NEBRASKA PLANNING & ZONING ASSOCIATION

NPZA 50th Anniversary

Archive Yesterday, Action Today, Achieve Tomorrow

Newsletter

Post-Conference 2018

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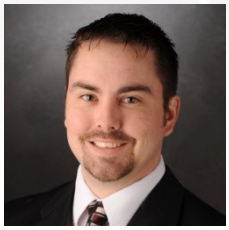
From the President...



Another year, another successful Nebraska Planning Conference! This year we once again had over 200 registrants attend the conference. Actually, it is a number that appears to be growing as those in the planning and zoning field witness the viability of the training and networking provided by the conference. We hope the wide variety of sessions that the Conference Committee packed into the conference program covered every subject that piqued your interests. This committee of NPZA and APA Nebraska Chapter board members does amazing work each year.

This edition of the NPZA Newsletter will look back on the sessions provided at the conference and provide some follow-up information and further discussion on the session topics.

This fall NPZA will once again sponsor a regional 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. This year's Fall Workshop will likely be on the east end of the state, stay tuned for more information.

For more information on upcoming training opportunities and other NPZA activities, please check out the NPZA website or follow our activities on Facebook and Twitter as well.

--Christopher Solberg
President-NPZA

Enjoy the conference?

Become an NPZA member today!

Click here for online registration on npza.org.

Detailed information provided on page 6.

Mark Your Calendars

March 6-8, 2019: Nebraska Planning Conference
Younes Center, Kearney, NE

Students Weigh-in on Nebraska Planning Conference

Compiled with the help of Gordon Scholz, AICP; Program Director of Community and Regional Planning, UNL

The 2018 Nebraska Annual Planning Conference was attended by 16 graduate students enrolled in UNL's Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) degree program. The MCRP program is a two-year 48-credit hour program accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board. The Nebraska Annual Planning Conference is a highlight for students every academic year, and the welcoming, friendly atmosphere of the Conference, as well as the multiple substantive sessions, give these aspiring professional planners a sense of what planning practice is about, especially in Nebraska, and who the participants are in the planning process.

See 'Students' page 2...

'Students' (continued from page 1)

Students attending this year's Conference provided these comments about their experiences at the Conference:

- I really enjoyed featured speaker Aimee Nassif of Olathe, Kansas. Her message and the way she delivered it were engaging, informative and meaningful. While I am a student, I also work full-time in a position that serves clients that are not always appreciative of our message. Her strategies and commitment to her team were very much appreciated. The STaR session led by Chad Nabity was also very well done. Instead of spending an hour focused on one success story, we got to network and hear dozens of success stories.
- The most meaningful part for me was being able to talk to and learn from current professionals. It provided a better understanding of the work they do and the challenges they face in their communities and work environments.
- I really enjoyed the diverse range of topics that were covered in the presentations, as well as meeting planners that work in a variety of fields. It is exciting to see the many different job options that the field of planning has.
- Attending the NPZA Conference gave me the chance to network with a wealth of professionals in our field. The conference introduced me to innovative ideas in planning and gave me a wealth of initiatives, methods, firms, and projects to look into for my graduate studies. Thank you for waiving student registration fees!
- I should have gone to all 3 days of the conference (I only went Thursday), because the networking and presentations were great. There were a lot of people that I had heard of but hadn't met until the conference. I wish there had been a presentation about historic preservation (or if there was I didn't see it in the brochure).
- Thanks for offering me the chance to attend this meeting. I think the section of "Wetland Conservation Planning" was quite useful for me, which is related to my thesis. It gives me a holistic view of the wetland topic, and makes me think about wetland challenges and restoration from a broad view, especially the explanatory information of some policies, such as "no-net-loss." Thank you!
- As a planning student, the NPZA conference provided myself and my classmates the opportunity to see professional planners give presentations on projects undertaken in our own cities, learn about the different processes that were used in each project's planning and implementation phases, and to network with professionals in our field of study. Thanks!
- The conference was an amazing opportunity to network with planners across the state from very different backgrounds and work disciplines. I was able to take away some new knowledge and professional connections, as well as a strengthened sense of excitement and pride for the work that I will get to do as a planner in this state. I am so thankful to have been able to attend the conference, and I will definitely be back next year.
- I was impressed with the presentation by Julie Harris that focused on the collaboration between public health organizers and planners. The built environment has an impact on public health and the collaboration between planners and public health officials can help to create environments that improve overall health of communities.
- I would say it was great opportunity to feel the planning atmosphere and to talk with various planners who are working in the real field. Thank you.
- I was very excited about the conference because it was my first time. I participated on the first day. One session I attended was "Capturing Character: Branding for Plans, Projects & Places," which was really related to my GIS final project. In addition, there were some areas of interest in the pre-function area in the hallway. Next year I want to participate on all days of the conference. In many ways this conference was a big success!
- I thought the conference was a great way for me to see real world examples and applications of what I am learning in the classroom on a daily basis. There is only so much we can learn in class, and I was very grateful for the opportunity.
- Very nice! Glad to meet new people and hear new perspectives.

Downtown Atkinson, Nebraska. Located near the north bank of the Elkhorn River in north central Nebraska.

