

*April 1 is National Census Day—Nebraska counties will benefit from federal tax dollars for every person counted. Do your part on behalf of Perkins County and mail back the questionnaire as soon as possible.*

***By Jan Rahn***

***Managing Editor***

The deadline is approaching for all residents to get their 2010 Census form completed and returned—a small task that could potentially reap big benefits for the state of Nebraska and Perkins County.

April 1 is National Census Day. Each household in the county will have received a census form to complete and mail back by then, creating an opportunity for receipt of federal dollars.

Distribution began the first of March, with census workers hand delivering questionnaires to each and every household in Perkins County.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau office in North Platte, the state of Nebraska ranked second in the nation last time the census was taken 10 years ago, with a response of 75 percent.

“Surpassed by only one percent in 2000, we hope Nebraskans will make the state number one in 2010,” said Vic Gentry, manager of the North Platte Census Office.

Being counted is the only option in recapturing federal dollars, said Gentry.

He said Nebraska loses \$1,114 per person per year in federal funds for every person not counted.

Lana Kammerer, local crew leader, said the census people hired in Perkins County were getting the questionnaires out as quickly as possible.

Kammerer will be training workers who will count residents in group facilities such as nursing homes, etc.

“They are intent on getting the area covered,” she said about the workers, adding that bad roads are undoubtedly playing a role in any delay.

By the first of this week, between 70-75 percent of the questionnaires had been passed out by approximately 30 workers in Perkins County, according to the North Platte U.S. Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau emphasizes the importance of getting the questionnaire completed and mailed back as soon as possible to make sure every resident of the county gets counted in the national census. It will make a difference in funds for local schools, roads, etc.

Census workers simply drop off the form—they do not ask the questions or assist with the questionnaire in any way except maybe to verify an address.

They do not ask personal questions. If any resident encounters someone not following these guidelines, they should beware of a scam—do not answer any personal questions.

None of the questions in the form is intrusive, so residents completing them can do so without concern of revealing private information.

In May, workers will be knocking on the doors of everyone who did not complete and return the questionnaire.

“Why would anyone not return it—it’s simpler to fill it out and mail it than to be disturbed (by a census worker) at dinner time,” said Gentry.