

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

The public is probably unaware of the many tasks and responsibilities that are undertaken by the administrator of Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation.

Here is a summary of the duties performed within the corporation that make a difference in the five-county service area of Perkins, Chase, Dundy, Hitchcock and Hayes.

The first administrator of the corporation when it formed in 1999 was Dorothy Colson. Becky Uehling assumed the duties of administrator next, and then Ann Burge came on board and has been with the corporation since 2002.

SWNCBC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting economic growth in the five counties it serves.

Federal funds to support the programs are provided through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Benefits to the communities are numerous:

- Increased homeownership helps stabilize families and strengthen their future in local communities.
- Improved housing helps employers bring in new workers and communities attract new residents.
- New small businesses help communities grow and thrive.
- Expanded community services improve the quality of life in southwest Nebraska and make communities more appealing to new residents.

When communities grow, there is a positive impact on school enrollment and business growth which help produce a thriving economy.

Some of the programs for residents include:

- Homebuyer education: Local residents learn about homeownership, including financing, maintenance and other related topics that prepare them for these challenges.
- Downpayment/closing costs assistance: Up to \$7,000 can be accessed for down payment and closing costs and up to \$17,500 for home rehabilitation costs by graduates of the homebuyer education program.
- Purchase/rehab/resell: Qualified buyers can purchase an existing home with needed repairs financed as part of the purchase transaction.
- Owner-occupied rehab: Up to \$24,500 can be received by qualified homeowners to improve their homes, making them safer and more energy efficient.
- Rural business economic grants: Technical assistance and up to \$20,000 in low interest loans can be received by qualified business owners.
- Rental program: A six-unit low-to-moderate income rental property in Grant is managed by SWNCBC.