

# NEBRASKA PLANNING & ZONING ASSOCIATION



Archive Yesterday,  
Action Today,  
Achieve Tomorrow



## Newsletter Fall 2017



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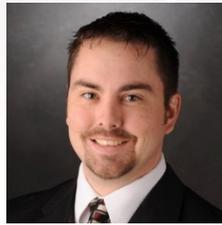
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## From the President...

Fall is upon us and another great year for NPZA is nearly in the books. But not quite yet....

On September 18-19 NPZA will hold its third Fall Workshop. In an ongoing effort to bring together the land use decision makers from multiple levels of government, this fall workshop was geared to appeal to more than those who typically attend our annual conference in Kearney. This year's workshop will be in North Platte as the NPZA Board is making a conscious effort to move the fall workshop around the state.



This year we have a variety of topics including zoning, conditional use permits, nuisances, the Open Meetings Act, and findings of fact. It is a diverse selection of subjects that we believe will be helpful to everyone in attendance. Additionally, as always, we will have a general question and answer session that is helpful in resolving specific issues.

We have also been working hard with the Nebraska APA on planning the 2018 Nebraska Planning Conference. The NPZA Board was proud to announce at the conference this past March that the contract with the Younes Conference Center has been extended through 2021. It is our goal to make this conference better each and every year. We are looking forward to the conference next March and hope you can make it.

For more information on the Fall Workshop, the annual conference, or on NPZA itself, please check out the NPZA website or follow our activities on Facebook and Twitter as well.

--Christopher Solberg  
President-NPZA

## Mark Your Calendars

**September 8, 2017:** NPZA Board Retreat; Hastings, NE; 9 am- Early Afternoon; Hastings City Hall  
All NPZA district officers encouraged to attend!

**September 12, 2017:** Presentation Proposals Due for 2018 Nebraska Planning Conference, Info on Page 6

**September 18-19, 2017:** Nebraska Fall Planning Workshop; North Platte; Best Western Plus  
Info on Page 2

**March 7-9, 2018:** Nebraska Planning Conference; Younes Conference Center, Kearney, Nebraska

## A Sustainable Nebraska: Commentary by Ron Sims; Former Deputy Secretary of US Dept of Housing and Urban Development

The challenges of economic growth and sustainability in the State of Nebraska are much like those of other states in this great country. There are large urban areas, small cities, university communities, and many rural towns. All aspire to be great places to live and all feel the pressures of change.



See 'Sims: Sustainable Nebraska' page 3...





## Federal Reserve Bank an Important Partner for Economic Development, co-host Broken Bow Forum

By Daniel Bennett, NPZA Newsletter Editor

In assessing the current economic conditions, opportunities, and barriers to growth, Custer County Economic Development Corporation and Central Nebraska Development District enlisted the help of a new partner, though they've been around for a while- the Federal Reserve Bank.

Some may not think that economic development stakeholders in Broken Bow, NE and the agency which conducts the nation's monetary policy would be speaking the same language, much less spending 3-days together hashing out the economic prospect of Central Nebraska, but those in attendance found much common ground for discussion and a willing partner in the Federal Reserve's Omaha-based staff.

The forum drew over 100 people to Broken Bow over the three days and provided an opportunity for local leaders and Federal Reserve staff to share with one another what's going on with the local, state and national economies and what changes to anticipate. These economic forums are hosted annually around the state, but it was the Federal Reserve's first time hosting an event in Broken Bow. Erin Redemske, director of public affairs with the Federal Reserve's Omaha branch, said that these forums provide their staff with a sense of the 'pulse' of the local area, to better know what's going on on-the-ground and incorporate those insights into the monetary process at the national level. "The Federal Reserve Bank has lots of data, but data is always looking backwards. Going into communities we are able to talk and say, 'What are you seeing?', 'What are you anticipating?'" Redemske said.

For economic development leaders in Central Nebraska,

*See 'Federal Reserve' page 5...*



### 2017 NPZA Fall Workshop: North Platte Best Western Plus

Afternoon September 18- Morning September 19

**Register today!**

#### Topics include:

- Findings of Fact
- Board of Adjustment
- Problem Properties
- Comprehensive Planning
- Handling tough scenarios

#### Registration:

\$50 for one day, \$70 both days  
Email registration to Judy Clark at [clarkjm@ci.north-platte.ne.us](mailto:clarkjm@ci.north-platte.ne.us)

#### Rooms:

Best Western Plus; \$91.00 + Tax  
(ask for the NPZA Fall Workshop block)  
Direct: (308) 534-3120  
Reservations: (800) 780-7234



# Meet the Planner: Liz Doerr, Knox County Zoning Administrator

Interview by Daniel Bennett

What's the most positive change you've seen in your work from where you started to where you are now?

Technology has made it possible for me to do a better job. Our GIS webpage puts so much information in a convenient format. I can easily access e-mails, and files when out of the office so that I can give a faster reply.



