

EASTERN PLAINS RC&D AREA, INC.  
ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING  
January 30, 2008

The Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc. annual council meeting was held on January 30, 2008, at The MonDak Heritage Center in Sidney, MT. 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), Randy Phelan (NRCS), Gene Buxcel ( DCEDC), Mickey McCall (Plentywood CD, Commissioners), David Pratt (NRCS), Steve Olson (Work Force Services Division), Daniel Watson (Rosebud County), Chet Hill (NDSU/MSU Extension), Tony Barone (Richland County Conservation District), Khrystye Earle (EPRCD), Jim Shanks(Roosevelt County), Gary Macdonald(Roosevelt County).

Chairman Dixie Berwick called the meeting to order and meeting participants introduced themselves. **The agenda was reviewed and NCOC Report was added and approved by a motion from Ginny Archdale seconded by Stark Ickes and carried.**

**MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT: The minutes were reviewed and approved by a motion from Mickey McCall, seconded by Stark Ickes and carried.** The Treasurer's report was reviewed. **A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Daniel Watson and seconded by Tony Barone and carried.**

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Mike Carlson presented his quarterly report. He thanked everyone for coming in the cold weather. Mike showed everyone a copy of the annual report and says it has gotten better, in 1999 there were 10 projects and in 2007 there were 35-40 projects. Mike went through the annual report and pointed out some of the things he had worked on:

- Gateway to Opportunity was in Glendive, MT again this year. He stated about 200 people attended, and he has heard a lot of good things about the speakers and classes.
- Corral Creek Wind Farm is up and running and the \$38 million was spent on 13 turbines.

Mike also showed a copy of the Hi-Lites that were sent out to all sponsorship members, he feels that sending out the Hi-Lites has helped bring more sponsorships. Mike also finished up his wind feasibility study and went over what he would like to spend the \$9,000 on. He would like to buy new wind equipment so that his wind committee can put new towers up for local land owners. Tony Barone asked Mike who benefits from the wind towers? Mike told us that only the landowner benefits currently from the towers.

**ASSISTANT COORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Dick Iversen presented his quarterly report. Dick thanked Mike Carlson and his wife Susan, for letting him come and work. Dick also thanked the board and Khrystye Earle for all of their work. He also thanked Sarah Herman for doing everything so fast and getting it done in time, he then thanked Cal Oraw for helping getting the EDD finalized. Dick then went over the annual report projects that he worked on:

- MonDak Ag Open- worked on the tours and then sponsor a hole with Montana made products
- GTO- Dick went to some classes during the GTO and helped with the Wine Down
- CRM- A new Coordinator was hired to take over Lyn Guenther's position
- Dry Redwater Rural Water Project- Has started surveying and have gotten more signatures, they currently are at 3,047 people
- Ethanol Project- Just for the Congressional staff educational tour to go and ask questions and to take a tour of the plants
- Ethanol Fuel Workshop- 100 people attended, Dick helped organize
- Ft. Peck Buffalo Herd- All tests came back Brucellosis free
- Ft. Kipp Irrigation Project- 1,900 acre center pivot irrigation system

**Randy Phelan who is acting for Dave Kascht told us that the supervision for Coordinator's will be at State level. He also stated that the NRCS will be supplying \$10,000 for administrative assistance.**

**CRDC REPORT:** Cal Oraw told up the EDD is up and running with a start date of January 1, 2008. It was originally sent for October 1, 2007, but they had it moved until they were ready. Cal told the council that the EDD board is meeting in Wibaux on Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> to look at the applications for the executive director. The annual CRDC report has been finished and has been sent it. The discretionary funds were used on a ethanol tour that was sponsored by EPAC and The Eastern Plains. The tour was on January 28-29 2008. Chet Hill was one of the people that went on the tour and he talked about the tour. He said it was pretty cold but there were 23 people attending, including the Dept of Commerce, Dept of Environment Quality, Dept of Labor (WIRED) and a few others. Mick Miller gave a bus tour of Red Trail Energy. Chet also brought some samples of distiller's grain and ethanol that were passed around. Gene Buxcel also attended; he said there are 9 new homes in Richardton because of the ethanol plant. The feed lots are also keeping families in the town; they feedlots are using the co-products to help fatten the cows. Chet Hill passes around a bag of cow manure for everyone to smell, the manure had been through a methane digester, the manure had no smell.

