



Eastern Plains RC&D

Area Newsletter

Working together for the future
of Eastern Montana

October 2008

Eastern Plains Resource Conservation & Development to Meet in Culbertson on Wednesday, October 22 at 9:30a.m.

The quarterly council meeting of the Eastern Plains Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc. will be held on Wednesday, October 22, at The Town Hall- 210 Broadway, Culbertson. **The business meeting will begin at 9:30a.m.**

Highlights of the RC&D meeting will include current projects such as Brownfields Grants (EPA), Housing Program, Western RC&D Conference in Spearfish, SD, and the STI Grand Opening.

Lunch will be served at 12:00 (noon) and will be \$7. An afternoon tour of Dry Prairie Rural Water given by Clint Jacobs will be at 2:00 pm. This would be of special interest of the people working on the Dry Redwater Rural Water System.

Safflower Technologies International, LLC

Safflower Technologies International, LLC is located in Fairview, MT and President of the company is Mike Bergman.

Safflower Technologies International was formed and started business in 2002 and has expanded the business over the years. The company specializes in identity preserved safflower production and marketing, but also conditions Busch Ag Resources Inc barley for planting seed.

The company has been purchasing safflower, sunflower, and other specialty crops from area producers. Safflower Technologies is licensed and bonded to purchase grain in both Montana and North Dakota. They are marketing identity preserved safflower products such as bird seed, edible oil markets, livestock feed, and livestock supplements, bio-fuels, bio-lubricants and even a cat litter from NutraSaff safflower.

The Fairview facility is open for business Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm.



The Eastern Plains RC&D Area encompasses the Montana counties of Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Garfield, Fallon, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley and Wibaux. RC&D gets people involved to identify and solve human, economic, and environmental problems in their communities.



Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc.
Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, October 22, 2008 9:30 A.M.
@ Culbertson Town Hall
210 Broadway– Culbertson, MT

9:30	Council Call to Order Introductions Motion to Approve Agenda	Dixie Berwick, Chairman Council Members and Guests Council Members
9:40 - 9:45	Meeting Minutes Approval	July 16
	Treasurer's Report	July-September
9:45-10:15	Coordinator's Report	Dick Iversen
	Certified Regional Development Corp (CRDC)/Economic Development Corp (EDD)	Jason Rittal
	Housing Education Assistant	Khrystye Earle
	Bio-Product Innovation Center	Nicole Zimmerman
10:15-10:45	Old Business	Ag Open Fort Kipp Irrigation Project
10:45-11:50	New Business	Brownfields Grant– Jason Rittal & Linda Twitchell Housing Program Western RC&D Conference– January 25-28th STI Grand Opening– Nicole Zimmerman
11:50	Adjournment	Next Annual RC&D Council Meeting Date: January 21 Time: 9:30 a.m. Place: Sidney
11:50-12:00	Any Area Meetings To Announce	If you have a meeting to announce please share with group.
12:00	Lunch: Soup & Subs	\$7
1:00 pm	Reports, Happenings, and Issues in RC&D Area	
2:00 pm	Tour of Dry Prairie Rural Water	Given By: Clint Jacobs

The Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc. is operated in accordance with Federal law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap. Reasonable arrangements for persons with a disabilities will be made if request is made to the RC&D office in Sidney, MT, phone (406) 433-2103 Ext. 125, at least one week in advance.



1st Time Homebuyer Update

The First-time homebuyers class is getting more popular with new potential buyers. More people are calling because they read it in the paper and want to attend so that they are able to make informed decisions and their choices in the market.

With the economy and the financial crisis getting a first loan has become harder and your credit score has to be in good shape 640 or better. FHA loans require more down from the buyers. Freddie Mac is requiring first-time homebuyers to have a class and certification to close. As our Country continues through this time there will be more regulations to conform too. Interest rates for a Primary resident remain close to 6%. Board of housing was able to sell new bonds this year and have competitive rates.

There are a couple of new tax Items that are new homeowners need to know. The Federal tax credit isn't all that it seems make sure you understand the payback rules.

Also Montana State has a tax credit for first-time homebuyers who put their down payment and closing cost into a marked House Savings and use that money to purchase their house.

The Montana RC&D's are looking into creating some new homes in Eastern Montana through self help housing opportunities. These homes would be built by the buyers and family, overseen by a Professional contractor.

If you have any questions or need more info call Khrystye Earle at 406 480-3162.