Liz Doerr is the Knox County and Antelope County Zoning Administrator with 13 years of experience and was the recipient of the 2017 Loretta Ludemann Excellence in Planning award.

What motivates you to continue doing your job even when zoning administration can be sometimes be regarded as a 'thankless position'?

There are times when I do feel worn down by the position but when a customer compliments me and thanks me for helping them plan out their new project, it keeps me going. When I was asked to fill in as the Antelope County Zoning Administrator during a controversial time, I took the job because I knew that, with my experience, I could help them. We were able to finish the permitting for a new windfarm and will soon be done with the update to the Zoning Regulations.

What new challenges do you see for county planners and zoning administrators?

I feel that the public attitudes can be a challenge as there are not as many willing to listen, compromise, and consider both sides of the issue. Too often, they can't see the big picture of planning for a better community and focus only on one item and how it affects them individually...These challenges will continue to make it more difficult to find good people that are willing to serve on the Planning Commissions.



Photo by Lindsey Yoneda. The Daily Nebraskan

# Busy Year Ahead for UNL's Community and Regional Planning Program

By Gordon Scholz, AICP, AIA

Students and faculty in the Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) degree program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln returned to the classroom for the 2017-2018 academic year on August 21.

This year the MCRP program will be undergoing a regular accreditation review by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), which accredits university programs in North America leading to bachelor's and master's degrees in planning. PAB standards for performance, integrity, and quality are developed with input from the public and the PAB's sponsoring organizations: the American Planning Association (APA); APA's American Institute of Certified planners (AICP); and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP).

The accreditation process involves the preparation of a *Self-Study Report*, which has already been submitted to the PAB by the MCRP program faculty. The next step is a site visit by a three-person team appointed by the PAB. The site visit for UNL's MCRP program is scheduled for the end of October. The site visit team will include Mark

*See 'UNL CRP Program' page 5...*





## *Sims: Sustainable Nebraska* (continued from page 1)

The tools available for sustainable solutions to the complex issues facing Nebraska are beginning to be used by other states and communities. Planning and execution of those efforts are of paramount importance. It will require community input and commitment. It will also demand all voices be respected and that establishing a common ground be the goal.

The nation and most states are finding urban cities increasing in size and economic importance. Efficiency of transportation for employees and employers is critical. Goods must be efficiently moved from manufacturer to users and distributions systems. This requires an integrated planning approach. No longer can land use, commercial, and manufacturing activities be dealt with independently. Comprehensive planning is absolutely necessary.

In order to insure that everyone wins in Nebraska's urban communities, the utilization of zip code data is incredibly important. Data unequivocally suggests that zip codes are no longer an address; they are a life determinant. Thus, it is vitally important that the decisions of urban planners insure that all people are achieving the same municipal benefits, health outcomes, and employment opportunities.

Rural America faces a number of challenges. While many small towns and communities have sustainable futures, some will have overwhelming challenges. Some statewide municipal associations now offer technology support to handle the services of small cities and towns. But, the tougher question is, which small towns are going to be economically viable. Planning must be done at a regional process which will effectively determine the strengths of a community. This will allow many small communities a better chance for long term viability. Good ideas are necessary and planning is essential. I must note that Nebraska's assets of highways are very efficient as are its system of small airports. Universities will continue to attract talent, industry, and commerce, in the communities

that embrace them. They are an incredible economic engine. Data suggests that university communities have a shallower recession and a quicker recovery than most other communities.

Does every community need to look like each other? The answer is no. But it is important for services in large and small communities to be available. Planning is one of those necessary services. Whether it is a single large jurisdiction, or a group of small communities acting in their common interest, planning is absolutely necessary. It is the planning process where the hard questions are asked and difficult decisions are made apparent and hopefully resolved. It is the planning process where all ideas and voices are treated equally. It is the planning process that unites disparate interest into a single goal. It provides the road map.

Planning is not new. When humankind moved from a nomadic existence to small villages, hamlets, towns, cities, and megacities, it succeeded because of the visions of planners. Skills to listen, to organize, and to sensibly place housing, services, employment centers, manufacturing and industrial businesses, medical centers, municipal and state buildings, universities and colleges, walking and bike paths, streets, gathering points, and view corridors, is artistry. It remains timeless.

The state of Nebraska will continue to change. Its long standing agricultural industries, freight, meat packing, shipping, warehousing, insurance, telecommunications, financial and investment services, emerging technology companies, and international trade will continue to be of extraordinary economic value. One only needs to see the Sandhill cranes migration to note the continued increased tourism opportunities. The manufacturing sector will remain world class. The not so hidden gem is Nebraska's higher education system. Research will continue to alter the technological and industrial capacity of the state. But it is important to capitalize on this talent. Planners can work with these varied interests and assist in expanding the communities where new industries and employment centers can locate.