**HOMEBUYER EDUCATION PROGRAM:** Khrystye gave a brief summary of what she had done this past year; she had 13 classes and taught 110 students. This year she will continue charging a \$20 fee per certificate given out; this fee will go into a special account and will be used when there maybe reduced funding from the Montana Homeownership Program. Khrystye has also started giving one-on-one counseling, and this is very helpful to the clients who need more individual help. The one-on-one will be paid per session this year instead of per hour. Khrystye will be asking banks for sponsorships this year. She will be going to training on February 10-11<sup>th</sup>.

**OLD BUSINESS: Annual Plan of Operations- The plan was handed out and reviewed and approved by a motion from Bruce Smith seconded by Mickey McCall and carried. Gateway to Opportunity- Held on January 10, 2008 with about 200 people attending with 5 classes per hour. The noon speaker was Cole Gustaufson. There was a wine down after all of the classes that had all locally made food, wine and beer. It was well attended and many good comments were heard. The next meeting will be on February 15<sup>th</sup> in Beach, ND. The next GTO will be in Dickinson, ND for 2 years before coming back to Montana. Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation- The MOU was briefly talked about and approved to sign by a motion from Bruce Smith seconded by Daniel Watson and carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS: Election of Officers- Dixie told the group we need 2 new officers for 2008 as Dixie Berwick, chairman and Kevin Dukart, treasurer, were both up for election. Ginny Archdale nominated that Dixie Berwick stay Vice Chairman, Bruce Smith seconded and motion carried, and Dixie agreed. Stark Ickes nominated Kevin Dukart stay as Treasurer seconded by Ginny Archdale and carried. Annual Report- The annual report was went over earlier in the meeting, no one had any questions. Ginny Archdale stated that the staff did a nice job on it. Sarah Herman told everyone that the website was up and running, thanks to Mickey McCall. It has all of the current projects, minutes and meeting dates. Its address is- [www.eprcd.org](http://www.eprcd.org). BPIC- Bio-Product Innovation Center has been accepted to be in the Eastern Plains Office, it will be a part-time position. Dick Iversen commented that we will be putting the job description in the paper as soon as we hire the new EDD director. There is too much confusion when there is more than one opening in the office. **Gary Macdonald made a motion to accept the new position, Bruce Smith seconded and motion carried. NCOC Report- Ray Trumpower gave a quick update on the NCOC. They have 2 tribes in their Tribal Portfolio. The United States Congress has been involved but has tried to stay anonymous, but the Washington Post has found out and has printed the whole story.****

#### **REPORTS, HAPPENINGS & ISSUES IN RC&D AREA-**

**Gene Buxcel**- showed samples of bio-fuels samples that have went through his 80 gallon batch plant (soy, canola, peanut, camolina, safflower, and a few other types)

**Jim Shanks**- there will be a new generation plant- Basin Electric. Dry Prairie has a new building. Building a new water treatment building in Wolf Point- the bid was started at \$23,000 it is now around \$50,000. They are also updating 2 hospitals in Wolf Point and Poplar it will cost \$13 million.

**Randy Phelan**- NRCS planning and contracting 225 EQUIP Contracts worth \$6 million.

**Chet Hill**- there is a Midway Shippers Association Meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> in Williston.

**Steve Olson**- Department of Labor (WIRED) told everyone there is a lot of money for training in the workforce area- North Central Montana and Eastern Montana. There goal is to train 500 people by 2009.

**Daniel Watson**- PPL is going through a lot of employee changes in the next 5 years they will have around 300 people leaving or retire. Colstrip just got 7 housing units and Forsyth got 5 units. The V Store Trading Post is going out of business.

**Stark Ickes**- Lots of retired people buying up all available housing. Elder care got a grant to buy land and start plans. The conservation districts loan program has all of the available money loaned out for the second time in ten years. There is currently a study going on about getting a spur track to haul coal from the mine.

**Ginny Archdale**- Application started for grant/loans for sewer project (1.7 million). Wibaux purchased medical facility from Grenora. Horizon group spent \$7000 on a 501 (c) 3 organization and a housing study. District Drug and Alcohol and the school received a grant to figure something for students to do other than drink. Ginny is also working on census addresses so that no one get forgotten and to keep the numbers right.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held on April 16, 2008 at 9:30 am in Baker. Place to be announced.

**The meeting was adjourned for by a motion from Mickey McCall, seconded by Ginny Archdale and carried.**

After the meeting the museum was open for everyone to view.