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WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST

Date: 3/31/16

Weekly Agenda Date: 4/5/16

DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN: David Gleiser – Rural Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: Discussion of Proposed Issue Papers for the Annual Siouxland Chamber of Commerce Washington D.C. Conference

ACTION REQUIRED:

Approve Ordinance

Approve Resolution

Approve Motion

Give Direction

Other: Informational

Attachments

WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on Proposed Issue Papers for the Annual Siouxland Chamber of Commerce Washington D.C. Conference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Woodbury County Department Directors were asked to develop position papers on issues they would like the County's delegation to discuss with Federal officials while in D.C. The following issues were identified:

- USDA RBDG Grant Application
- USDA REDLG Grant Applications
- USDA REDLG Program
- FEMA Flood Plain Map Revisions
- Medicaid for Incarcerated Youth
- Renewable Fuel Standard

BACKGROUND: Woodbury County intends to meet with Federal officials while in Washington D.C. during the Annual Siouxland Chamber of Commerce Conference. In previous years the County has sent representatives to lobby on issues pertinent to Woodbury County.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: 0

RECOMMENDATION: Acknowledge the update and discuss the issues.

ACTION REQUIRED: Give direction by consensus on which issues the County delegation will be bringing to D.C.

2016 USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Application

ISSUE

Woodbury County is applying for the 2016 USDA Rural Business Development Grant. The application deadline for funding offered through USDA Rural Development's 2016 Rural Business Development Grant program to support targeted technical assistance and training to develop or expand small and emerging private businesses in rural communities or areas is Wednesday, June 1st. Last year six projects supporting rural Iowa received funding through this nationally competitive program. Entities and organizations including communities, state agencies, nonprofit corporations, rural cooperatives, higher learning institutions, rural cooperatives and federally recognized tribes are eligible to apply for program funding.

REQUEST

We respectfully request the support of our application for the Rural Business Development Grant.

BACKGROUND

Grant funds may be used for such activities as project planning, business counseling/training, technical assistance, market research, feasibility studies, professional and technical reports or product/service improvements. They may also be used to help acquire or develop land, construct or renovate buildings, establish revolving loans funds, community economic development planning, establish rural business incubators and leadership and entrepreneur training.

Applications will be evaluated on such criteria as evidence showing job creation to occur with local businesses, economic need in the area to be served, and consistency with local economic development priorities.

The project we're requesting funding for seeks to provide rural cities in Woodbury County with long-range comprehensive plans. Currently, 11 of our 14 rural cities do not have a comprehensive plan. These plans will create a framework for the development of future public policy, particularly in the area of future land use, infrastructure, and economic development. Cumulatively, these plans will serve as an asset map for Woodbury County which will be used for strategic planning as it relates to economic development opportunities.

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2016 USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Applications

ISSUE

Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is submitting 2 applications for the 2016 USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) funding opportunity. Both applications are for the expansion of the Char-Mac Assisted Living Facility in Lawton, Iowa, to provide services for our ever growing elderly population. This project proposes to build 31 memory care units and create 14.75 full-time equivalent jobs for the local community. The projected cost of this expansion project is approximately \$4.3 Million.

Woodbury County REC will submit 2 requests for funding from the REDLG program:

- \$300,000 request to enhance their local Community/Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF); and
- \$1 Million request for a "Pass-Through" loan.

REQUEST

We respectfully request the support of Woodbury County REC's REDLG applications (\$300,000 RLF, and \$1 Million Pass-Through Loan).

BACKGROUND

The REDLG program is very important for rural Woodbury County, Iowa. In 2015, Woodbury County REC applied for and won its first REDLG grant (\$158,000) to establish a local Community/Economic Development RLF. This RLF is a vital local funding source with a goal of providing low interest loans to assist with local economic and community development projects. Their priorities include job creation and retention, diversification of the economy, improving the education and skills of the rural workforce, and upgrading the public infrastructure to improve the health, safety, and/or medical care of rural residents.

With their first REDLG grant of \$158,000 Woodbury County REC provided a local match of \$32,000 and loaned all of the funds to the City of Bronson to build a new City Hall and Community Center. Bronson is a small rural town in Woodbury County with 300 residents. Bronson's old City Hall was a former grain storage building the size of a single car garage and could only sit 6-8 people comfortably. The new facility can now hold meetings for up to 50 people and hold offices for the City, Township Boards, as well as Fire & Rescue organizations, and is fully equipped with new audio and video equipment.

With their current request of \$300,000 Woodbury REC will provide a local match of \$60,000 and loan all of the funds to Char-Mac through its local Community/Economic Development RLF, just as they did with Bronson. Their separate request for \$1 Million will be "passed through" Woodbury REC and loaned to Char-Mac for its \$4.3 Million expansion project.

