



# Annual Funding Workshop Conducted by Kansas Department of Commerce at Lyons

**C**elebration Centre, located in the city of Lyons, was the setting for the annual Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Workshop held Wednesday, April 20. The day began with a welcome to the city of Lyons by Michael Young, President of the Lyons City Council, and by John Sweet, Lyons City Administrator.

“Since 1984, the majority of the Annual Application Workshops were held at Salina, but the decision to move the workshop this year was so the Kansas Dept of Commerce could showcase the Celebration Centre and Horse Arena; both buildings were projects of the Commerce programs, KAN STEP and Community Service Tax Credit (CSP),” stated Debbie Beck, Grant Coordinator.

The day was filled with individual sessions representing the different programs of the Kansas Department of

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Commerce. Debbie Beck led the group with “Community Improvement Application” which is more commonly known as the CDBG grant application. Most entities are familiar with the CDBG grant program. Water, wastewater and community improvements such as streets projects turn to the CDBG grant program as a funding component. Debbie discussed

the aspects associated with the CDBG application from how to conduct a Low-to-Moderate income survey, the scoring of the application and the importance of attending the KIAC (Kansas Inter-Agency Coordinating) meeting.

Renee Lippinsott, Rural Opportunities, Sterling, spoke about the Small Community Improvement Program (SCIP) and the Community Service Tax Credit Program (CSP).

The SCIP program was established in 2008 to address “quality of life” needs in communities with populations of less than 5,000. This program is similar to the popular

“KAN STEP” Program in which local volunteers invest sweat equity as the community’s contribution of the funding. The Kansas Department of Commerce will fund up to sixty percent of the total CST project budget. A maximum of \$125,000 per project may be received. The community provides forty percent of the cost via in-kind match with volunteer labor, donated materials, land and equipment, etc. Past projects funded include theaters, wellness centers and parks.

Established in 1994 the CSP program is for non-profit projects in three categories: Community Service, Healthcare Services and Crime Prevention. How does CSP

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work? It is a non-profit's exchange for tax credits in donations. A total of 457 projects have been completed with 251 being rural and 206 being urban. Tax credits in the amount of \$66,980,635 have been awarded. If you are interested in learning more about these programs, contact Chris Harris, KDOC Rural Development Division, Topeka by calling 785-296-6815 or emailing him at [charris@kansascommerce.com](mailto:charris@kansascommerce.com).

Representatives of funding agencies who spoke included Richard Boyle, USDA Rural Development Newton Area Director; William Carr, Kansas Department of Health and Environment Public Water Supply Loan Fund and Rod Geisler, Kansas Water Pollution Control Revolving Loan Fund. Each provided information about the funding available through the respective programs for water and wastewater systems; they focused on the coordination necessary to work with the CDBG program.

Other Commerce representatives also presented. Terry Marlin gave a presentation for the Kansas Department of Economic Development. Linda Hunsicker spoke about the KDOC Housing applications. She commented

that two types of housing programs are available: Housing Rehabilitation, and Housing Rehabilitation and Demolition. Only one application is eligible per year. All projects must be completed within twenty-four months. The application deadline is August 26, with awards to be announced approximately January 6, 2012.

Salih Doughramaji outlined details about the KAN STEP Program and CDBG Urgent Need Grant. KAN STEP, as previously mentioned, is a community development program sponsored by the Kansas Department of Commerce designed to help communities with an acknowledged community improvement problem. Types of facilities that qualify include improvements to water or sewer systems and buildings. Examples of eligible buildings include community buildings, libraries and fire stations. The KAN STEP program was established in 2000. Funding consists of sixty percent for materials; forty percent in volunteer labor, equipment, land, etc. Applicants must meet the Low-to-Moderate Income criteria; the maximum grant is \$300,000 per project. There are presently sixty-two completed projects

and ten addition projects are in various stages of construction. The application deadline is August 15. The Kansas Rural Water Association provides inspection services and technical assistance to the KAN STEP program. For more information, check out photos on the KRWA Web site at [www.krwa.net/projects](http://www.krwa.net/projects).

CDBG Urgent Need grants are only to be used as a last resort for funding. Such awards are only to situations where there is a threat to the health and safety of local residents. The problem must have developed within the last six months of initial contact with CDBG. Projects cannot exceed \$400,000 or on an as needed basis. An administrative fee of up to ten percent of CDBG construction costs is allowed.

Kansas Department of Commerce is also going "green" this year or shall we say "paperless". All applications and the Grantee Handbook were given out on a "thumb drive" provided by Kansas Dept. of Commerce.

Debbie Beck summed up the workshop by stating; "This is a great way for the State to listen to communities' issues as well as to educate them on how to access funds."



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