



Mead: Sustainable principles important to economic growth

Sustainable, beneficial development and "green" jobs as part of economic growth became the foci of the third Nebraska Sustainability Leadership Workshop in Mead on December 11 and 12.

Representatives from regional city councils, schools, and other organizations engaged in discussion about the importance of sustainable principles to the growth and economic development of rural Nebraska communities.

Among specific topics discussed were:

- Waste management issues
- Declining population
- Community growth and economic development
- Entrepreneurship and youth leadership, particularly regarding "green jobs"
- Land use planning, zoning, tools and guidelines for initiatives
- Conflict assessment
- Consistency, or lack thereof, of bureaucratic requirements and public policy

One of the problems addressed in break-out groups was, "How can our community become the most aggressive provider of green jobs?" They determined that



Managing growth sustainably was a topic at the Mead workshop

establishing a task force or steering committee would be the first necessary step, and went on to determine that providing incentives for education and job-training as well as locally-owned green businesses would be important. Assessments of ROI strategies, identifying appropriate technologies for the local market, as well as assessing existing educational programs, and creating an incubator/ innovation center are key. The long-term goals were determined to be becoming a catalyst for regulatory compliance, as well as leading the way to policy revision, establishing a research and development mechanism, and building new markets.

Read more: www.nslw.org/mead.html



Nebraska Energy Plan Seeks Public's Comments

Nebraskans are encouraged to comment and offer recommendations on this interim Energy Plan which will be used to chart Nebraska's energy future. During January, citizen comments on the interim plan will be used to create a 2009 Nebraska Energy Plan. Deadline for comments on this interim Nebraska Energy Plan is January 23, 2009, 5 pm. The final plan will identify regulatory, statutory, administrative and collaborative activities to implement the new Nebraska Energy Plan.

<http://www.neo.ne.gov/comments2/index.php>

NSLW consultants are available for your group

The experts and facilitators of the NSLW are available for custom-designed half-day or full-day programs. Whether you're interested in learning more about LEED certification, energy efficiency, community food systems, wastewater engineering, or water quality, we can help. If you are interested in setting up a custom program, please call Katie Torpy at 402-933-0080, or W. Cecil Steward at 402.472.0087 to set up a custom program for your group.

NSLW Network is growing

The establishment of a network of civic, county, and sustainability leaders is one of the major aims of the NSLW. Name by name and workshop by workshop, our network is growing. The idea is to give you access to people across the state who can share ideas and information with you, exchange ideas about challenges and solutions, and more. Visit our website to learn more: www.nslw.org/network.html.

Regional cooperation, recruiting young workforce topics in Kearney

Workforce development, both with regard to supporting existing local businesses in the area as well as attracting new businesses and young professionals to the region, was a hot topic at the NSLW workshop in Kearney on January 8 & 9. Communities in the area are searching for ways to match existing workforce to job opportunities, and attracting and retaining a talented young workforce is considered a key in enhancing economic growth in these towns.



Ways of recruiting and retaining younger workers were addressed in Kearney

Key hurdles to building a strong, young workforce and good job opportunities were determined to be a need for more regional cooperation, costly infrastructure needs for any increases in population and industry, and identifying collaborators.

Among possible approaches to

solving these issues are enhanced technological development, which younger workers both want and need, and development of an entrepreneurial/incubator program on a county-wide basis.

"A recurring theme was the need for regional cooperation among communities to make sure the right

workers are living and working close to employment opportunities," said facilitator Jay Leighter. "Additional amenities needed to attract this demographic would include communication technology including better cellular and wifi service."

More on our website:

www.nslw.org/kearney.html

Upcoming Workshops: January 29-30 in Grand Island, February 12-13 in Columbus, and February 26-27 in O'Neill. Call Katie Torpy at 402-933-0080 to sign up.