

EASTERN PLAINS RC&D AREA, INC.
ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
February 4, 2009

The Eastern Plains RC & D Area, Inc., annual council meeting was held on February 4, 2009, at the Country Club in Sidney, MT. Those present were:

Ginny Archdale (Town of Wibaux), Kathy Green (City of Glendive), Jerry Jimison (City of Glendive), Randy Phelan(NRCS, Richard Rice, Paul Finnicum (RC&D Interim Coordinator), Tom Beck (NRCS-Poplar), Cal Oraw (City of Sidney), Kevin Dukart (City of Baker), Bill Loehding (Carter County), Candy Loehding, Adam Gartner (Dawson County), Willie Bernard (Daniels CD), Chet Hill (NDSU-MSU Extension), Steve Olson (Dawson County Economic Development, Dept. of Labor), Jason Rittal (Eastern Plains EDD), Dixie Berwick (Town of Culbertson), Pam Berwick (Eastern Plains RC&D), Tod Kasten, Carol Markuson (Town of Circle), Linda Twitchell (Great Northern Development), Bruce Smith, Mike Carlson (Glendive Resident), Mickey McCall (Sheridan CD, Commisioners)

Chairman Dixie Berwick called the meeting to order and meeting participants introduced themselves.

AGENDA:

Cal Oraw made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Bill Loehding seconded the motion. All present voted aye. Motion carried.

MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bill Loehding moved to accept the minutes from the July and October meetings as presented. Kevin Dukart seconded the motion. All present voted aye. Motion carried.

Ginny Archdale moved to approve the financial report as presented. Mickey McCall seconded the motion. All present voted aye. Motion carried.

ACTING COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Paul Finnicum, acting coordinator, explained that former coordinator Dick Iverson retired January 2, 2009. Paul was asked to fill in as acting coordinator and has been trying the past three weeks to familiarize himself with ongoing projects. Paul noted he is from Culbertson and has been with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in various capacities since he was in high school. He also has been involved in city council, school board and other civic activities in Culbertson. He said the RC&D coordinator's position has been advertised and applications close Feb. 26. He said he has worked with Dick Iverson on the Fort Kipp irrigation project and on a tribal carbon sequestration project and will continue to work on those projects. The Fort Kipp project will put 1800 new acres under irrigation.

EASTERN PLAINS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:

Jason Rittal reported he had participated in a Glendive-Miles City conference call on working together on floodplain issues. He also said the EDD has loaned money from the Revolving Loan Fund for a child care center. In Terry, he worked with the Cameron Foundation to draft new by-laws. He also is working with Steve Olson and his staff from the Glendive Job Service on the Business Expansion and Retention Program, in an effort to try to help the businesses we already have. He has been working on expanding wind energy monitoring, but is not sure the EDD should get into the business of owning towers. He submitted the CRDC annual report last week. A Brownfield grant has been submitted, but they have not yet heard whether it has been awarded. Jason participated in the Montana Economic Development Association's economic development day at the Legislature, providing information to lawmakers about various programs. He also attended an energy conference in Helena. The federal stimulus package was a big part of the discussion at that meeting. The CRDC's at this point are not recommended to be cut. Carter and Fallon counties got in on a disaster declaration as a result of last May's storm. This may make CDBG funds available, and the EDD is looking at using those to enlarge the Revolving Loan Fund. To do so, it may be necessary to transfer the RLF from the RC&D to the EDD.

HOME BUYER EDUCATION:

Pam Berwick reported that Khryste Earle has taken another job. Pam will be going to Atlanta for training soon. She sat in on a session in Miles City led by Nicole Zimmerman and Pam and Khryste will be doing one together as well.

COORDINATOR'S RESIGNATION:

Pam Berwick read a letter from Dick Iverson in which he thanked the RC&D for his association with it the past five years. He also highlighted projects that he thinks have good potential for the future of eastern Montana.

BIO-PRODUCTS INNOVATION CENTER:

Pam Berwick said she has completed several year-end reports for this program and has put together the budget proposal for next year's funding. She plans to get out soon to meet with people in various counties regarding specific projects.

