

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Pleased with how three community meetings went last week, Perkins County Planning and Zoning Administrator Chris Loeffler said, “Our planning team was impressed with the attendance and variety of ideas received.”

The ideas Loeffler refers to were expressed by those present for three gatherings where numerous suggestions were expressed for community and economic development across Perkins County.

Meetings were held in Grant, Madrid and Venango, with each event attracting 15 to 20 community patrons.

Loeffler said a list of at least 20 suggestions came from the sessions sponsored by the Perkins County Planning Commission on “visioning” for the future.

Attributes, challenges, opportunities and assets of the county and communities were evaluated, she said. A prioritization process was used to select several priorities at each event.

Acting as facilitator for the community meetings was Danielle Hill, executive director of the Nebraska Housing Developers Association.

Information that was gathered will be utilized by the Perkins County Planning Commission in preparing for a draft of an updated comprehensive plan.

A public hearing will also be convened before final adoption to accept further public comment, said Loeffler.

She described the county's comprehensive plan as providing information on the various assets of the area, such as demographics, facilities roads, housing, future land use, along with other aspects. □ "The plan also includes a vision for the future and various goals and objectives for providing a good environment for jobs, standard of living and families," said Loeffler.

□ oals from members of each of the communities varied, she said, and included:

Grant Workshop

At the meeting held in Grant on Monday, March 22 at Zion Lutheran Church, the top priorities for the community were:

- Maintaining quality health care
- Recruiting a multi-employee business
- Continuing a "vibrant" school system
- Development of entrepreneurship or business.

Madrid Meeting

Key desires of citizens attending the Madrid gathering at the community hall on Tuesday,

March 23, included:

- Maintaining existing schools
- Maintaining quality rural living opportunities
- Protecting the landscape and natural resources
- Minimizing regulations

Venango Session

The top priorities for Venango residents attending the community meeting at the Venango Legion Hall on Wednesday, March 24, were:

- Developing business and farm options for young people
- Developing better services for fuel
- A convenience store and lodging options for the western community of Perkins County.

Survey Forms Available

To help provide additional data for the process of updating the county's comprehensive plan

with the theme of “helping vision our county for the future,” survey forms are available from the Perkins County Planning and Zoning office at the courthouse.

The survey can also be completed online at www.co.perkins.ne.us/zoning

Citizens of Perkins County are invited and urged to participate in the county survey.

Deadline is Thursday, April 15.

For further details or answers to questions, contact Loeffler at 308-352-2703.