

**EASTERN PLAINS RC&D INC.  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
APRIL 20, 2011**

The Eastern Plains RC&D Quarterly Council meeting was held on April 20, 2011 at the Yellowstone River Inn in Glendive MT. Introductions were made, the following were present:

Jerry Jimison (City of Glendive), Elizabeth Smith (EPEDG), Linda Jones (Glendive City Council), Adam Gartner (Dawson County), Ron Klosse (Town of Terry), Jason Rittal (Eastern Plains EDC), Bruce Smith (Farm to Table), Tim Ouellette (NRCS – Bozeman), Stark Ickes (Treasure County), Mike Carlson (Buffalo Rapids I Project), Jim Atchison (Colstrip / SEMDC), Kevin Dukart (City of Baker), Kathy Newton McLove (Mid-River Rural Economic Development Rep), Levi McEven (Powder River County), Dixie Berwick (Town of Culbertson and Bainville), Gary Macdonald (Roosevelt County Commissioner), Jim Shanks (Roosevelt County Commissioner), Mickey McCall (Sheridan County), Sabrina Labatte (Roosevelt County).

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman, Mickey McCall, called the meeting to order at 9:39 A.M.

**AGENDA:**

Jerry Jimison made motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2011 Agenda as presented. Ron Klosse seconded the motion. Motion Approved Unanimously.

**MINUTES AND TREASURERS REPORT:**

Stark Ickes made motion to approve the 2010 Annual meeting minutes. Dixie Berwick seconded the motion. Motion Approved Unanimously.

The first quarter Treasurers report and was read and reviewed. Kevin Dukart made motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011 Treasurers report. Stark Ickes seconded the motion. Motion Approved Unanimously.

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT:**

Bob Nansel 's report is attached.

Mickey McCall read attached letter from Joyce Schwartzendruber.

Tim Ouellette gave information to the council that Montana has spent \$500,000 in funds already this year and is no longer in the budget, putting them in a deficit.

Coordinators for the RC&D have been reassigned to other duties and are no longer in the budget to be paid to work on RC&D. Coordinators and Administrators will no longer have office space paid by the NRCS. Office space must be vacated in approximately 60 to 120 days. There are no funds available for a shutdown period. Files and desks and anything not capital can be removed and taken for the RC&D to keep operating.

Tim gave information that the program did not go away just the budget did. \$2,500 is still coming to Eastern Plains RC&D to honor the agreement they had and to assist with costs during the transition stage.

Discussion was held on what other programs were cut and Tim gave information that besides the RC&D that Watershed and Watershed Rehab programs took a hit but were not cut completely.

Tim gave information that the national RC&D budget was 54 million. The Montana budget that was cut by 1 million and .3 million for other activities.

Tim gave information that RC&D is still a USDA recognized program and can lobby and build capacity. Technical assistance is still available.

Tim was asked how long the NRCS knew this was coming to cut the budget of RC&D. Tim answered that within the last two years it was a chance. Discussion was held on how to move forward without funding from the NRCS and the grant shortage. CIG grant monies were discussed and the need to sell RC&D programs more to the delegation and prove what Montana is losing without our program.

Mickey McCall asked Tim about how the budget cut is saving money when coordinators are just being reassigned and not being let go. Tim said he really couldn't answer that but suspects there will be some early retirements and coordinators will be moved to vacant positions.

Discussion was held on different ways to shift some programs so that they are still available. RC&D may have to shift gears and add technical assistance to housing because there is no organization to handle the housing. Housing right now is such a big demand in Eastern Montana.

Discussion was held on programs that are making money such as the Home-Buyer program. It is self-sustaining but we need someone to do the training.

Bruce Smith made the comment that we need to keep RC&D alive and visible!! Discussion was held on keeping the organization alive and all members were in agreement. Suggestions were made for ways to find more volunteers. Suggestion of VISTA volunteers was discussed as long as contracting an organization to help us move forward. The suggestion was made that Prairie Development in Glendive may be able to donate some office space for files. Sponsorship checks being received were discussed.

Sabrina was directed to send out an e-mail to all of our sponsors and member's regarding what was happening with RC&D and ideas on how to move forward. We need to set up a meeting with as many people as possible for next month to discuss the options after people have had time to think about this.

