



2019 Community Contributions

Diann is working with Sandy Renner from the Center for Rural Affairs on an Entrepreneurial Conference to be held in Pender. It was supposed to be this Spring but scheduling has become an issue so it was moved to October. This will be a great opportunity for potential new business owners to get some valuable data in a location close to home.

- Updated: Diann and the Board completed working with the Hanna Keelan Staff to complete a new Housing Study and Comp Plan for the Village of Pender. All data was completed and reviewed in June. These studies will provide a roadmap for the future of our Community. A NIFA grant was utilized for partial payment for the Housing Study – grant data was finalized and reimbursement should be submitted to the Village in the coming weeks.
- Updated: The Pender business map has been completely redone with area businesses listed with a legend on the back page. This will be provided to businesses / organizations / travelers / etc. to promote our local businesses. The creation/updating of this data was paid for by a grant from Thrivent.

Diann spent a large amount of time in February preparing for and completing Business Retention and Expansion surveys. We had two representatives from DED and Mandy Hansen from NMPP come to town to assist. We did 21 business visits with ten of the companies being new to this process. We also did a tour of Palace Lofts and Uptown Pix. Final reports will be reviewed to determine areas that need attention in our community.

Diann continues to work with the Thurston County Tourism Committee on grant applications; grant reimbursements; and existing grants. If your organization is planning an event in Thurston County and you would like grant assistance for the promotion of the event or to enhance a local tourism destination – contact Diann to receive a grant application.

Quarter 2 – New:

The Downtown Revitalization Grant Phase one is complete. I compiled the grant guidelines with the projects we hope to complete in Phase two and had forwarded them to NENED and to the DTR Committee in April for review. Our Committee met in May and we worked through the process of what we want to include in the application; we tweaked the guidelines; and discussed needed data for the application. I visited with all active Main Street businesses throughout June. We have many businesses that would like to utilize the DTR Façade improvement grant dollars if awarded. I will be creating a budget for the grant in July and working with Mandy at NENED to prepare the application. I am on the Village Council agenda for July to discuss matching funds needed for the beautification piece of the grant. The removal of the bump outs on Main Street was part of this grant process.

Diann is working with Judy Joy of NENED and Bill Newton on conversion of the Rehab dollars to Down Payment Assistance. We have come to an agreement of what the guidelines should offer. Judy has submitted these to DED for approval. If these are approved without exception these will be sent to the Village of Pender for approval. Once this occurs the program details will be made

available for local residents to apply for and utilize the money for residential down payment assistance in our Community.

Diann continues to work on the process of getting our Community Re-Certified as a Leadership Certified Community. This is an accomplishment for Pender that allows for additional grant points once your community has this designation.

Quarter 3 – New:

The Downtown Revitalization Grant Phase two was submitted on September 6, 2019. We should have results in January. I worked with the Village for Code enforcement data and Bill regarding CRA data. I submitted all the pictures and data requested for several years of activities. We received/included 17 letters of support; the banking letters for potential lenders; the CRA required documentation; the Village summaries; links and documents to all of the current comp plan / housing plan and zoning regulations. Everything was compiled and submitted, this was a significant part of my quarterly time spent; however if awarded its \$400,000 in grant funds.

I presented the DTR data to the Village Council in July. They are on board with matching the \$100,000 sector of the DTR beautification project. Matching dollars would be \$25,000.

The TCLEC Arboretum grant will be completed this year. We had a site visit in July. Rachel was very impressed with our pollinator garden. She took pictures that were placed on their website – I shared on Facebook. Replaced plants have been planted; we are adding Phase two which will include some trees being planted on the East side of the land. I have compiled all financial data to be sure that we are under the grant expenditures limit and have discussed matching labor logs continue to be completed by volunteers. Phase two was completed in early August and we have so much money left, another phase was added to do shrubs and trees. These should be coming in early September, Shelly Perez is organizing the planting so I believe it will be done by inmates. I am compiling bills so that the final reimbursement can be made and the grant closed.

Quarter 4 - New:

Diann continues to work with the Thurston County Tourism Committee on grant applications; grant reimbursements; and existing grants. We have dollars left for Tourism Improvements – if there are areas in the County that need to be improved to promote tourism, please contact Diann for an application. In November we added Candice Gardea to the Tourism Committee as a replacement for Ellen Kitzmann from Blue Ox.

The Down Town Revitalization grant was awarded for \$445,000! Jason did a great story about the award in the Pender Times. Mandy with NENED is working on the environmental review. Bill and Holly have signed the contract and returned all data to NENED to move forward with the grant acceptance.

I assisted Sandra Renner from Center for Rural Affairs in hosting the Building Better Communities through Food & Art Conference hosted in Pender October 10th. I did a tour of eligible business space on Main Street including four sites:

- Pender Grain 4th & Main – Empty Building
- JoAnne VonSeggern – Front space
- Maryott McHirron – West side
- Lorensen Lumber – Building south of 5th Quarter.

I had five ladies interested in seeing the buildings, unfortunately none were local – but there is always much interest in our Community and how we have accomplished as much as we have through the past few years. The Conference hosted nearly 50 attendees and many speakers from around Nebraska and beyond.

I continue to work with the Senior Center on ideas for handicap accessibility for the center to utilize some of the funds we have sitting in the previous REHAB fund. Again, these funds need to be allocated before June 2020 or they are defunded and sent back to the State to be reallocated from the general fund budget. We received a quote in late December which has been forwarded to NENED. I am waiting to hear from Mandy on what the next step would be towards the reallocation.