Upcoming Events

Small-Scale Biodiesel Production Workshop

- * October 8, 2008– Miles City, MT
- * Contact Bill Webb —
(406)841-5200 for more info

A Discussion of Organic Production

- * October 28, 2008– Glasgow, MT
- * October 29, 2008– Plentywood, MT
- * October 30, 2008– Sidney, MT
- * Contact Ginny Harrington —
(406)444-2402 for more info

1st Time Homebuyer Classes

- * October 11, 2008– Sidney, MT
- * November 8, 2008– Glendive, MT
- * December 13, 2008– Wolf Point, MT
- * January 31, 2008– Miles City, MT
- * Contact Khrystye Earle —
(406)480-3162 for more info

Are more Potato acres and French Fries coming to the Mon-Dak region?

The Mon-Dak Region has long been known for its potato raising ability. The region currently raises potatoes for the larger potato processing companies in the US. The potential of more acres and a French plant to process those potatoes is being analyzed by a project funded by several Mon-Dak regional development groups. The project is funded by money from Williston Area Development foundation, The Eastern Plains RC&D and the Montana DNRC Irrigation Development Branch. These entities have hired Chuck Stadick of "Spud Viking Potato Consulting" to study the acres and potential growers together for this study.



Dick Iversen, Chet Hill and Chuck Stadick went on a little tour to look at different soil, here Chet and Chuck take a better look.

Update From the EDD

Prepared by Jason Rittal, Executive Director EPEDC

This past month included a trip to the 2008 EDA Denver and Seattle Regional Conference. The conference had between 15 and 20 Montana representatives. The conference topics included Dynamic Visions and Planning for Success; Strategic Planning for Economic Development; Laying the Foundation for Effective Strategic Planning; Data Resources; Creating Vision and Setting Meaningful Goals and Objectives; and Developing and Implementing Effective Action Plans. The conference also included a day long Revolving Loan Fund Workshop as well as a half-day training workshop for new Economic Development Districts. The information, networking, and training were enlightening and should prove to be useful.

The Great Northern Development Corporation has taken the lead in an effort to submit a Revolving Loan Fund Application for clean-up of Brownfield sites which would include, among others, Carter, Dawson, Fallon, Prairie, and Wibaux counties. Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used residential, industrial, and commercial property where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. As a part of the application process I am inquiring in each of the EPEDC's five counties as to potential sites and/or projects for those loan funds if the application is successful.

Work continues to progress and inquiries about our organization continue to grow. I travel regularly to each of the counties and am happy to meet with anyone interested in the services the Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation has to offer.

If you have any questions, ideas, or concerns, I can be reached at 406-698-3255.

EASTERN PLAINS RC&D AREA, INC.
QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETING
July 16, 2008

The Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc. quarterly council meeting was held on July 16, 2008, at Fort Keogh in Miles City, MT. Those present were Dixie Berwick (Town of Culbertson), Dick Iversen (RC&D Coordinator), Sarah Herman (RC&D Administrative Assistant), Kevin Dukart (City of Baker), Ginny Archdale (Town of Wibaux), Jason Rittal (Eastern Plains EDD), Jim Atchison (SEMDC), Mike Coryell (MCAEDC), Stark Ickes (Treasure County), Mickey McCall (Plentywood CD, Commissioners), Jim Shanks (Roosevelt County), Gary MacDonald (Roosevelt County), Dick Scheetz (Terry NRCS), Steve Olson (Dawson County Economic Development, Dept of Labor), Richard Rice (City of Plentywood), Liz Chang (Senator Max Baucus) and Mona Cantalupo (SMART).

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

MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT: The minutes were reviewed and approved by a motion from Gary McDonald, seconded by Stark Ickes and carried. The Treasurer's report was reviewed. **A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Stark Ickes and seconded by Ginny Archdale and carried.**

COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Dick Iversen stated that most of his report is the New Business and he will discuss all of that later in the meeting.

EASTERN PLAINS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT: Jason Rittal told the council that he took a month off for personal reasons and is back now and ready to hit the ground running. Jason said right now he is working with the Terry and Ekalaka museums. Nicole Jones from Midrivers is working on a grant for the Ekalaka Museum. Jason also said he would like to talk to more city councils and the next one will be Baker.

HOUSING EDUCATION ASSISTANT: Khrystye Earle talked about how her classes are slowing down instead of having 10-12 people she is getting 5-6 people. She said the reason things are slowing down is the mortgage and credit crisis. Khrystye has been doing one-on-one credit counseling and working with the clients budgets. She is also working on a HUD Grant for self help with help from the other RC&D's in Montana. Khrystye would like input from some towns to see if a self help project is needed or wanted. She is trying to get the HUD grant with Beartooth RC&D and all of the money will go through Beartooth RC&D. If anyone is interested in the self help project let Khrystye or Dick know and they can get the ball rolling and set up another meeting to discuss it further.