*See 'Sims: Sustainable Nebraska' page 5...*



## 'Sims: Sustainable Nebraska' (continued from page 4)

One should never underestimate the power of integrated planning systems. They are vital to a prosperous future. They unlock new opportunities. It is the process that we use to insure that the lives, hopes, and dreams of future generations will be better than our own.

Nebraska is one of those states where opportunities abound. But, hard and difficult challenges are present. By the use of comprehensive planning strategies, political interest, and a willing public, the future for Nebraska looks enviably bright.

## 'UNL CRP Program' (continued from page 3)

Lapping, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus in the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine; Mark Wilson, Ph.D., Professor and Program Leader in the Urban and Regional Planning Program at Michigan State University; and Carol Rhea, FAICP, Managing Partner for Orion Planning and Design in Huntsville, Alabama.

Attendees at the 2017 Nebraska Annual Planning Conference in Kearney will remember that Carol Rhea, immediate past president of the American Planning Association, was a keynote speaker at the conference. We are very pleased that Carol was chosen by the PAB to serve on the site visit team, and we look forward to seeing her in Nebraska again!

The MCRP program at UNL has about 35 students actively pursuing the degree on a full-time or part-time basis. The five full-time faculty teaching planning courses in the program include Gordon Scholz, Professor and Interim Program Director; Rodrigo Cantarero, Associate Professor; Yunwoo Nam, Associate Professor; Zhenghong Tang, Associate Professor; and Daniel Piatkowski, Assistant Professor. The program also engages once each academic year a practicing attorney specializing in real estate and environmental law to teach the planning law course. For several years Tom Huston provided that expertise. Now, Andrew Willis teaches the course. Both attorneys are employed by the law firm,

Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, in Lincoln, and they serve as leaders of training sessions at the Nebraska Annual Planning Conference.

The Planning Accreditation Board currently accredits 72 master's and 16 bachelor's degree planning programs at 77 North American universities. The MCRP program at UNL was initially accredited by the PAB in 1988, following establishment of the PAB in 1984, and has successfully renewed its accreditation in five successive PAB accreditation reviews in the ensuing years. The MCRP program at UNL is the only planning degree program – thus, also the only accredited program – in Nebraska.

## 'Federal Reserve' (continued from page 2)

the forum provided a space to hear about state and national policy's effect on vital industries like agriculture and discuss overcoming barriers to growth. Tools for growth were also shared in a brief training on the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), which covered the requirements banks have to engage in community development. Redemske was particularly impressed with the optimism shared by leaders in Broken Bow, and the examples shared of how small communities can take action to spur growth despite the agricultural downturn and quality housing shortage seen across the state.

For planners and economic development professionals across Nebraska, the Federal Reserve Omaha branch staff can help communities interpret information and economic trends through published resources and staff insight. The Omaha branch staff also helps with technical assistance for entrepreneurship based economic development, disaster preparation and resiliency, and business succession.

Redemske stated that the Federal Reserve's most significant contribution to communities is made possible through strong community partnerships. In Broken Bow, the economic forum created new insights and expanded networks which can be used to better Central Nebraska and the state. Redemske encourages others in the state interested in hosting these types of events to reach out to the Federal Reserve Omaha branch staff to begin the conversation.



## 2018 Nebraska Planning Conference Call for Presenters

The Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association (NPZA) and Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association (NEAPA) will convene in Kearney, Nebraska in March of 2018 for the Nebraska Annual Planning Conference. We invite you to share your experiences with local, state, and federal officials, industry leaders, consultants, and other interested parties by presenting a session. We are particularly interested in sessions related to:

- Site Plan Review
- New Trends in Planning
- Housing
- Zoning Issues / Techniques
- Renewable Energy
- Agriculture/Rural Planning and Zoning
- Small Town Planning and Zoning
- GIS
- Plan Implementation
- Storm water and Floodplain Management
- Hazard Mitigation

Submission of presentations on topics outside this theme are also welcome.

The Call for Presenters seeks a broad range of professionals to address the many issues and problems associated with planning. Topics will be selected for concurrent sessions during the conference. Sessions are typically 60 minutes of presentation time and 15 minutes of Q&A. In some instances, presenters of similar topics may be scheduled to present with a panel.

The Conference Committee will be submitting your presentation summary to APA for Certification Maintenance credit consideration.

The presentation form must be submitted by **September 12, 2017**. All selection and placement of presentations is at the sole discretion of the Conference Committee. Selected presenters will be

notified on or before October 12, 2017.

Additional Information found on the NPZA website at <https://npza.org/resources/planning-news/104-2018-nebraska-planning-conference-call-for-presenters>

Submittal Questions:

Please email any questions proposals to Christy Eichorn at [apanebraska@gmail.com](mailto:apanebraska@gmail.com).

*Please submit any questions, comments, concerns, or ideas regarding the newsletter to Daniel Bennett at [danielb@nepadd.com](mailto:danielb@nepadd.com)*