



2020 Community Contributions

The Down Town Revitalization grant was awarded for \$445,000! Jason did a great story about the award in The Pender Times. Diann worked with NENED on revamping the Guidelines we had submitted to DED. They had sent them back with several concerns, we worked through these and updated with data that would meet DED requested specifications and resubmitted. These were approved in late January.

March 5th was the DTR Business Owner meeting to provide data to Main Street business owners regarding the façade improvement program. Data is continually provided to Main Street businesses to promote this program. The first round of applications is due to the Village office by April 17, 2020.

The Pender/Thurston website has been completely revamped. We have updated this to be more targeted for the Economic Development spectrum with links going to other area pages. Please check it out!

The TCLEC Arboretum grant is completed. Rachel had several requests for additional data that were supplied in December. The final reimbursement was set to be mailed in early January – the grant is officially closed. The check was received in early February. This award was for \$24,015 with just over \$16,000 being utilized. No cash was required for match as we exceeded match requirements with sweat equity!

Diann is working with Justin at the Center for Rural Affairs. They have a USDA grant that is meant to assist small businesses and would like to do another seminar in the fall in Pender, similar to the one we did in October. We are working on new topics; reaching the businesses; and potential dates.

The Leadership Certified City application was submitted on March 26, 2020. This was a major project that took quite a lot of time during this quarter. This Certification gives us extra points with DED grants. With the current world issues I have no idea when we will hear back on whether or not we were re-certified.

Diann continues 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. I am working with Mandy on a timeline for the work and release of funds. We worked on the procurement policy for the Village and have determined we need to follow the State guidelines. I have contacted several other contractors and am waiting on quotes from them to be reviewed by NENED. We need to have a public meeting to release the funds and then we can move forward with the renovations.

The DTR Application deadline for round one applications was extended to April 24th at 4:00pm. We had eleven businesses apply for building renovations. The DTR Committee met on Tuesday April 28th and conferenced with NENED via telephone to review the applications. We should see an estimated \$240,000 spent on the Main Street buildings with roughly \$162,000 coming from the DTR grant. This is only round one. Each of these businesses are now working on DUNS and SAM registration; then will have an environmental review done of their building prior to construction beginning.

Thurston County Tourism Committee has money available for tourism promotion and tourism improvement grants. Diann continues to work with the Committee; the Board; and area groups on these grants; availability; and funding.

Currently Welcome Packets are available at the School; the City Office and the Community Center. With the new website we have decided to do a digital Welcome Packet. Jason from Sturek Media and Diann are working on this project currently.

The procurement for Engineering was sent out for the lighting portion of the DTR. The deadline for response was May 8th. **Note – this was necessary because the Village engineering firm has not been with the Village for the minimum three years. Therefore, it was sent to bid. Two responses were received and later scored by the DTR Committee. Olsson was awarded the project at the June Board meeting.

Pender Economic Development owns a five-acre parcel of land west of the Nitzschke Ball Fields. We have requested that the City annex this parcel to allow for further housing expansion.

Phase Two of the Downtown Revitalization grant had six applicants that were approved for nearly \$73,000 in early June. If all work is completed and all award money is spent, we will have about \$65,000 available in round three. Our goal is to wait until this fall to do round three once we get work started on several of these buildings to hopefully inspire additional businesses.

The Thurston County Tourism Committee approved three grant applications during the third quarter of 2020, all three for Pender projects. Canoe access was improved by dirt work done by Cooney's and new signs being placed, Pender Grain will house five murals on their building along Highway 9, and Winter Snowflake decorations are being purchased to improve/beautify Main Street during the winter season.

In September, the Leadership Certified City Award was given to the Village of Pender. This is a significant designation only awarded to 29 communities in Nebraska. The program provides a solid framework for communities to identify capacity, stimulate focused planning, and utilize technology to build strong foundations and to meet the challenges of the future.

PCD is working on additional housing options to the West. We have proposed a new redevelopment area and are researching the opportunity of utilizing TIF and other programs to facilitate growth in this area.

The Senior Center project is complete. I worked with Jan at NENED and Jim Rutar to try to expend all of the money in the Rehab account. According to Jan as long as the changes are to the asset and non-movable, we can do anything. Jim worked on additional change orders so the list of things to be completed include:

- Handicap accessibility with a new ramp and handrails
- New outside doors – wheelchair accessible
- Removal of the outside ramp and outside stairs – replace with new steps
- Repair of foundation from removing outside ramp and steps
- Repair/sheet rock of east wall from deterioration caused by ramp installation
- Bathroom renovations to be handicap accessible
- Doorways inside the facility to be wheelchair accessible
- New windows & blinds
- Repair of the basement ceiling – due to destruction from ramp installation
- Repair floor joist – needed for bathroom renovations
- New carpet
- Paint

Northeast Nebraska Development District completed a blight study on another section of Pender. This redevelopment area number two will allow that area to utilize Tax Increment Financing for new projects in the Community.

Diann completed the Pender Thurston Community Education Foundation Fund grant and submitted it in December for \$5,000 to assist with the payment of the blight study and wages for extended hours for Diann for grant writing. We have not heard back from the committee yet on their decision of fundability.

Diann worked with Andrea at NENEDD on the NIFA application. We have applied for \$250,000 as matching funds for the Rural Workforce Housing Grant offered by DED. All data was compiled and submitted to NIFA on December 28, 2020. These matching funds if awarded will be leveraged in the Department of Economic Development Workforce Housing Grant due in late January.