

Greenwood County Economic Development Council Holds Monthly Meeting

The Greenwood County Economic Development Council (GWEDC) held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 20, 2013 at the Sauder Center in Madison. In attendance were Anna Curry, Joy Jensen, Diantha Stutesman, Rachel Ballard, Larry Whipple, Barbara Anderson (KDOC), Linda Snyder, Joe Beeman, Ian Martell and Cindy Pereira. President Martell called the meeting to order. Larry Whipple made a motion that the minutes of the January 16, 2013 meeting be approved, Diantha Stutesman seconded and the motion carried.

Election of officers for 2013 was the only item of old business. A motion was made by Linda Snyder to retain Ian Martell as President and Joe Beeman as vice president for 2013. Cindy Pereira seconded the motion and the motion carried. The Council expressed their appreciation to Ian and Joe for continuing to serve as officers.

The 2013 gifts to graduating Greenwood County high school seniors was the only item of new business. The purpose of these gifts is to remind young people that their hometowns will always welcome them back to raise their families, work or start a new business. After discussion, Diantha made a motion that we give the same Teter Rock key chains as last year but update the year to 2013. Joy seconded and the motion carried. Cindy will be in charge of fund raising and getting an accurate count of all seniors in Greenwood County, including those who attend school in neighboring districts.

Discussion was held on the continuing population decline in Greenwood County. The impact of the Baby Boomer generation and lack of diversity was discussed. Some people felt that cultural diversity was not an issue while others felt it is an important aspect for growth.

Barbara Anderson spoke about the Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ) and how it can have a positive impact on population changes. There are two components to this program. The first is for people who move to Kansas from another state and may qualify State income tax abatement. The County is not involved in this part of ROZ. The second component is a tuition reimbursement program for people who move to Greenwood County after they have completed a post-secondary course of study from an accredited institution such as a technical school or university. The State matches the amount reimbursed by the County up to \$1500. At this time Greenwood County has one person who has applied for and been accepted into the tuition reimbursement portion of ROZ. There is one applicant that is pending and efforts are underway to secure funding for the county's portion of the tuition reimbursement. For more information visit the website kansascommerce.com.

Cindy Pereira, Greenwood County Economic Development Director, reported that the second annual **Fabulous Finds on Highway 99** will be held September 27 and 28. A planning meeting is scheduled with the other counties along Highway 99 on April 10 in Emporia. The group will once again use Facebook and other social media to promote the event. Signage for this and other events was discussed.

She also reported on the collaboration between the Eureka Foundation and the Kansas State School of Architecture. The focus has been narrowed to three sites: 1) the river at the West edge of Eureka, 2) the first block of Main Street north of River, and 3) the area around the Eureka "Springs" marker at River and Main. Preliminary designs have been made and efforts to secure funding will begin shortly. The intersection of Main and River is the site of the only stoplight in Greenwood County and therefore is an ideal location to capture the attention of motorists who are travelling through the County.

The Greenwood Preservation Society will host a "Prelude to the Symphony" event again this year on April 9 at the Greenwood Hotel. A social hour will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and a string quartet will perform at the Lutheran Church beginning at 6:45 p.m. Information on tickets will be available soon.

Beginning the community reports, Diantha and Rachel reported that Madison will soon have large stone signs placed on Highway 99 by the high school and on the hill by the 4-lane highway. The stones will say Madison and have the date of incorporation for the city. These signs were made possible by the Madison Lions Club and the Verdigris Valley Foundation. A Career Fair will be held at the Madison High School on April 24 with students from Madison, Hamilton, Olpe and Hartford attending. Madison Days are scheduled for June 7, 8 and 9 and the addition to the park shelter will be completed prior to the yearly celebration. Diantha encouraged everyone to take a few minutes to browse Madison!

Joe and Linda reported that Hamilton is working on a new community and senior center. They have bids out and have started fundraising. Joe reported that the 100th Anniversary of Hamilton High School will be celebrated on Alumni Day on June 1. Alumni Day is an annual event that is held on the first Saturday of June.

Ian reported that Eureka is still facing a water shortage and asked if other communities were still planning for drought conditions. Madison is expected to be at the Critical Stage by early June if significant rainfall is not received and Eureka has also approved a plan of action which could include significant rate increases for water usage above a pre-determined "average". Ian has been very proactive in talking about the importance of water conservation and feels that people are reacting in a positive manner. He also reported that the City will be repairing the dam at the city lake and he is concerned about the structural integrity of four buildings on Main Street in Eureka.

The next meeting will be held on April 17 at 9:30 a.m. Cindy will send information regarding the place for the meeting at a later date. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.