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## Five Rivers RC&D Council Meeting Minutes – March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Vice-President Jessica Jones called the regular meeting of the Five Rivers Resource Conservation & Development Council to order at 9:40 a.m. at the Five Rivers RC&D office location.

**Members Present:**

Lower Big Blue NRD –Bob Lorenz	Nemaha County – Mary Kruger
Johnson County – Tom Hamer	Pawnee County – Alan Richard (via conf. call)
Gage County – Myron Dorn	Johnson County Alternate – Howard McNiff
Richardson County- Jim Davidson	Otoe County - Alfred Gigstad
At-Large – Dale Haverty	At-Large – Wilmer Schlake
Nemaha NRD – Scott Kudrna	Jefferson County - Jim Frager
At-Large – Jessica Jones	

**Members Absent:** At-Large - Paul Rohrbaugh; Saline County – Willis Luedke

**Staff and Volunteers:** Tammy Timms, Coordinator; Bobbie Meints, Program Support Assistant

**Changes to the Revised Agenda:** President Richard joined the council via a conference call to discuss current RC&D funding.

**Introduction of Guest:** Vice-President Jones welcomed guest speaker –Tom Jordison, Executive Director Nebraska Renaissance Project. Introductions were given.

**Presentation:** Tom Jordison, Executive Director of the Nebraska Renaissance Project, presented the council with information pertaining West Corporation and, specifically, its home-based branch, West-At-Home, was incentivized to hire Nebraskans to work from home in rural parts of the state. This incentive was created by Legislative Bill 1081, introduced by Senator Abbie Cornett and passed during the 101st Legislature of 2010. On an individual basis, Nebraskans can visit: [www.westathomenebraska.com](http://www.westathomenebraska.com) where they can learn about working from home, a day in the life of a West-At-Home agent, determine if such a job may be a good fit for them, become educated about the application process and also apply for the job.

In September of 2010, West Corporation sought to enter into a promotional and cooperative partnership with the Nebraska Renaissance Project in order to increase the hiring of rural Nebraskans. Owing to the many contacts the NRP had within the telecommunications industry, the relationships with the Department of Economic Development and Labor and a goal to provide innovative economic development solutions in rural Nebraska, this partnership was a natural fit. Since that time, the NRP has worked with its members and supporters across the state to promote this opportunity and inform Nebraskans about the legitimacy and benefits of working from home in rural Nebraska. Mr. Jordison provided informative handouts and participated in a Questions & Answers session with the council members.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Kruger and seconded by Haverty to approve the February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 minutes as previously mailed. Motion carried.

**Bills and Financial Report:** A motion was made by Kudrna to accept the financial report as presented. Frager seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Correspondence:** No correspondence.

**Staff Report:** Coordinator Timms gave an update on projects.

**Update of Volunteer Hours:** A volunteer hours reporting form was circulated.

**Unfinished Business:**

**Executive Committee:** The executive committee will arrange a meeting to discuss current RC&D funding issues within the next week.

**New Business:**

**RC&D Budget:** President, Alan Richard joined the council meeting via a conference call from the Western RC&D Meeting in Idaho. Richard recognized the Nebraska RC&D Councils by informing all members that out of six awards presented at the conference, Nebraska received three. Additionally, Five Rivers RC&D was acknowledged for the council's most recent award, the NRCS National Earth Team Volunteer Award for an RC&D Council.

Richard reported that the RC&D Councils are currently funded through April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 with the passing of the most recent Continuing Resolution. The fiscal year 2011 appropriations proposals that are being currently considered either eliminate or significantly reduce funding for the RC&D program. President Richard stressed the importance of sending individual letters to congressman and that making phone calls could make a difference. Richard noted that council members attending the Western Conference were encouraged to construct exit strategies to prepare for the worst, but to remain positive and continue working on projects and fulfilling responsibilities. Richard asked the council to discuss whether or not the Five Rivers RC&D Council would continue to provide services to the surrounding counties if federal funding was eliminated. A motion was made by Hamer and seconded by Davidson to complete all current projects and decide on continuing new projects once a decision regarding the budget of the RC&D program has been reached. Motion approved. A Five Rivers RC&D executive committee meeting will be scheduled at the end of next week to discuss creating the contingency plan for the Council in the event federal funding is eliminated. The Council of 12 will be meeting in Grand Island on April 7<sup>th</sup> to continue the discussions of RC&D funding. President Alan Richard has extended an invite to all council members wishing to attend this meeting.

**Council of 12:** Vice-President, Jessica Jones commented that President Alan Richard had covered this topic already during the RC&D Budget discussion.

**RC&D Internet Service:** PSA, Bobbie Meints presented the council members with current internet provider rates. Kudrna made the motion to purchase internet service through Windstream on a month to month basis for the price of \$59.99, Frager seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**RC&D Promotions – Booth Table Cloth:** Coordinator, Tammy Timms, reported that the staff was searching for the best available rates on a table covering for the council's booth.

**State Association Meeting, April 7 in Grand Island:** Vice-President Jones reported that the state association has been making changes, which include making the by-laws easier to read and understand, President Richard also discussed the need to begin constructing an exit strategy to prepare the council if funding is lost. Members were once again encouraged to contact their local congressman as well as attend all meetings related to the subject matter.

**Projects to Open/Close:** No new projects to open or close.

**Other Business:**

**State RC&D Association Request:** The State Association has asked all council members to share ideas on how they can best assist each council during and after congress makes their decision regarding funding.

**April Council Meeting:** Jefferson County Council Member, Jim Frager, will be hosting the next council meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at Wally's in Fairbury, NE. (Located in the old Wal-Mart Building, Northwest of the stop light off HWY 136. Contact Bobbie at 402-335-3347 with any questions or directions.)

**Civil Rights – Women's History Month:** Coordinator, Timms, announced that February is Women's History Month and dispersed a flyer honoring several women who have had a large impact on civil rights.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the RC&D Council will be held at **Wally's in Fairbury, NE at 10:00 a.m. on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011.**

**Roundtable:** Council Members and staff shared information on current events in the surrounding counties and communities.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. with a motion from Frager and second by Dorn. Motion carried.



Al Gigstad, Secretary