#### **Economic Development:**

Jason gave information that EDA looked like it was going to take some hits from the budget but it looks as if it has been restored.

Jason gave information that the North Baker water is done and half the sewer will be done this spring. Contractors plan to start May 1<sup>st</sup>.

A business from Terry is starting an expansion to start businesses in Miles City and Williston.

Jason brought up discussion on the Revolving Loan Fund. Comments were made that we need to stay on top of this because it is a good thing.

Jason is going to discuss book keeping options with his board and whether they will need RC&D for that any longer.

Jason gave information that RC&D has one more payment due in April and he had sent a bill.

Jim Atchison gave information of the 2004 Letter of Understanding and read a letter to the group regarding the MOU as of 2010 is null and void and is no longer needed.

Jim Atchison presented chairman, Mickey McCall, with a check for \$11,874.24 for two years of payments. Jerry Jimison made motion to reinvest the earnings back into the Revolving Loan Fund account. Adam Gartner seconded the motion. Motion Approved Unanimously.

#### **Homebuyer Education:**

Information was given that the next training class is in August in Atlanta. Dixie gave information that she would ask her daughter Pam if she is interested in helping out until someone else is trained. Jim Jimison made comment that we need to keep this program going. Agreement by all in the room.

#### **Annual Plan of Work and Budget:**

Jerry Jimison made motion to table the Annual Plan of Work and Budget until next meeting. Gary Macdonald seconded the motion. Motion Approved Unanimously.

#### **Election of Officers:**

Gary Macdonald moved to nominate Dixie Berwick for Vice President. Jerry Jimison seconded the motion. Jerry Jimison made motion to close the floor and reappoint Dixie. Motion carried.

Dixie Berwick moved to nominate Stark Ickes for Secretary. Jerry Jimison seconded the motion. Gary moved to close the floor and appoint Stark Ickes as Secretary. Motion Carried.

#### **News and Updates:**

Updates were given by the following members:

Dixie Berwick – Town of Culbertson and Bainville: Lots of truck traffic and housing shortage due to the oil exploration.

Levi McEven – Powder River County: Coal Bed Methane Rules and adoption.

Kathy Newton McLove- Mid-River Rural Economic Development Department: working writing grants and would like to be more involved in economics.

Stark Ickes – Treasure County: He is the new secretary for RC&D.

Jim Atchison – SEMDC: Colstrip is doing overhaul of Power plant into July. People are looking for housing there as well. June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup> is their annual Energy tour and Golf Tournament.

Kevin Dukart – City of Baker: The pipeline company wants city water and sewer. Company is helping to pay for studies and professional help for the study of the expansion. 600 to 1200 workers are coming in.

Gary Macdonald and Jim Shanks – Roosevelt County Commissioners: Dry Prairie plant will open in September. Water to Poplar will be completed the end of the summer; used stimulus money to get new windows in the courthouse. AC system going up for bids on Friday. Trucks have been destroying county roads and Roosevelt County is dealing with man camps. Fertilizer plant tax incentive out of Wolf Point; will staff 6 to 7 people. Sheriff is requesting two deputies. Ft. Peck Tribes are building an 80 person jail

in Poplar. A scenic view road has been reopened.....Landowner locked it 3 years ago. Lawsuit between county and landowner on who owned the road. The landowner reopened road and the county needs to repair it. Streets need repairs and swimming pool needs repair.

Adam Gartner – Dawson County: New DOS Coordinator; ER Activation center opened; they have no gravel around ; projection for county revenue is high.

Jerry Jimison – City of Glendive: A lot of realty activity; Elks golf course has been for sale for 20 years and sold a month ago to a company who is dividing in 5 parts. Land bought in sunrise section and sold in tracts for various projects. No building permits yet but anticipating expanding water and sewer and city roads. New Mental Health Facility starting this spring.

Jason Rittal – EPEDC: demand for CDL's ; Halliburton is to hire 10 people a week for the rest of this year

Mickey McCall – Sheridan County: Border Patrol hiring 10 people; housing and oil issues; SCCD is starting to sell frac water to oil companies. Have been monitoring and studying water in Sheridan County.

Next meeting to be held in 3 to 4 weeks; time and place TBA.

Chairman, Mickey McCall, adjourned meeting at 1:30 P.M.