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USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program

ISSUE

For years, electric and telephone cooperatives have been partnering with rural communities and local economic developers to invest in community projects through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program, more commonly referred to as REDLG.

Through the REDLG program, electric and telephone cooperatives can secure zero-interest loans or receive grants to create revolving loan funds which allow cooperatives to make loans to businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. In the past several years, the number of projects submitted to the program have exceeded the amount of funds made available through the normal appropriations process. In addition, the REDLG program is supported by a source of funding available through our cooperative lenders, called the Guaranteed Underwriter Program or GUPs funding. The GUP provides a reliable source of low-cost capital to help cooperative lenders maintain a balanced portfolio and strengthen the ability to raise additional funds in private capital markets. Most recently, there has been an increase in the demand on the GUP program, so an increase is warranted.

REQUEST

We respectfully request support of efforts to increase the amount of funding authorized by Congress for the REDLG program and associated GUPs funding.

BACKGROUND

The REDLG program is very important for rural Woodbury County, Iowa. In 2015, Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) applied for and won a REDLG grant (\$158,000) to establish a Community/Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The funds main purpose is to improve the quality of life in rural areas by contributing to long-term improvements in the local economy. With their initial award, Woodbury REC provide a local match of \$32,000 and loaned all of the funds to the City of Bronson to build a new City Hall and Community Center.

This RLF is a local funding source with a goal of providing low interest loans to assist with local economic and community development projects. Their priorities include job creation and retention, diversification of the economy, improving the education and skills of the rural workforce, and upgrading the public infrastructure to improve the health, safety, and/or medical care of rural residents. Currently, Woodbury County REC has 2 REDLG applications for funding requests of \$1.3 Million to help support a \$4.3 Million expansion of the Char-Mac Assisted Living Facility in Lawton, Iowa.

On March 22nd, 2016, the Woodbury County Rural Economic Development Department submitted letters of support to Iowa Congressman Steve King, and Iowa Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst on behalf of this issue (see attached).

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March 22nd, 2016

The Honorable Congressman Steve King
2210 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman King:

I am writing to voice my support for increased funding levels for two very important programs at the USDA Rural Utilities Services—the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG) and the Guaranteed Underwriter Program (GUP).

Through the REDLG program, electric and telephone cooperatives can secure zero-interest loans or receive grants to create revolving loan funds which allow the cooperatives to make loans to businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. This program fosters area economic growth, leverages substantial private investment and also augments the infrastructure of electric and telephone cooperatives.

The REDLG program is very important for rural Woodbury County, Iowa. Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative recently applied for and won a REDLG grant to establish a Community/Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The funds main purpose is to improve the quality of life in rural areas by contributing to long-term improvements in the local economy.

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Over the last several years, additional entities were authorized to utilize the REDLG program and demand for funds has significantly outpaced availability. Since recent funding levels for REDLG have been inadequate to meet the demand, I would like to request your support for REDLG program funding at the full amount of \$85 million recommended in this year's administration budget.

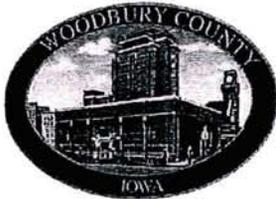
One very important source of funding for the REDLG program is the fees paid by cooperative lenders, through the GUP. The GUP provides a reliable source of low-cost capital to help cooperative lenders maintain a balanced portfolio to provide loans to rural cooperatives and strengthens the ability to raise additional funds in the private capital markets.

I am very appreciative of Congress setting a program level of \$750 million for GUP in the current year. Taking into account additional demands for the program, I respectfully request an increase in GUP to \$1 billion; this would require no additional funds be appropriated since this program is scored as a negative subsidy. An increased program level will ensure not only that cooperatives are able to continue investing in system improvements while keeping rates affordable in rural America, but also help sustain REDLG in the future.

I appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Gleiser".



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March 22nd, 2016

The Honorable Senator Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

I am writing to voice my support for increased funding levels for two very important programs at the USDA Rural Utilities Services—the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG) and the Guaranteed Underwriter Program (GUP).

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March 22nd, 2016

The Honorable Senator Joni Ernst
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Ernst:

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Gleiser".

FEMA Flood Plain Map Revisions

ISSUE

Woodbury County's current flood mapping resulted from a FEMA sponsored study over 2008-2011 timeframe resulting in mapping enacted in Sept. 2011. During the study period and thereafter more current and detailed mapping elevation data has been gathered by the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR).

In late 2010 Woodbury County hired Snyder and Associates resulting in separate Approximate Flood Plain Studies for the Browns Lake and Farmers/Garretson Ditch areas of the county. Those studies used the better IDNR data. Unfortunately even though the Snyder studies were provided before mapping enactment, FEMA would not accept the studies citing the facts FEMA's contracts for the hydrology study of our county had already been let. FEMA held their ground even after reconsideration efforts were made by our federal elected officials.

