

nebraska

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INVESTMENTS & IMPACTS

CDBG 2010-2014



NEBRASKA
Department of Economic Development

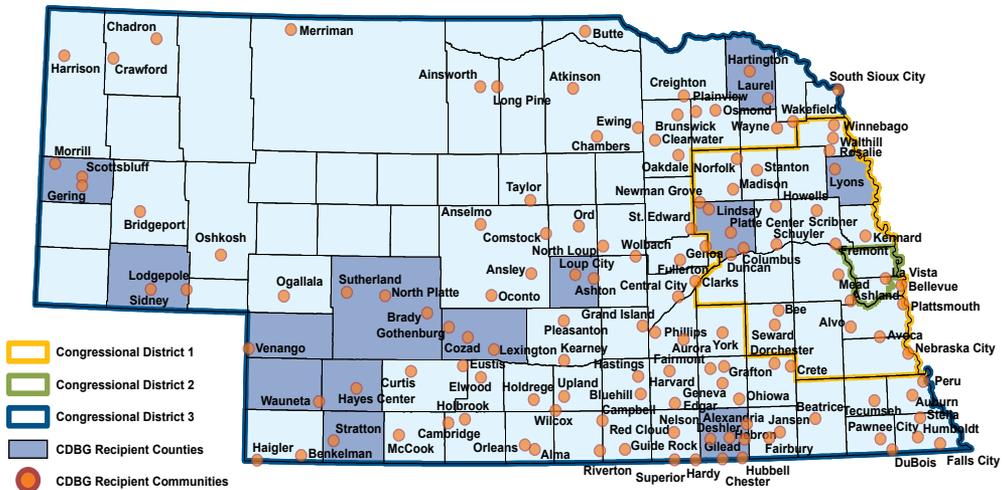
INVESTMENTS & IMPACTS

CDBG 2010-2014

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program was established in 1974 as part of the Housing and Community Development Act. In 1982 the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) instituted a state CDBG program that provides Nebraskans with safe, affordable housing and infrastructure as well as quality jobs and investments through the financing of new and expanding businesses. CDBG funding is allocated to the state from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Nebraska CDBG Program does not include the entitlement cities of Omaha, Lincoln, or Bellevue (which became an entitlement city in 2011). All data included in this publication relates to all Nebraska counties and communities less than 50,000 population.

Awarded Projects 2010-2014



Awarded Projects from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2014

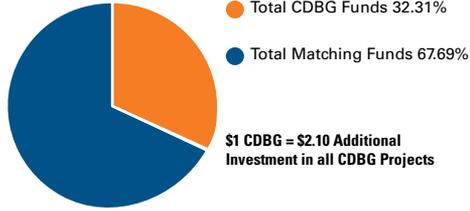
2010-2014 CDBG Awards by Congressional District

Congressional District 1	\$19,765,690
Congressional District 2	\$1,440,279
Congressional District 3	\$39,105,564

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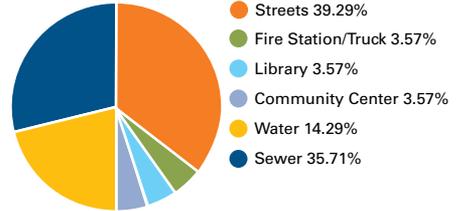
Investment Summary

2010 - 2014 Nebraska CDBG Investments and Other Investments for All Program Categories



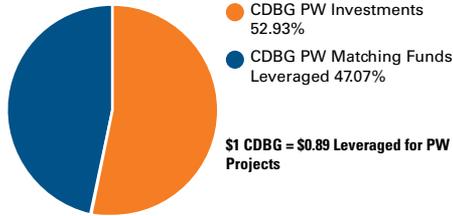
With \$60 million in CDBG funds, matched with over \$125 million in leveraged funds for a total of 327 CDBG eligible projects.

2010 - 2014 CDBG Public Works Project Investments



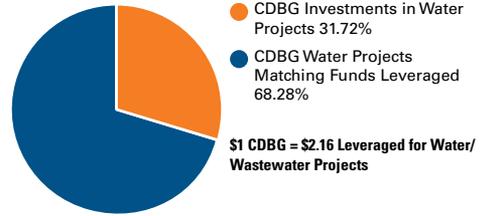
There was a total of 53 Community Development projects between Public Works and Water Wastewater. CDBG investments contributed over \$1 million to these projects.

2010 - 2014 CDBG Public Works Project Investments



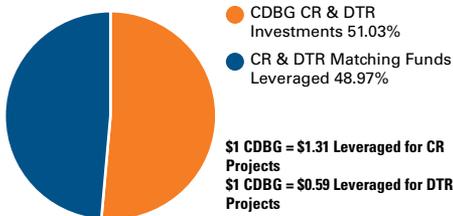
Over \$8 million in CDBG investments leveraged over \$7 million in other private and public investments.