BIO-PRODUCTS INNOVATION CENTER:

Nicole Zimmerman has been working for 3 ½ months and has been very busy. She has met with a lot of the local commissioners, councils and other agencies. Nicole has been working with Carter County with Biomass Fuels that will use woodchips to heat there school, courthouse and the hospital. Nicole has also been working with Bruce Smith for Farm to Table; they are working on putting together a DVD and booklet together. Also right now they are selling shares. She is also working with Peggy Iba on the Western Trails Food, their sales are going up and with the price of wheat going up they have to raise their prices. Nicole has also been working with Ashley Preston who is the Program Director of the University of Montana of Technology. They are working on having energy classes in colleges in Miles City and Missoula. They would also have internships in Montana for energy. She has also been going to meeting for the 2009 GTO in Dickinson on January 29th. The next meeting for GTO will be July 31st in Medora. Nicole has started to sign up farmers for NCOC carbon credits. So far she has one signed up and is waiting to hear back on it. Nicole will be attending a North Dakota Rural Economic Development Conference in Bismarck later this summer.

OLD BUSINESS: EDD- The website will be up and running shortly with the help of Mickey McCall. **NCOC-** The NCOC is made up of RC&D's in Montana and 1 Watershed group, it is located in Butte, MT. Awhile back Eastern Plains tried to find the NCOC policies and could never find a signed copy so they had to ask for a copy and have now received it. Nicole is an affiliate for NCOC and will sign up farmers and ranchers. RC&D might eventually see a stream of revenue once the credits are sold.

NEW BUSINESS: Fort Kipp Irrigation Project- The Fort Peck Tribes has the best water rights and blocks of land around. Dick has been helping the Tribes to get the land exchanged or purchased. The Tribes has now hired a firm to go and get contracts signed for the tracts. This is a long process but they are moving along. **Wind Energy Project-** We have the best wind energy in Montana, we are trying to get a grant to move the monitoring equipment to different areas. **Josh's Energy Saving Project-** Josh Kellar from Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D is talking about having the RC&D's partner together to get state/federal grants. We would be more likely to get these large grants if we have a bigger area that they would cover. To have a tower it costs the land owner roughly \$15-\$20,000 for each tower. The grants could cover up to \$20,000. Mike Carlson (retired RC&D Coordinator) has gone through proper training now so he is licensed to put these towers up. We will be working with Mike to see what we can do. **CRDC Discretionary Funding Use-** With the old Discretionary funds that we haven't used up yet and the recent funds we have received we have decided to update the Ethanol Feasibility Study that we have done last year. Great Northern Development has offered to pitch in \$1000 to help with the update costs. **Ag Open-** Will be August 5-7th in Williston, ND. Everyone is welcome to be our guest, just go online to www.ag-open.com and register.

REPORTS, HAPPENINGS & ISSUES IN RC&D AREA-

Ginny Archdale- Working on a \$1 million lagoon project, will be having Julie Jones come and talk to them about a housing project on August 13th and 14th, Park bathroom update, Beaver Creak Brewery should be open by Labor Day.

Kevin Dukart- Also has Julie Jones working on a housing project they are currently in the middle of the process, the county has built a retirement housing to help free up some houses that the retirement age people are living in, Encore Operating is for sale, need rain.

Stark Ickes- In a housing crunch, Billings people are buying up houses for their retirement homes in Hysham, got a grant for the shooting association, Rosebud/Treasure County Fair going on right now.

Gary McDonald/Jim Shenk- Local Doctor is starting a pub, will sell beer wholesale to other bars, Fort Peck Tribes still working on green refinery, trying to work in bottling water and selling it.

Richard Rice- Dedication of Town Pavilion, also in a housing crunch, Westby elevator construction going strong, motel is busy.

Mike Coryell-City/County is doing a business plan, trying to develop business development area for future business development, working on old BN Depot to have parties in it, working on flooding zone- federal government final preliminary report and then in October they will know the final boundaries recommendations and then they will have 60-90 days for comments, the new armory that was planned to be build can't be, they can't use federal money to build in a flood plane, they have a new website-

www.4miles-city-business.com, they have meetings the 1st Thursday every month at 7:30am at the Stockman Center.

Mona Cantalupo-back after being gone for 1 1/2 years, continuing to work on North Water/Sewer applied for TSEP grant, Baker hotel came down which spurred other people to get store fronts looking better.