REQUEST

That FEMA reevaluate Woodbury County's floodplain mapping and/or accept our existing studies to allow a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMR) request. Those areas in question include portions or all of 8 floodplain map panels. The re-study would be valuable toward potentially offering certain county property owners relief from the 100 year flood plain designation resulting in the aforementioned benefits.

BACKGROUND

In 2014 Woodbury County engaged FEMA, IDNR, and federal elected officials on the subject of reevaluating portions of the county's flood plain mapping, specifically for the Browns Lake and Farmers/Garretson Ditch areas of the county. The offices of Congressman Steve King, and Senators Tom Harkin and Chuck Grassley were presented with information specific to this issue during the Annual Siouxland Chamber of Commerce's Washington D.C. Conference. Upon returning home from this event, Bob Franke of DHS / FEMA Region VII / Risk Analysis Branch contacted Woodbury County and stated that based on the information presented in the report, the information does appear to be sufficient to support a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) request (see attached email). This information was then forwarded to Bill Cappuccio of IDNR, who then provided Woodbury County with additional information about potential next steps and anticipated costs (see attached email). The most current developments of this issue include a recent conference call with Woodbury County Officials and IDNR to discuss the potential of FEMA reevaluating our flood plain mapping. During this call IDNR stated that FEMA has announced plans to reevaluate portions of Iowa's flood plain mapping, and that Woodbury County was identified as one of the jurisdictions they intend to work on.

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>>> "Franke, Bob" <Bob.Franke@fema.dhs.gov> 6/18/2014 4:13 PM >>>

Hi David,

I apologize for the tardiness of this response. I did want to let you know that I reviewed the reports for Farmer's/Garretson Ditch and Brown's Lake prepared by Snyder & Associates.

Based on the information presented in the report, the information does appear to be sufficient to support a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) request. The data will need to be submitted to FEMA for technical review and determination. If the data meets the technical criteria for a map revision then the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) could be revised. The revision would be in one of two formats; a LOMR determination document with annotated map panels, or as a Physical Map Revision (PMR).

Because the study data applies to portions of 13 FIRM panels, I believe the request would need to be processed as a PMR. For a PMR FEMA would prepare revised FIRM panels, distribute for comment and appeal periods, and then adopted by the communities. The decision to process the revision request would be made once FEMA completes a technical review of the data.

To request a LOMR, the MT-2 application package should be completed. A local entity will need to bear the expense to have the forms completed and the data prepared for submittal. FEMA's reviewers may develop questions during the technical review, and these would need to be resolved before FEMA will issue a determination.

The MT-2 application forms and instructions for a LOMR may be obtained from FEMA's web page - <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/1343?id=1493>. There may be a fee involved with FEMA's review of the data, but this request may be exempt from fees. Information concerning fees is available from this web page - <http://www.fema.gov/forms-documents-and-software/flood-map-related-fees>.

I noted there may be 30-40 Letters of Map Amendment (LOMA) in the area. The data prepared by Snyder & Associates may be used to support additional LOMA request for individual structures. If this process is of interest let me know and I'll describe how the data may be used.

Please contact me if you have questions.

Bob Franke

DHS / FEMA Region VII / Risk Analysis Branch
Voice: 816.283.7073 Cell: 816.806.8403 e-mail: bob.franke@fema.dhs.gov

>>> "Cappuccio, Bill [DNR]" <Bill.Cappuccio@dnr.iowa.gov> 6/19/2014 6:25 PM >>>

David,

Well this is definitely great news and a big surprise! Believe it or not, we approached FEMA about doing a LOMR for this area when the Snyder study was originally completed and were told at that time that they couldn't do it because it involved too many panels and would require a physical map revision (PMR). So, I guess this is one more example that reinforces the adage "the only thing that is constant is change".

When we last spoke, we were trying to get FEMA to consider using the Snyder data as the "match" for a project to remap the area funded by FEMA's "cash match" program. But, we ran into a few problems. First, there are a number of levees within the area. And, at that time, FEMA hadn't published the final version of its procedures for dealing with de-accredited levees. So, the Region was concerned that any project it started for that area would be stalled waiting for that guidance to be published (it was finally published last July). But, even if that issue had been resolved, it turns out the Region didn't receive any funding for cash-match projects that year (nor any since).

The DNR does have money that it uses for floodplain mapping projects. However, that money was received as a supplemental CDBG grant from money that was available after the 2008 flood and can only be used in those 85 counties that were part of the 2008 declaration. Unfortunately, Woodbury County is one of the 14 Iowa counties that were not part of that declaration. Because of this, we cannot use that funding for floodplain mapping projects there.

