

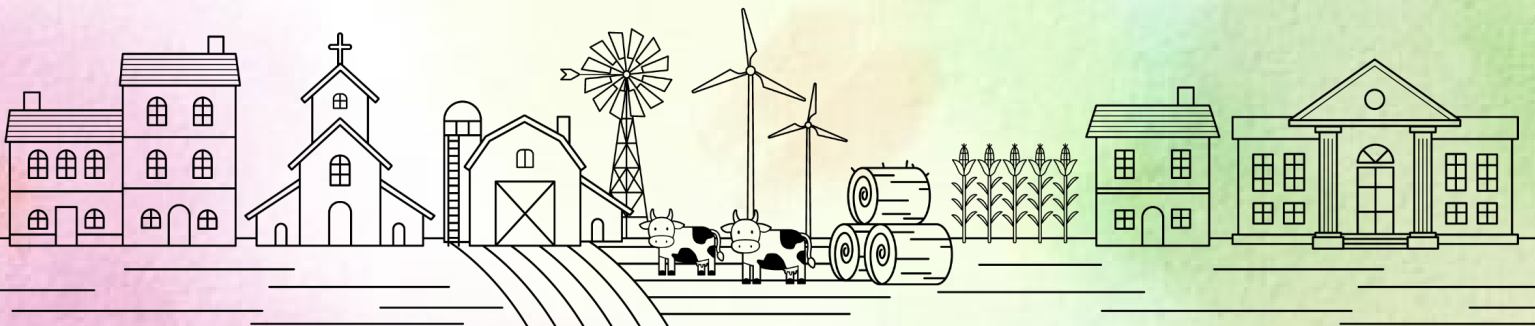


# 2023 - 2024 Annual Report

## Central Nebraska Economic Development District

in partnership with:

## Central Nebraska Housing and Economic Developers, Inc.



# Future Projects? Let Us Help!

## MEET THE TEAM!

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## CONNECT WITH US!

Website:

[www.cnedd.org](http://www.cnedd.org)

Facebook:

Central Nebraska Economic  
Development District

## Letter from the Chairs

The 2023-2024 year has been a busy one for Central Nebraska Economic Development District staff, filled with services and projects that address broadband, tourism, housing and community needs.

Six Regions, One Nebraska; a joint collaboration between the Governor's Office, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and Nebraska State Chamber kept the staff busy attending meetings and developing projects in 3 of the 6 regions. CNEDD was recently awarded \$200,000 to consolidate housing studies and available programs into a bilingual website for potential developers and community officials.

We thank you for your trust and partnership in ensuring that Central Nebraska is a great place to live.

**Ed Brown, CNEDD Chairperson**  
**John Madsen, CNHED Chairperson**

## The Director's Corner

I was named the Executive Director on December 1, 2023. The past year has been a whirlwind of activity and learning. I recognize the CNEDD legacy that came before me. I work every day to be worthy of walking in Judy's shoes. One day I will get there.

Be assured that I am committed to our member communities and this region. I love living where I do. I love what I do to help communities thrive. Thank you for your lasting support, and together we will continue to make this region a great place to live, work, and play.



**Carla Kimball, CNEDD Executive Director**

# Community and Tourism Growth

## *Anselmo Community Center -*



The Village of Anselmo was awarded a **\$442,330 public works facilities grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development** to rehabilitate and expand their community center, which is also known as the Anselmo Village Library. The library serves as the community's gathering and meeting place, hosting numerous events including funerals, community potlucks, and private parties.

Recently, the building has been unable to satisfy the needs of the community, causing events to move locations, even to outside village limits.

Construction activities began in November of 2023, with the facility now open to the public. The visitors seating area presently offers the following new features: **handicap-accessible bathrooms, handicap-accessible entrances, and additional space for a kitchen.** By making these improvements, the library will be able to attract more visitors and host larger events.

## *Street Improvements in Ainsworth and Bartlett -*

Streets serve as the lifeblood in a community. They connect businesses, citizens, tourists, and so much more. They also wear out, and when they do, everything becomes less cohesive. No one wants to drive on a worn-out road, vehicles wear out faster, and utilizing the streets becomes more dangerous for pedestrians. Updating becomes necessary, but also very expensive, especially in our rural communities. **This year, two street projects were able to be completed. One in Ainsworth (Brown County) and one in Bartlett (Wheeler County).**

**The City of Ainsworth was awarded \$433,000 in Community Development Block Grant Public Works (CDBG-PW) funding to make street improvements in a residential area of the City.** Construction on the street began in June 2024, after the completion of a water/sewer project in that section, which is being competed as part of a larger project within the City.