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK:

Paul Finnicum led a council discussion on the annual plan of work. After reviewing the 2008 plan of work, it was agreed to add the following items: monitor Intake Diversion plans; monitor Richland County groundwater reservation; pursue funds for soil mapping specific to potatoes; monitor opportunities within the federal stimulus package; d; and keep informed of new programs for housing development within the area. It was also agreed to delete the following items from the 2008 plan of work: seek funding for community project start-up grants; promote beef marketing and new dairy potential; assist Glendive Yellowstone Recycling Program; cooperate with Northwest Area Foundation Horizon Leadership Training Program. The following items were amended: change "Support the Revolving Loan Fund for SE Mt. CRDC Area in cooperation with SE Mt. Development Corporation" to "investigate transferring the Revolving Loan Fund from the RC&D to the EDD and investigate ways to support and

expand the Revolving Loan Fund;” change “Assist Eastern Montana group in developing an ethanol production facilities in eastern Montana” to “assist Eastern Montana groups in developing biofuel production in eastern Montana;” change “Complete 12 homebuyer education classes per year” to “Offer 12 homebuyer education classes per year.” It also was noted that wherever S. Herman’s name appears in the staff list Pam Berwick’s name needs to be inserted.

A motion was made by Carol Markuson, seconded by Bill Loehding to approve the annual report as amended. All present voted aye. Motion carried.

GATEWAY TO OPPORTUNITY:

It was noted that only 28 people attended the well-advertised Gateway to Opportunity in Dickinson. It is supposed to be in Dickinson again next year, but attendance has been higher in Glendive so that may have to be re-evaluated.

CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING:

Pam Berwick noted there will be consumer credit counseling training in Wolf Point February 23-24. Cost is \$10. Interested persons should contact Great Northern in Wolf Point.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Ginny Archdale nominated Mickey McCall for vice-chairman. Jerry Jimison seconded the nomination. After hearing no other nominations, Kathy Green moved to close the nominations. Adam Gartner seconded that motion and all present voted in favor of McCall’s election.

Kathy Green nominated Ginny Archdale as secretary. Jerry Jimison seconded the nomination. After hearing no other nominations, Adam Gartner moved that nominations cease. Carol Markuson seconded the motion and all present voted in favor of Archdale’s election.

ANNUAL REPORT:

Copies of the RC&D’s annual report were handed out and reviewed. No action was necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION:

Mickey McCall informed the council of position changes made by the executive board. Sarah Hermann resigned as administrative assistant to take a full-time job. About the same time, Khyrste Earle resigned from the part-time homebuyer position and Nicole Zimmerman resigned from the part-time Bio-Products Innovation Coordinator position. The executive board felt it could keep a person better if the job was full-time and paid a better wage, so the positions were advertised optionally to be combined or to be held separately as in the past. Six applications were received. Because one of them was Chairman Dixie Berwick’s daughter, she recused herself from the selection process. Pam Berwick was hired for the three positions as a combined position. This will have to be monitored closely to see how it works. McCall said to date Berwick has been learning and taking hold very fast and very well. He said it may be necessary to find someone to assist with the homebuyer education classes part-time.

COORDINATOR'S POSITION:

NRCS regional coordinator Randy Phalen talked about staffing changes. State Director Dave White has moved to higher position in Washington, DC. His replacement is Joyce Swartzendruber, who will be assuming the duties Feb. 19. Two RC&D coordinator positions are open in Montana. Advertising them at the same time may bring in a bigger applicant pool. Mike Carlson asked whether there was an opportunity to have an assistant coordinator in this area since it has such a large territory. Phalen said that would be something for the council to discuss with the new state coordinator. Ginny Archdale expressed frustration that Dick Iverson's position had not been advertised before he left. Mickey McCall said the state RC&D Association is being revived, and Dixie Berwick is its new president. There are various issues such as these that the association will be discussing with the new state coordinator.

DRAFT BUDGET:

Pam Berwick passed out a copy of last year's budget. She said she is trying to familiarize herself with it and plans to have a draft of the current year budget for council action at the next meeting.

LUNCHEON SPEAKER:

Chuck Flynn, MSU Research Center, presented results of research on which oil seed crops are likely to have the best yields and produce the best quality of biofuels.