Looking at Bob Franke's email, he referenced several items associated with a LOMR submittal that might result in expense to the community:

- Completion of the MT-2 forms needed to request the LOMR,
- Preparing the study data for submittal, and
- A FEMA review fee

I would assume that the cost for completing the first 2 items on that list would be small compared to the cost of doing the original study. As for the FEMA review fee, I believe that is typically ~\$5000. However, as Bob indicated, this particular project might be exempt.

If you think it would be helpful, we could schedule a conference call with Bob Franke to discuss some of the details of the process.

Let me know if you have additional questions,

BILL CAPPUCCIO



Iowa Department of Natural Resources
P 515.281.8942 | F 515.281.8895 | Bill.Cappuccio@dnr.iowa.gov
502 East 9th Street | Des Moines, IA 50319

WWW.IOWADNR.GOV   

Leading Iowans in Caring for Our Natural Resources.

>>> "Cappuccio, Bill [DNR]" <Bill.Cappuccio@dnr.iowa.gov> 3/15/2016 9:38 AM >>>

John,

I sent an email to Scott Ralston of our FP Mapping Program asking if he could give us a ballpark estimate of the cost for a Physical Map Revision (PMR) for the 11 FIRM panels affected by the Snyder data. Scott's going to be out most of the week. So, I may not have an answer for you until next week.

I'll let you know when I have more information.

BILL CAPPUCCIO

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Medicaid for Incarcerated Youth

ISSUE

Medicaid can help meet the unique needs of juvenile justice-involved youth. Youth involved with juvenile justice systems often have significant and sometimes costly health needs, in part because they may not have received regular or continuous medical care. It is important to note the difference between juvenile justice-involved youth and youth who are incarcerated. The setting or placement a young person is remanded to, if he or she is adjudicated delinquent, will affect which state agency pays for health care. Federal Medicaid dollars cannot be used to reimburse "care for services of any individual who is an inmate of a public institution." Federal regulations do not require states to terminate Medicaid enrollment of those who become inmates of a public institution; rather, states have the option to suspend eligibility. In Iowa, we suspend Medicaid eligibility for incarcerated youth. In Woodbury County, Iowa, the majority of youth held in juvenile detention are Medicaid-eligible. Currently when the juvenile is detained they lose access to Medicare and all medical costs must be absorbed by the county including the costs for prescriptions unless the parent has private insurance, which is rare. Medicaid is a tremendous resource for juvenile justice-involved youth. Incarcerated youth should still benefit from Medicaid eligible services while being held in secure confinement.

REQUEST

We respectfully request equality in access and funding for health care and, therefore, recommend that all youth in public and private confinement and detention facilities remain eligible for Medicaid and private health care coverage consistent with state and local eligibility requirements. We support pre-release insurance application/enrollment and pre-release coordination to ensure post-release continuity of care.

BACKGROUND

Until 1984, federal regulations allowed correctional institutions to bill for health services provided to incarcerated youth who were eligible for Medicaid for the month of their arrest and the month of their discharge. After 1984, the regulations disallowed any federal reimbursement for health services to incarcerated individuals. This action shifted the responsibility for financing needed health care entirely to local governments (e.g., states, counties, cities) and, due to a reduction in federal funding, often results in inequities in the quality of care available to youth. Children in public, as compared to private, facilities are mostly poor, minority, and from socially disadvantaged families. They are disproportionately affected by ineligibility for insurance. In contrast, children residing in private facilities are eligible for Medicaid.

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Renewable Fuel Standard

ISSUE

Renewable fuel gives Americans choices: the choice to use a lower-cost, domestic and clean fuel, and the choice to escape the control that the oil industry has over our wallets. Renewable fuel is making a critical difference for our economy, for our environment, and for all Americans. In uncertain times, renewable fuel is a strong and reliable catalyst for growth, creating jobs while promoting a cleaner environment. However, in 2015 the EPA's final decision for RFS volume obligation levels failed to follow the renewable volume levels set by Congress. This process has negatively impacted Iowa families through reduced commodity prices, farm incomes, and farmland values. The EPA's decision only marginally improves volume levels in a step that will hurt Iowa families, businesses, and farmers.

REQUEST

We respectfully request the support of policy that includes:

- Increasing the use of renewable fuels;
- Achieving the highest renewable fuel standard possible; and
- Removing obstacles that prevent the increased usage of higher renewable fuels blends in the marketplace.

Furthermore, we support policy requiring all gasoline sold in Iowa to be blended with ethanol at the maximum rate allowed in the standard automotive fleet. We believe the incentives for renewable fuels should apply only to domestically produced fuels.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the EPA's final decision failed to follow the renewable volume levels set by Congress. The decision shows the lack of interest in providing consumers choice at the pump, creating jobs and increasing incomes in Rural America, and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. This rule falls far too short of a robust RFS and short of the standards set by Congress. The State of Iowa has supported both the production and use of biofuels, including renewable fuel infrastructure development through the Fueling Our Future Program and the Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program, to ensure that consumers have true choices at the pump.

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