**The Village of Bartlett was awarded \$420,279 in CDBG-PW funding to improve their main Village street,** which not only benefits a residential area, but also greatly improves traffic and pedestrian safety for Wheeler County Public Schools, which is the only school in Wheeler County.



# Housing Development

## Bassett Rental Duplex -



Following a housing study, Bassett discovered the extent of their housing shortages. These limit an individual's choice of where to live and the ability to seek and sustain employment. The workforce is directly affected by the quality and cost of housing. For individuals, quality, affordable housing is the basis for economic stability and self-sufficiency. For communities, schools, and businesses, it is a critical part of any sustainable and successful economic development strategy.

Within that mindset, Bassett recently completed construction of a new rental duplex. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) and CNEDD partnered with the City of Bassett to obtain a **\$356,490 grant from the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF)**. Construction of the new rental duplex (both of which are three-bedroom, two-bathroom, with a single-car garage) was completed in June of 2024. **The duplex is for income-qualified individuals and families.**



## Custer County -

Utilizing **Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Funds, Custer County Economic Development Corporation** was awarded \$524,139 to build three single-family homes to sell to income-qualified individuals or families. The target was to build three homes, with sale proceeds to go towards future home construction within the County, with the third, and final, home being finished in 2023. A celebration was held in December of 2023 with **K.C. Belitz**,

Director of Nebraska Department of Economic Development, **representatives for Senator Deb Fischer, Senator Pete Ricketts, and Congress Adrian Smith**, along with numerous members of each of the communities. A new family was able to celebrate Christmas in their new home, as they all sold relatively quickly.



Custer County is also repurposing their current Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan Fund program into the existing CDBG Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program. The existing program allows the rehabilitation of income-qualified, owner-occupied homes within the municipal boundaries of communities within Custer County. All CDBG funds primarily benefit low-to-moderate income people. Approximately eight households will be served through this revolving loan fund at one time.

# Special Projects

## Daycare Around the District -



**Two new daycares** opened in the District, one in **Burwell** (Garfield County) and one in **Loup City** (Sherman County). In Burwell, Garfield County Supervisors used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to construct the new daycare, which is **licensed to serve 75 children**, but with limited staff, they currently can only serve 50. Loup City used grant funding to renovate a building in the community and their daycare is **licensed to serve 30 children**.

Funding for pre-schools and daycares are limited but still greatly needed throughout the Region. CNEDD continues to provide any funding opportunities available for these projects.

## Niobrara Valley Vineyard -

On July 19, **Niobrara Valley Vineyards (NVV)** celebrated the completion of their exciting project, including an **ADA accessible campsite, walking paths, restrooms**, as well as the **creation of two full-time jobs for low-to-moderate income employees**, which are all part of the **\$385,039 CDBG tourism grant**, with the **total project cost at \$736,089**.

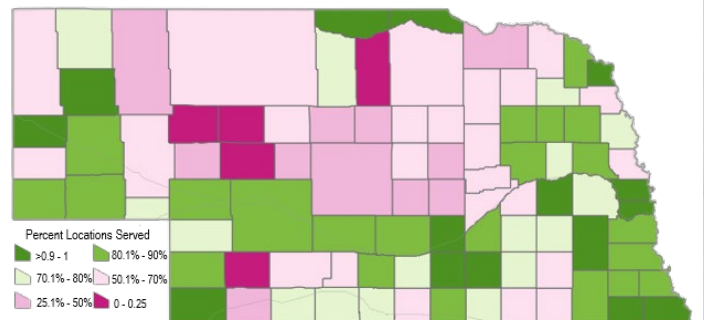


Among the numerous supporters and celebrators from across the state were: **Vaughan Wehr** - representing Sen. Deb Fischer, **Valerio Jansante** - representing Congressman Smith, and Department of Economic Development **Director K.C. Belitz**.

Since 2016, NVV has received awards from the **Mid-American, Indy International, and International Cold Climate wine competitions**. That recognition, and the Nollette's home-grown hospitality, draw more than 5,000 visitors every year. You can find their wine in the Nebraska made wine sections, wherever local wine is sold. **Be sure to visit the winery's new tasting room and event center!**

## Broadband and CNEDD -

CNEDD, partnering with the other development districts, has focused strongly on *improving broadband outreach throughout our District and across the State*. Following the successful collection of broadband speed tests, the development districts helped create the **Nebraska Digital Equity Plan**, through their own **Regional Plans**, made from collaborative committees of individuals from around the Districts. CNEDD also compiled **an asset inventory**, found in our **Digital Equity Plan**. Seven Districts applied for funding to **deliver ACP and similar program outreach** throughout our communities; CNEDD was able to visit three communities before the program was shut down in January 2024. Finally, CNEDD and three other Districts applied for USDA funds to **provide technical assistance for broadband expansion to our rural counties**. The funding has been awarded, and activities are planned for 2024-2025.





