

PCEDC recognizes wind project with collaboration award

Written by Chris Lee

“A Prescription for Success” was the theme for the 2010 Phillips County Economic Development Corporation annual meeting Monday, March 22.

An effort to help bring wind projects to Northeast Colorado was the reason behind presenting NECO Wind and Phillips County Commissioners with collaboration awards. Their prescription for success came in the form of wind projects.

PCEDC executive director Nici Bishop said drawing different entities within the county together is always important.

After NECO Wind partnered with Phillips County Commissioners in 2009, \$2.5 million was awarded after nearly \$6 million was requested in an energy grant. NECO partnered with Phillips County Commissioners because they needed a government entity on the project. National Wind is also a part of the project.

Bruce Rosenbach of NECO Wind said the communities and landowners will all have a chance to participate in the project.

“I think it’s the right track we are running on,” Rosenbach said. “We sure can use any help we can get.”

Executive Director gives 2009 overview

Bishop said the PCEDC website has recently been redone and within the last few months was launched. Many different links are included and Bishop said the main framework is in place with some tweaking left to do.

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Along the lines of technology, Bishop said they have also set up a Facebook page. She said it is a great place to get people linked to economic development. A page called Proud to be from Phillips County was created and Bishop said it provides a great place to advertise events happening around Phillips County.

Colorado Entrepreneur Marketplace is something Bishop would like seen brought to Northeast Colorado. These marketplaces help entrepreneurs who have ideas but don't have the resources to get started.

Bishop said funding for the project became available two years ago and was started in Colorado. A year ago one was placed in Grand Junction and one for Limon is in the works for this October. Bishop said she hopes to get on board with the Limon project to learn more to help bring a marketplace to Northeast Colorado.

She said she will be working with NJC in Sterling to help bring it to Northeast Colorado.

Engage Haxtun was a project in Haxtun to help bring different entities together. Bishop said they were initially invited to participate in it but have taken over some of the planning of it. The project is a collaboration of the Haxtun school district, hospital, city, economic development, Chamber of Commerce and Vision Committee.

Bishop mentioned they have written numerous letters of support for different things over the years and encourages people to contact her if they need help with letters for grants.

Alliance for Entrepreneurship is something Bishop said they really believe in. The question of finding and flushing out entrepreneurs in the area is something they have been thinking about. Bishop said they have been working with Imperial, Neb. economic development coordinator Leslie Carlholm to gather people for the alliance. The facebook page idea came into use with this project as well to help fish out those people who need assistance.

Small Business Development Center and PCEDC work hand in hand, Bishop said. She said the SBDC has seen some changes since moving from Ft. Morgan to UNC Greeley. The changes

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have been beneficial, according to Bishop.

Bishop said she is still a certified business counselor with the Small Business Development Center and is able to provide assistance to new businesses and expansions.

A Phillips County housing study was something Bishop said they had been working on. County Administrator Randy Schafer said the project is on hold as of right now due to state funding. The project will be done at the same time as a Sedgwick County housing study, according to Bishop, but they will not be linked together.

Small business grows

Keynote speaker Mark Hutchinson of University of Nebraska-Lincoln Food Processing Center attended Monday's annual meeting to run through the process of conducting a feasibility study. He gave a run-through of the process and what they have done to help Wisdom Poultry in their efforts to expand their business.

Jay Wisdom contacted Bishop because his business was growing at a rapid pace and was looking into expanding. He was put in touch with UNL Food Processing Center and they are currently in the process of conducting a feasibility study.

Wisdom Poultry is run by Wisdom and his wife Cindy. He said they began small seven years ago but after attending the Boulder Farmers Market, things really started to take off. He said when they began they sold about 5,000 chickens in their first year. They now are up to around 20,000-25,000.

Eggs are another part of the business and Wisdom said it has been a big part. They also began

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raising turkeys to sell.

Daughters Jennifer and Megan had the idea of selling peacock feathers at the farmers market. After coaxing Dad into the idea, the girls turned a hefty profit and now consider it a part of the business.

The operation is currently on their farm 14 miles south of Dailey. They are looking into moving the operation off the farm to allow for expansion and that is where the feasibility study comes into play.

Mark and Melanie Vigil provided entertainment for the PCEDC meeting while Robert and Ronda Fetzer prepared the meal that consisted of Wisdom Poultry chickens.

Three-year terms for members at large, Alicia Schram, Candie Salyards, Mark Farnsworth and Randy Schafer were up and all were re-elected at Monday's meeting.

Current members of the board include Schram, Tom Bennett, Lyle McBride, Jamie Tori, Jared Anderson, Ray Bailey, Salyards, Farnsworth and Schafer.

PCEDC's demographics cover the entire county, including Amherst, Haxtun, Holyoke and Paoli.