITCHELL	\$13.10	\$ 13.39	\$ 13.76	\$ 14.90	\$ 14.50	\$ 14.21	\$ 14.66
ROOKS	\$11.24	\$ 11.92	\$ 13.76	\$ 14.37	\$ 13.94	\$ 14.78	\$ 15.12
SMITH	\$10.28	\$ 10.18	\$ 11.92	\$ 10.35	\$ 11.72	\$ 11.50	\$ 15.30
ELLIS	\$14.54	\$ 13.32	\$ 13.47	\$ 13.47	\$ 14.33	\$ 14.42	\$ 15.44
ELLSWORTH	\$11.91	\$ 13.18	\$ 13.66	\$ 14.61	\$ 16.77	\$ 17.67	\$ 19.28

EVENTS FOR YOUR CALENDAR –

- **October 22nd** - The Beloit Holiday Fair will take place at the Beloit Elementary Gym. Also 3A Sub-State Volleyball will be in Beloit this weekend. Be prepared for lots of visitors to the area!
- **October 24th** - There will be a legislative update given by Rep. Susan Concanon at Kettle in Beloit at 6:30 p.m. on Monday evening. The Leadership Mitchell County Taskforce will also present information on the options regarding the ballot question recommended by the taskforce for the City of Beloit as to whether reduce the number of members of the city council and change the role of the city administrator to a city manager.
- **November 3rd** - The official grand opening and ribbon cutting for Ray's Apple Market will be held on November 3rd at 10am. Please join in welcoming them to the community.

- **November 3rd** – Chamber After Hours sponsored by Nex-Tech Wireless at the Porter House from 4:30pm – 6:30pm. Plan on joining your friends at the Porter House for refreshments, prizes and endless networking opportunities.
- **November 4th** - the monthly Chamber Coffee will be held at Rolling Hills Electric from 9am-10:30am. There will be refreshments, coffee and tons of networking!
- **November 11th** - will be the annual Veterans Day Parade and festivities in Beloit starting at 11am.
- **December 3rd** - will be the holiday kick-off with the Santa Race and Santa's Workshop at NCK Tech as well as the Sizzling with Santa Chili Cook-off. There will be a free movie shown at the Solomon Valley Cinema courtesy of H&R Block and the Isle of Lights will light up at 6 p.m. It is an entire day of festivities in the community.
- **November 12th** - Brandi Zimmer of NCK Tech discussed a surplus auction to be held at the college on November 12. Beloit High School will also have items on the auction. Zimmer said there will be a wide variety of items available including welders, furniture and more.

CHAMBER & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES ARE MOVING!

It is with great pleasure we announce the Chamber and Community Development offices are moving to a new location! We will be moving to the Porter House where the old coffee shop was located. Some renovations will be taking place before our arrival and we are so very excited about this new location. We are also on the search for some new furniture for our new space! I don't think my furniture from college will make one more move! 😊 The Chamber currently owns the building we are in now. If anyone is interested in the current Chamber building, please contact a Chamber Board member or Gina Broeckelman. 785.738.2717

NEXT MEETING - The SVED annual meeting will be held at next month's gathering on November 17th at 12:30 p.m. at the regular meeting place in the NCRPC basement in Beloit.

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.

Heather Hartman

Highlights of the **December 15, 2016** meeting:

NEW OFFICE - 209 E Main #104 in the Porter House in beautiful downtown Beloit. **YES, WE MOVED!** We now have a perfect space to welcome new people and business to the community. If you haven't been by to see us yet you are missing out on the best view in beautiful downtown Beloit. Thank you to the Solomon Valley Economic Development membership for funding a few pieces of furniture for our new space. Please stop in to see us, have a cup of coffee and watch the world go by. ☺

WEBSITE – Our website is **LIVE!** Please take a minute to check out our new website by clicking here: www.mitchellcountykansas.com We will use the site to provide information for our residents, but also as a positive snapshot for those businesses, families and individuals looking for a new place to relocate and establish themselves. Please take a look and let me know what you think.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – I am very pleased to announce the start of a new program in Mitchell County, the Façade Improvement Program.

Purpose – This program is designed for small scale renovation projects to the façade of the buildings in Mitchell County. The program is available to provide an affordable financing option for improvements to commercial building facades in order to improve the functionality, structural integrity and aesthetics in commercial areas.