Mickey McCall- Westby Elevator working on construction- 110 cars, former NRC D employee is selling landowner maps and CDs- they will be sold at some of the Conservation Districts.

Dick Scheetz- New Welcome to Terry sign paid for by Horizons, Terry will have 5 vistas in town, 2 at grazing district, 1 at economic development office, 1 at Evelyn Cameron Museum and 1 at Buffalo Rapids.

Steve Olson- June was the ground breaking for the 18 unit housing complex,-spring 2009 occupancy date, and 25 people on interest list already.

Jim Atchison- Energy Open- 8/14-15, Biomass Task Force 7/23 Forsyth 1pm

David Pratt- from NRCS presented an update on the Farm Bill, including a component called the Ag Water Enhancement Act which talks about impounding surface water for new irrigation. The bill continues the conservation innovation grant program. Easement programs are mostly the same but with more emphasis on acreage rather than dollars. The bill puts an emphasis on maintaining rural landscape or rural life. Under the wetland preservation program, there may be flexibility to do long-term contracts with Indian tribes. The bill also includes a new component that may include developing a

register for environmental measures such as carbon credits.

Liz Chang- from Senator Baucus's office said Congress is working on the mortgage mess facing the country, and leadership thinks they can stabilize the scare tactics going on now. It has affected bonds for the state, credit, and loans. Following that Congress will work on defense. We may not see an appropriations bill pass until the new administration comes in. Baucus's office also is working on affordable housing projects.

It was decided to hold the October meeting in Culbertson.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on October 22 at 9:30 am in Culbertson. Place to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned for by a motion from Mickey McCall, seconded by Jim Atchison and carried.

After lunch there was a Tour of Tongue River Vineyard given by Bob & Marilyn Thaden.

BPIC Happenings

By: Nicole Zimmerman

Well summer is almost over and fall is right around the corner. This summer was good and full of exciting events. I had the experience of going to my first Mon-Dak Ag Open. This is a yearly three day event held in Williston, ND. I got the opportunity to listen to various speakers on Agriculture topics such as Biofuels / Energy, Agri-Business, Transportation, and AG Processing. On the second day of the event, there were tours in Montana and North Dakota. I went on the North/East tour in North Dakota. There were various stops throughout the day. Some of the stops were at the United Pulse Trading, Prairie Packing, and Nesson Valley.

The third day you have the option to go fishing or golfing. I helped with the Eastern Plains RC&D sponsor hole and assisted serving the golfers finger steaks and french fries. It was a great opportunity to meet people from the area and to find out what their interests and dreams were in Agriculture. I highly recommend anyone to attend the Ag-Open it is a great learning experience along with the pleasure of meeting new friends too.

Besides the Ag-Open this summer has been filled working on various projects and meeting residents throughout Eastern Montana. I am always looking for new ideas and projects to work on therefore if yourself or if you know someone that would want to start an agriculture project or want to expand an agriculture project let me know.

My contact information is
zimmerman_nicole@hotmail.com
or call me at (406) 891-0537.

EASTERN PLAINS RESOURCE CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT AREA, INC
2745 W. HOLLY ST.
SIDNEY, MT 59270

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Eastern Plains RC&D
Quarterly Council Meeting will
be on October 22nd
9:30 am—Culbertson, MT

Happy Halloween

Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc

Staff

Phone: 406-433-2103, Ext. 125 Fax: 406-433-7351

Dick Iversen, Coordinator
Sarah Herman, Administrative Assistant
Khrystye Earle, Housing Education Specialist
Nicole Zimmerman, BPIC Coordinator
Jason Rittal, Executive Director— CRDC/EDD
(Carter, Dawson, Fallon, Prairie, Wibaux)

Office location: 2745 W. Holly St. in Sidney
Office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday
Email: sarah.gullickson@rcdnet.net

Council

One representative from each county, tribal and municipal government, and conservation district; and the chairman of each resource committee.

Officers

Dixie Berwick, Chairman
Box 351, Culbertson, MT 59218
Phone: (406) 787-5271
E-Mail: culbertsonmt@hotmail.com

Mickey McCall, Vice-Chairman
119 N Jackson, Plentywood, MT 59254
Phone: (406) 765-1801 ext. 118
E-Mail: mickey.mccall@mt.nacdnet.net

Ginny Archdale, Secretary
PO Box 219, Wibaux, MT 59353
Phone: (406) 796-24712
E-Mail: wibauxmt@midrivers.com

Kevin Dukart, Treasurer
Box 1512, Baker, MT 59313
Phone: (406) 778-2692
E-Mail: cibaker@midrivers.com