

EASTERN PLAINS RC&D AREA, INC.
QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETING
April 18, 2007

The Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc. quarterly council meeting was held on April 18, 2007, at Fort Keogh in Miles City. Those present were Dixie Berwick (Town of Culbertson), Ginny Archdale (Town of Wibaux), Dick Iversen (Assistant RC&D Coordinator), Sarah Herman (RC&D Administrative Assistant), Mike Carlson (RC&D Coordinator), Cal Oraw (Certified Regional Development Specialist), Ray Trumpower (Fairview), Stark Ickes (Treasure County), Heather Ripplinger (Custer Co Commissioners), Richard Rice (City of Plentywood), Jerry Jimison (City of Glendive), Carol Markuson (Town of Circle), Mickey McCall (Plentywood CD, Commissioners), Daniel Watson (Rosebud County), Jim Atchison (City of Colstrip), Mack Cole (Treasure County), Dick Scheetz (USDA-NRCS and MT SWCS), Kathy Green (City of Glendive), Eugene Christensen (Garfield Co), Stanley French (Daniels Co).

Chairman Dixie Berwick called the meeting to order and meeting participants introduced themselves. **The agenda was reviewed and approved by a motion from Mickey McCall seconded by Daniel Watson and carried.**

MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT: The minutes and treasurer's report were reviewed and approved by a motion from Ginny Archdale, seconded by Stark Ickes carried.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Mike Carlson presented his quarterly written report. Mike has been working a lot on wind energy development in Dawson, Wibaux and Fallon County.

ASSISTANT COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Dick Iversen presented his quarterly written report. Dick talked briefly about the ethanol project and he has been working with Shirley Ball of EPAC. EPRCD co-hosted an ethanol training with EPAC in Glasgow on March 20, 2007, with over 70 participants.

CRDC REPORT: : Cal Oraw gave a PowerPoint presentation that summarized the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation, which consists of Carter, Dawson, Fallon, Prairie and Wibaux Counties. The draft copy of the CEDS was accepted by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). We are now waiting for Economic Development District (EDD) designation and we are in the process of completing an EDA Investment Assistance Pre-Application. The funding for the Fiscal Year of 2007 from the Montana Department of Commerce was \$28,788. Cal also talked about the \$5,600 discretionary funds that they applied for some ethanol development in the Terry area. Oraw also reviewed the Horizon Leadership Programs in Carter, Prairie and Wibaux counties. Oraw, Dixie Berwick and Ginny Archdale completed the LeadershipPLENTY Training held March 23-24, 2007.

HOMEBUYER EDUCATION PROGRAM: Mike briefly updated us on Khrystye's 1st Time Homebuyers Classes. Lame Deer has called and has asked for Khrystye to give classes there soon. She has had 7 classes and 52 students so far in FY2007.

OLD BUSINESS: Ethanol Workshop in Glasgow- Mike talked about how good the attendance was and it was very educational. Topics included the conversion of manure from feedlots to methane.

Fairview Pool Project- The final cost will be \$742,800 and they have raised over \$600,000 so far. McKenzie County, ND and Richland County, MT have given \$300,000. They are currently working on grants to get the remainder of the money raised.

NEW BUSINESS: Eastern Montana Housing Summit- Shortage of Housing in Eastern Montana was discussed. The need for new housing exists in all counties. Heather Ripplinger told the group that

there will be a housing meeting on May 14th from 9am-4:30pm at the Miles Community College, in Miles City. They will discuss the shortage of housing in the area with developers, land owners and anyone else that is interested is invited to attend. **Eastern Montana Wind Energy Project-** Mike talked about the 7 monitoring towers that they currently have up and that they will be putting 3 more up this spring. Gene Christensen from Mariah Power of Jordan gave a quick presentation about his company. Any questions that you have can be directed to Gene at 406-853-3410. Mike said MDU is going to do a \$60 million dollar project in the Coral Creek area at Baker; they will be putting up 20- 1.5 MW towers. **Carbon Sequestration- NCOC** and the Chicago Climate Exchange have announced the expansion of soil carbon management offsets for croplands, rangelands and forest lands in Montana. Ray Trumpower told the group that they will be holding a meeting in Butte, Montana on May 7th, to discuss the current issues. **CREBS Meeting-** 4 Meetings are being held around Eastern Montana for anyone interested in these tax exempt bonds for small wind energy projects.

REPORTS, HAPPENINGS & ISSUES IN RC&D AREA-

Wibaux County: Submitted CDBG planning application to work on a growth policy; continuing to work on sewer project, but waiting to see if state legislation changes the required lagoon design; some housing vacancies exist but what is vacant is in poor condition. Livable housing in the Beach-Wibaux area is in short supply.

McCone County: Working on sewer project and housing.

Garfield County: Two test wells for coal bed methane have been drilled.

Colstrip: Southeast Montana Development Corporation has added a new position – grant administrator; housing is also a large problem.

Treasure County: Trying to establish themselves as goose hunting capital of Montana.

Forsyth: Preserving courthouse dome; working on housing and The Horizons Leadership Program is nearing completion.

Glendive: Working on sewer projects, streets, and housing.

Plentywood: Raising funds for a \$2.5 million wellness center. A \$10 million grain elevator is being built in Westby. Newest state park is Brush Lake. Submitting CDBG economic development grant to purchase ready mix plant.

Miles City: Working on a water project for their industrial park. Floodplain issues will have to be dealt with. New retail businesses are coming in downtown.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on July 18, 2007 at 10:00am in Wibaux at the County Courthouse.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch by a motion from Mickey McCall, seconded by Richard Rice and carried.

From 1-3:30pm a CREBS Training Session was held by Mike Constanti of Matney-Franz Engineering of Bozeman. The CREB workshops will cover what CREBs are, why they were created, how they work, and how local governments can apply for the 2007 CREB cycle. The 2007 CREB cycle deadline is July 13, 2007, and the application process must be initiated by June 15, 2007. Eastern Montana city, county, or tribal representatives that are interested in bringing wind power to their area are encouraged to attend.

In conjunction with the CREBs meetings, a USDA Farm Bill wind energy grant workshop was held for Eastern Montana ranchers, farmers, and small business owners that are interested in using the newly authorized USDA Farm Bill for small wind projects. The Farm Bill offers a 25% federal grant buy-down or loan guarantee for 65-130 kW wind projects. Matney-Frantz Engineering will discuss this Farm Bill energy program and how Montana ranchers, farmers, and rural businesses can apply for a 2007 Farm Bill grant for small wind projects. The 2007 Farm Bill deadline is May 18, 2007, and the application process should be initiated by May 8, 2007.