Community Spotlight: Atkinson, NE

Lou Ann Tooker is the director of Economic Development for the City of Atkinson and the secretary/treasurer for the Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce. Atkinson is located in Holt County on the northern edge of the famed Nebraska Sandhills. Despite being a small town in a relatively isolated location, Atkinson's population of 1,245 has been very stable for the past 20 years. The community is surrounded by farm and ranch lands which provide the basis for the local economy.

NPZA: What's your role in town and how long have you been a part of the community?

Tooker: I am the Director of Economic Development. I started visiting the area 40 years ago and it always felt like home, so it was an easy decision to make the decision to stay 10 years ago. Atkinson started its Economic Development program in 2003. Much was accomplished in the first few years, such as initiating the Local Options Municipal Economic Development Act (LB840), a CDBG grant for housing rehab and down payment assistance, and developing a revolving loan program for businesses. Economic development does not stand still - it either moves forward or backwards. I also am the secretary/treasurer for the Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce. The two organizations work quite well together and the city is kind enough to let my office also be the Chamber office. There are rarely any dull moments!

NPZA: Atkinson has had several successes including economic growth along Highway 20, Downtown business success, and housing development over the years. Was there anything that has spurred these successes at any particular time? What has been most important to maintaining projects and momentum?

Tooker: I don't believe there was any one thing that kept us working on the expansion or retention of businesses. As stated above, economic development cannot stop or it slides backwards, so we always try to have at least one project of any kind going, no matter how big or small, at any particular time. Atkinson is a town of very progressive people (I've lived many places and I can attest to this!). I don't have to look very far before someone comes up to me with an idea - we are up to our eyebrows in entrepreneurs! Like the rest of Nebraska, we didn't have enough housing, so we gave a grant to a non-profit organization and asked them to build a house every year for ten years. The first year was a little rough with getting the new house sold, but they've got experience now and had the second house sold before it was even finished. Housing has been a difficult subject, but I believe we're making headway. As for businesses, the community understands that they need to support their own. I think it's important to keep the line of communication open - that's where having the Economic Development program work together with the Chamber of Commerce comes into play - I'm hearing what businesses have to say on a daily basis.

NPZA: What positive role have you seen planning and zoning play in bringing about these changes and others in your community?

Tooker: I believe planning is extremely important (I'm a list maker!).A lot of small towns "fly by the seat of their pants."While they may still get things done there's lack of organization and foresight. Atkinson recently updated all their "plans" including the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan, the Housing Study, Zoning Regulations and the Blight Study and Redevelopment Plan. By looking down the road and deciding where we want to be in 10 years we are able to make decisions about what needs to be done now. Also, by developing these plans, through town hall meetings, the residents are involved in the "plotting and scheming" and actually help with the decisions. They then become actual stakeholders and are vested in the community. I think that's the most positive thing that comes out of planning - people invested in their community.

NPZA/APA Award Winners

APA Nebraska and NPZA both gave out awards at the March conference. Congratulations to all 2018 award winners!

APA Awards:

- *Daniel Burnham Award for Comprehensive Plan*- The Sarpy County Comprehensive Plan
- *Environmental Planning Award*- Drought Management Plan for the Lower Elkhorn River Natural Resources District
- *Best Practice Award*- Flatwater Crossing Design Guidelines (South Sioux City, NE)
- *Transportation Plan Award*- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Online Bike Map
- *Urban Design Award*- City of Gretna Downtown Revitalization Plan & Design Guidelines
- *Planning Agency Award*- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)
- *Charleston-Ptak Planning Advocate Award*- The Central Nebraska Growth Foundation and Clint Schukei (former City Attorney for City of Norfolk)
- *Great Places in Nebraska*- Downtown Seward (City of Seward, NE)

NPZA Awards:

- *Carol Swayne Award for Planning Commissioner*- Gayle Malmquist, City of La Vista/Sarpy County
- *Mitsuo Kawamoto Excellence in Planning Award*- Chris Solberg, AICP, City of La Vista
- *Loretta Ludemann Achievement Award- Excellence in Planning by a Woman in the State of Nebraska*- Sue Schwartz, Honorary Nebraska Planner
- *President's Award*- Pilger Village Board and Pilger Planning Commission, Village of Pilger

Nebraska Planning Conference 2018 in Pictures

Photography by Jason Seamann

Special thank you to the Conference Committee and all who made the 2018 conference a success!

Membership Levels and Benefits

JOIN TODAY!

Membership supports NPZA's mission to provide quality education and training opportunities for individuals who make and impact land use decisions across Nebraska. By joining NPZA you join a collaborative and supportive network of people dedicated to making sound decisions and exchanging exciting ideas to create great communities.

NPZA membership also provides the local administrator member access to the Planning Commissioners Journal Web.

PlannersWeb site will provide you with articles and postings on a wide range of planning issues, as well as a focus on how citizen planners- especially members of planning commissions and boards- can work most effectively.

Individual Memberships

Student……..……..$ 5.00
Individual…….....$15.00
Private Planning Consultant……..$40.00

Group Memberships

City or County under 5,000 population…….$35.00
City or County over 5,000 population……$40.00
State Planning Agencies……$40.00
Joint Planning Agencies……..$50.00

Payment can be made by requesting a billing or online through PayPal.