Applicant Eligibility –

1. Building must be located in Mitchell County;
2. Building owner or business owner must be the program applicant;
3. Project must comply with applicable city, building, electrical, mechanical codes and have a valid permit;
4. **The applicant MUST have 2 of the following 3:**
 - a. A credit score of 700;
 - b. Been in business for 1 year;
 - c. Provide a matching fund of 1:1 for the requested amount

Eligible Use of Funds – Funding will only be approved for exterior improvements only. Projects may include but not limited to:

- Building Expansion
- Window replacement and repair
- Vacant building redevelopment
- Canopy or awning replacement, repair or installation
- Signage – not more than 30% of the funds can go towards signage
- Removal of contemporary facades to expose original construction of building
- Repair and/or tuck point existing structures
- Repair or Replacement of siding, trim, windows, doors, awnings
- Exterior painting, pressure washing, sand blasting
- Exterior Lighting
- No Interior renovations
- Will consider Heating/Air/Energy Efficiency Projects
- Other improvements not listed may be approved

Requirements include:

- All projects awarded must be completed within one calendar year from the official date of the award letter
- Will not fund debt
- Quotes for work to be completed

Loan Terms and Repayment:

1. Maximum loan of \$5,000
2. Interest rate fixed at 0%
3. Maximum loan term of 5 years
4. Closing fee of 1% to cover NCRPC expenses of administering the program
5. The loan will be paid in equal monthly installments by ACH draft from the applicants

Application period is open and on a first come, first served basis with no deadlines, based on the availability of funds.

SMALL BIZ SURVIVAL – Monitor Your Small-business Reputation – by Glenn Muske

Reprinted with permission from: Small Biz Survival

What's being said about your small business online?

Many small business owners have made the decision to not get involved in the growing social media trend. Their reasons include: the time or money it takes; don't understand it; doesn't seem necessary; or their customers aren't using it.

Avoiding the online world is the wrong path to take for two reasons.

First, your business is being put on the map without you doing a thing. This happens when various companies and services just do it. It also occurs when people, such as myself, identify you through Yelp, Trip Advisor or being a Google Local Guide. (I put one on and corrected one before coming to work this morning.)

When your business is identified and mapped, **you have the opportunity to “claim your business.”** This means you can provide basic information about your business including physical address, phone number, web site, and store hours. This information is what the mobile world, well over 50% of the U.S. population, uses as their business data base.

It also allows you to correct information that someone else may have already posted. I did a workshop on having an online presence. During the event I searched for several businesses present that day. The physical location for one of them, a restaurant, showed up as being in the parking lot over six blocks away. As a consumer, if I can't find you immediately I will probably just go somewhere else.

When claiming your bubble, you also will find reviews already posted. Thank people for offering testimonials. For negative reviews, engage them to see how you can resolve the problem. If it is a major issue, take the conversation out of the public channel. The important thing though is to show you are responsive. And it's important that others see you are concerned.

There is an underlying caveat to responding to reviews, negative and positive. It assumes you are being **timely in your response. A response six months after the fact doesn't help.**

Second, outside of the business mapping service, **people are more and more likely to use a social media channel for a testimonial or, more likely, a complaint.** It's crucial that you have one or more alert systems in place to monitor what is being said about you and your business.

In the area where I live, there is a controversial issue. Without their knowledge, businesses are being mentioned as being supportive or non-supportive. In the cases I am aware of, they are neither. However, this does not stop social media from spreading the story.

Responding to these stories is crucial for small-business owners. Yet in three of the cases I know about, the owner was not aware of the stories. Thus, my big push as to why you need to be online.

The chances are that, at some level, your business is being mentioned online. Even if it is your local paper's online edition, you are there.

So accept the fact your business is online. **Make plans to use it for building your business.**

SOLOMON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – The Solomon Valley Community Foundation announces grant applications are currently being accepted with a deadline of **February 1, 2017**. Mitchell County organizations are encouraged to apply online at the Foundation's website www.solomonvalleycf.org Grant awards are made available from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation's Community Impact Fund and the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, for a total of **\$55,000** available for grants to charitable projects. Through the competitive grant application process, preference will be given to programs or projects that include community involvement and volunteerism. Grants are not intended to be for endowment, general operational expenses or repairs. If you have any questions, please contact us or check at our website: www.solomonvalleycf.org 785.534.1126 If you would like to see some of the efforts of the Community Foundation please go to this link and watch a short video: <https://youtu.be/q9ZUVfGaHL4>

STEP Grant Kickoff Meetings

State Trade and Expansion Program The State Trade and Expansion Program (STEP) Grant, funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, helps Kansas non-exporters to get started and existing exporters to export more. Since the grant's inception in 2012, more than 50 Kansas

small businesses have participated and achieved \$17.2 million in actual export sales. In order to further broaden Kansas' exporter base and increase the export value and volume, the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas Department of Agriculture have joined forces during the 2016 grant year to focus on three main areas: export training, foreign trade shows and trade missions, and market entry support. We invite you to visit www.KansasCommerce.gov/STEP to learn more about these activities and discover how the STEP grant can help you enter and expand in the global market.

- Export Training Funding assistance will be provided to eligible small businesses to take part in export seminars and training courses offered by our federal and local resource partners.
- Foreign Trade Shows and Missions - In order to help Kansas small businesses, enter new markets and gain new international customers, the Department of Commerce will offer several foreign trade show and mission opportunities.
- Market Entry Support Commerce will provide website and marketing product funding opportunities and will employ U.S. Commercial Service's expertise and programs to help eligible small businesses enter new markets.

NEXT MEETING - The next Solomon Valley Economic Development meeting will be held on January 19th, 2017 at 12:30 p.m. at the regular meeting place in the NCRPC basement in Beloit.

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.