# Grant Work This Year

## Awarded / In Progress / Closing Out



- Ainsworth** – \$433,000 – *Street Improvements* – CDBG
- Ainsworth** – \$158,000 – *Street Lights* – CDBG-Repurposed
- Anselmo** – \$401,597 – *Community Center Improvements* – CDBG
- Ansley** – \$39,000 – *Planning* – CDBG
- Arnold** – \$37,500 – *Planning* – CDBG
- Bartlett** – \$420,279 – *Street Improvements* – CDBG
- Bassett** – \$356,490 – *New Rental Duplex* – NAHTF
- Bassett** – \$45,000 – *Bathroom Remodel* – CDBG-Repurposed
- Brown County** – \$871,336 – *Hospital Rehab/Equipment* – USDA-ERHP
- Burwell** – \$516,520 – *New Housing Construction* – NAHTF
- Burwell** – \$33,000 – *Planning* – CDBG
- Cherry County** – \$385,039 – *Tourism* – CDBG
- CNEDD** – \$200,000 – *6R1N Housing* – RDI
- CNHED Inc** – \$599,500 – *Homebuyer Assistance* – NAHTF
- CNHED Inc** – \$599,500 – *Homeowner Rehabilitation* – NAHTF
- Custer County** – \$216,000 – *Homeowner Rehabilitation* – CDBG-Repurposed
- Ewing** – \$431,640 – *Rental Duplex* – NAHTF
- Sargent** – \$103,000 – *Public Works* – CDBG-Repurposed
- Scotia** – \$480,000 – *Street Improvements* – CDBG
- Spalding** – \$25,000 – *New Ambulance* – Farm Credit Services
- Stuart** – \$370,000 – *Public Works* – CDBG-Repurposed
- Stuart Village Manor** – \$789,500 – *New Rental Duplex Construction* – NAHTF
- Valentine** – \$500,000 – *New Housing Construction* – NAHTF
- Valentine** – \$36,000 – *Public Works* – CDBG-Repurposed
- Wolbach** – \$433,000 – *Public Recreation Improvements* – CDBG

## Awaiting Approval

- Long Pine** – \$53,000 – *Planning* – CDBG
- Stuart** – \$145,183 – *Electrical Metering System* – NDEE

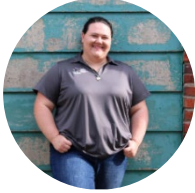
## Funding Sources

- CDBG** = Community Development Block Grant
- NAHTF** = Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- NDEE** = Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy
- RDI** = Regional Development Initiative
- USDA** = USDA Rural Development
- USDA-ERHP** = USDA Emergency Rural Health Program





Nebraskans are known for helping their neighbors, and our rural communities truly embrace that. CNEDD's purpose is to help our neighbors and communities thrive. - **Tish Tielke**



We at CNEDD are on your team because no one person can do it all themselves. There is so much more to do, and when we work together, anything is possible. We are here to help you! - **Deanna Tomjack**



As a new year dawns, I am, again, thankful to be a part of the CNEDD team. Thank you to each of our existing members for collaborating with us, and a warm partnership invitation goes out to anyone curious about how we can help serve your community and its people! - **LaNae Maxson**



I'm excited to work within CNEDD helping the unserved and underserved communities in our district with their needs. Being a member of this great team of people motivated to get things done for everyone in our district will be a rewarding experience. - **Amy Tharp**



I am so excited to join the CNEDD Team! Having grown up in a small town, I understand how smaller communities are often overlooked and undervalued. I am looking forward to assisting communities in attaining their unique visions of growth and strength, thus improving the quality of life for this and future generations. - **Chyrstal Curtis**

## Outlook for 2025

The coming year looks to be one of growth, expansion, and improvement throughout CNEDD. Our goals for this year include the following services/needs:

- **Regional Development Initiative (RDI)** – Governor Pillen's economic initiative (6 Regions, 1 Nebraska - 6R1N) encourages cooperation, instead of competition, among neighboring communities. The regions were determined by the community college districts with CNEDD covering, and participating in, three regions: Central, Mid-Plains, and Northeast. Each region successfully supported one application for an award of \$200,000.
- **Technical Assistance and Digital Equity** – Expansion of quality broadband services in our region is vital to address business, education, and healthcare needs.
- **Community Improvement Grants (Continued)** – Funding for community infrastructure improvements, housing development, planning, and tourism is available every year.

