

2024

YEAR IN REVIEW



NCRPC AT A GLANCE

Our mission is to advance rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services.



133,806
PEOPLE IN REGION
ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates



9,270
SQUARE MILES



12 COUNTIES
83 CITIES



14 BOARD MEMBERS
21 STAFF

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The NCRPC has worked with the communities of North Central Kansas for over 50 years to promote economic and community development, long-term sustainability, and strategic visioning of a prosperous future. Opportunities and challenges present themselves every year, but with the support of our communities and an exceptional board and staff the NCRPC has accomplished remarkable things. 2024 was a year in which the NCRPC not only helped our communities through business financing, housing and weatherization assistance, homeland security resources, and programmatic initiatives and funding to support a broad range of community needs, but a year in which the NCRPC strengthened itself institutionally and its



John Shea
Executive Director

ability to forward its mission, to become a truly transformational organization.

The NCRPC enters 2025 with renewed vigor, focused on its mission of creating a prosperous future and sustainable communities throughout North Central Kansas. But as always, the NCRPC — as leader, facilitator, partner, or supporter — can only be successful with the continued engagement and cooperation of our 83 member communities and 12 member counties. If we all work together, we cannot fail, and rural Kansas will become once again a center of opportunity, growth, and vibrant future potential.

The following pages highlight just some of the NCRPC’s accomplishments in 2024, and we look forward to even greater things in 2025.



City of Burr Oak water project.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

A Snapshot of Primary Programs and Services in 2024

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The NCRPC supported **over 35 cities, counties and private entities** in applying for, securing or managing private and/or public funds for various projects this past year. Demand for NCRPC services is illustrated by the current list of approximately **65 projects** working with our staff to evaluate funding options.

Once funding is identified, this assistance moves to completion of environmental reviews and applications to various sources. This year, several new opportunities,

including the Kansas Water Office Grant Program and Kansas Department of Transportation’s Transportation Alternatives Program, were utilized. Researching new programs and implementing them in the region is a key focus for the Community Development staff. Once projects are funded, the Community Development staff provide valuable support to local staff to successfully implement their project. Over this past year, the staff has also assisted with four applications to the Economic Development Administration with three slated for approval in the new year. Implementation of three Department of Transportation grants — SMART, Safe Streets for All, and Thriving Communities — have brought opportunities to the region including drone bridge inspection, region-wide safety action planning, technical assistance for the most vulnerable communities in need of upgrades to critical infrastructure and public transportation planning. From beginning to end, well **over \$35 million will be invested from outside and local sources** to make these projects possible. As the planning and development extended staff for our member cities and counties, we act as a key information source knowledgeable about all funding programs. This coupled with our knowledge of the region makes us a unique partner for solving problems and capitalizing on opportunities.



NCRPC continued to administer its Department of Transportation Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant — SMART Counties in Kansas.



HOUSING

The NCRPC continued to collaborate with local, regional and state stakeholders on housing challenges and solutions in the region. Key highlights for the year include:

- Administered a **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Rehabilitation project**.
- Provided a **variety of inspection services** for governmental entities and private property owners.
- **Hosted two lead safe work practice trainings** for 13 contractors as part of a larger effort to address a contractor shortage.
- Continued to administer the NCRPC Housing Initiative, which is a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation. In the first year, funding made it possible to complete **70 rehabilitation projects and 57 demolitions across six counties**. In the second year, there were **87 rehabilitations and 55 demolitions**. The third year launched in six additional counties in May and is currently ongoing.
- Concluded the Clay County and Marshall County Home Ownership Programs, which attracted new residents and assisted in the purchase of homes in the region. Final statistics will be coming in the near future. The NCRPC continues to work through its two housing nonprofits to expand housing opportunities in all counties it serves.



A before and after example of a housing rehabilitation project. Housing projects continued this year in the City of Holyrood and extended into a larger area through the NCRPC Housing Initiative, administered through a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.



The NCRPC Business Finance Program assisted with a project involving Walt's Four Seasons Campground & Country Store LLC, located east of Abilene, Kansas. (Courtesy Photo)

BUSINESS FINANCE

The NCRPC Business Finance Program assisted 9 projects aimed at starting, improving, expanding, or purchasing businesses. These projects, totaling **\$2.8 million**, were assisted with direct loans and/or in obtaining financing through loan packaging services. They are expected to **retain 20 jobs and create 10** in our core 12-county service area.

The NCRPC administers an Economic Development Administration (EDA) CARES Act-funded revolving loan fund (RLF) in its core 12-county service area. The program has disbursed \$1,301,000 in loan capital to 19 businesses in the region, including 5 manufacturers, 4 retailers and 10 service-type

businesses. Other project funding sources have contributed an additional \$3.8 million dollars. The businesses that were assisted **have retained 80 jobs and created 12**. Some regional impacts of the RLF program include 12% to start-ups, 24% to women-owned businesses, and 4% to minority-owned businesses.



WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE

The NCRPC administers the Weatherization Assistance Program for **41 Kansas counties**, helping low-income households improve energy efficiency, reduce energy costs, and ensure health and safety. Since January 1, 2024, we have serviced **73 homes, benefiting around 183 people**.





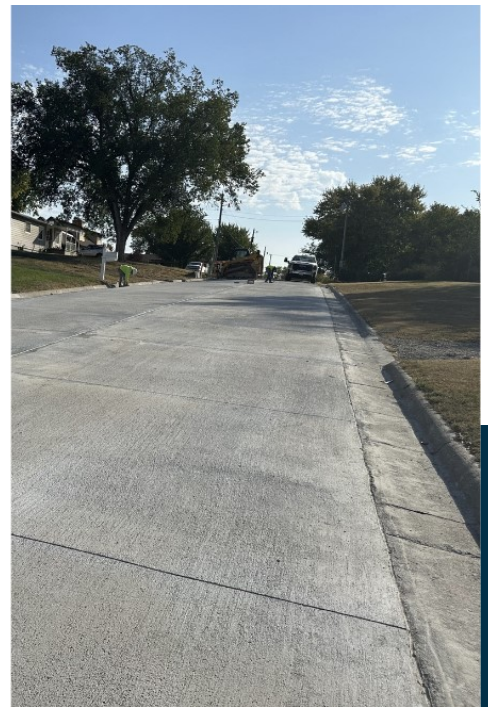
HOMELAND SECURITY PROGRAM FISCAL AGENT

The NCRPC supports safe and secure communities by serving as fiscal agent for **six Regional Homeland Security Councils in Kansas**. Project investments address the planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs to help build local and regional response capabilities and encourage citizen safety and preparedness.



NCKCN

NCKCN (a NCRPC affiliate) helps keep rural households, businesses, and communities connected. For more than 25 years, NCKCN has partnered with Cunningham Communications based in Glen Elder, Kansas, to deliver quality Internet access and services to thousands of customers across North Central Kansas. In 2015, NCKCN and Cunningham Communications began setting up NCK-WiFi hotspots across the region and currently have 22 active hotspots throughout 9 communities.



Projects from left to right: City of Miltonvale lagoon, City of Mahaska water project, City of Mankato sewer lines.

THANK YOU

We thank our members and the many who volunteer their time with the NCRPC and NCKCN serving on boards and committees. We look forward to continuing our work together in 2025.

North Central Regional Planning Commission

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