If you would like to learn more about our goals for the coming year, and would like to partner with us, just let us know. **We are here to help you!!**

# CNEDD Members

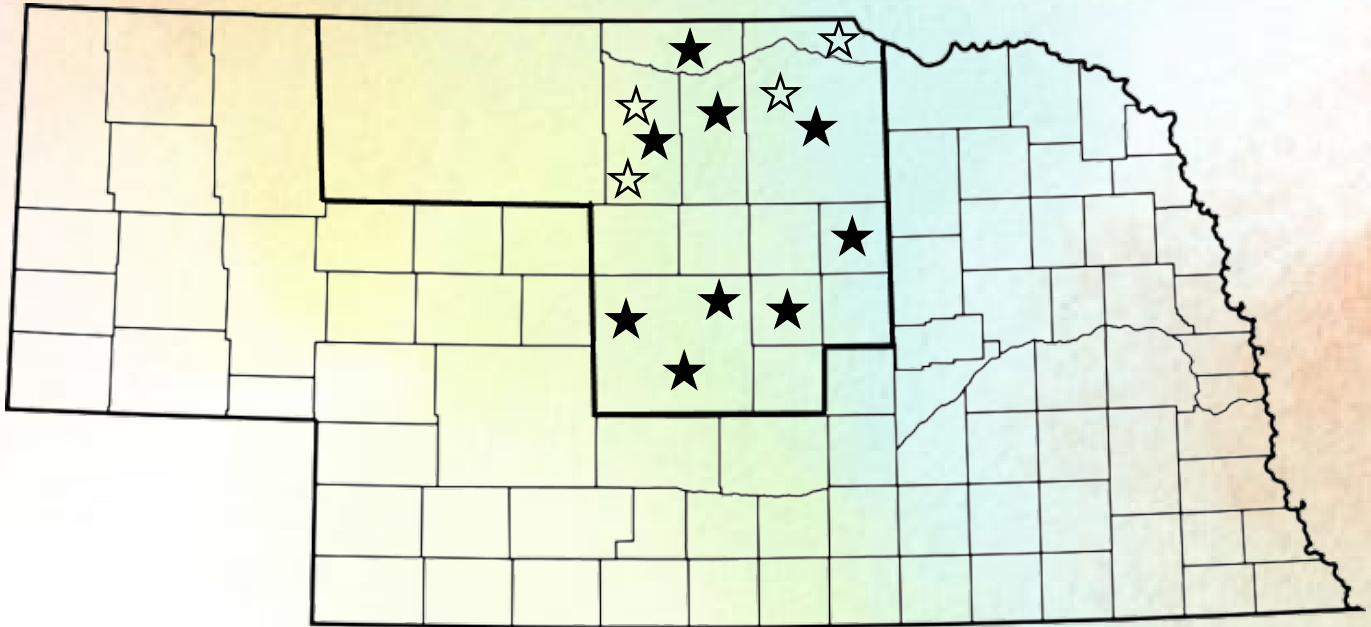
## Counties:

Blaine · Boyd · Brown · Cherry · Custer · Garfield · Keya Paha · Rock · Wheeler

## Communities:

Ainsworth	Bartlett	Cody	Litchfield	O'Neill	Spencer
Anselmo	Bassett	Comstock	Long Pine	Ord	Springview
Ansley	Broken Bow	Ericson	Loup City	Page	Stuart
Arcadia	Burwell	Ewing	Lynch	Sargent	Taylor
Arnold	Butte	Greeley	Mason City	Scotia	Valentine
Ashton	Callaway	Johnstown	North Loup	Spalding	Wolbach
Atkinson					Wood Lake

To become a member of the Central Nebraska Economic Development District –  
Call (402) 394-1755 or visit our website at [www.cnedd.org](http://www.cnedd.org).



## CNEDD Board Members:



Ed Brown (Long Pine)

Alvin Johnson (Arcadia)

Anne Gibbons (Custer Co.)

Kristy Beard (Bassett)

Cheye Young (Atkinson)

Cheryl Carson (Arnold)

Melissa Wenger (Springview)

Kellee Rasmussen (Wheeler Co.)

Deborah Ritz (Comstock)



## CNEED Board Members:



Craig Brewster (Butte)

John Madsen (Stuart)

Ed Brown (Long Pine)

Kristin Olson (Ainsworth)