2010 - 2014 CDBG Water/Wastewater Project Investments



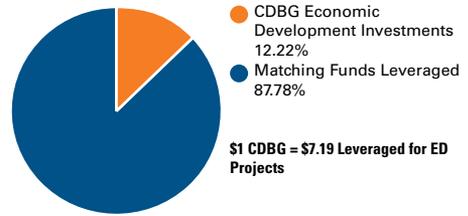
Over \$6 million in Water/Wastewater investments leveraged over \$14 million in other private and public investments.

2010 - 2014 CDBG Comprehensive Revitalization and Downtown Revitalization Project Investments



Over \$2 million in CDBG Comprehensive and Downtown Revitalization investments leveraged over \$17 million in other private and public investments.

2010 - 2014 CDBG Economic Development Project Investments



Over \$11 million in CDBG Economic Development investments leveraged over \$81 million in other private and public investments.

Alexandria, NE – New Lagoon Offers Future Protection From Disaster



In late spring 2008, Nebraska experienced a string of severe storms that debilitated many communities. The storms produced dangerous winds, tornadoes, and a heavy influx of water, causing extensive flooding. Evaluations were done by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to determine whether the state would qualify for disaster-based aid. Nebraska received a major disaster declaration, meaning that different entities in the state were eligible to receive funding

assistance from FEMA and other organizations that distribute emergency funds. A total of 19 projects statewide qualified for disaster recovery aid in 2008.

Alexandria (pop. 176) was one such community awarded Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds in 2008 for storm-related damages, mainly flooding. The goal of the CDBG-DR program was to fund projects that would help prevent severe future damage in response to recent disasters, as well as aid in repairing damaged infrastructure.

Nebraska was awarded approximately \$5.5 million in CDBG-DR funds, distributed and awarded during four different funding cycles. Although all communities applied in 2008, following the storms, the funds were distributed over time. Alexandria received its grant funds in 2010, totaling \$754,532.14 for their project activities. With matching loans of \$871,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the project totaled \$1,625,532.14. A total of 197 people throughout the area received assistance (121 or 61.42% of whom were low-to-moderate income persons). While the project was officially funded in 2010, activities commenced in early 2013, with most finished by December 2014. All project activities will be completed by March 2015.

The Alexandria project activities addressed lagoon walls that collapsed as a result of heavy flooding, and improving the water/wastewater infrastructure of the sewer mains. Following the walls' collapse in 2008, sewage was released downstream from the lagoon, resulting in a long-term safety concern that needed to be addressed in order to prevent future problems. During the design process, Village officials and their engineer determined the best solution was to relocate and construct new lagoons and a lift station away from the 100-year floodplain. Final project activities included acquiring land for and constructing the new lagoons, elevating manholes, building a lift station, sliplining sewer mains, filling dirt in the old lagoons, and repairing exposed sewer mains.

Alexandria was the last of the 2008 CDBG-DR projects funded in Nebraska, with no other CDBG-DR funds having been distributed since the 2008 storms. Currently, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is overseeing a new federal program called NDRC (Natural Disaster Resilience Competition) which will allocate CDBG-DR funds for similar projects. The NDRC is a competitive standard used to better measure the disaster needs of applicants for Disaster Recovery funds. States must apply if interested and funds will be distributed according to established criteria for fund allocation based on competitive rankings of applicants. Approximately \$1 billion of Disaster Recovery funds have been allocated nationally for this program.

Safety is the number one issue addressed by the CDBG program as it relates to Disaster Recovery. Without funding availability to safeguard and protect against future infrastructure damage resulting from natural disasters, communities are left vulnerable. The value of safety can never be overstated, especially in rural communities statewide that may not always receive the same level of attention as larger Nebraska cities. Safety needs require this kind of detailed attention, when necessary.

Elwood, NE – Dedication to Downtown Development Runs Deep

The Village of Elwood (pop. 707) is the county seat in Gosper County where the courthouse and county offices are located. As a central location for the county and surrounding areas, it is an important hub, and when faced with obstacles, Elwood bands together to find ways to fix problems.

Even before receiving a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for a Downtown Revitalization (DTR) project, Elwood demonstrated a dedication to improving its community space when, in 2009, it received CDBG funds to rebuild the local library so that it was more accessible and up-to-date. The library was relocated next to the village office and Gosper County Senior Center, thus making it more centrally and easily accessible. Additionally, before filing a 2011 application for DTR funds, Elwood community members banded together to rehabilitate and reopen a local grocery store after it had recently closed. These efforts preceding the undertaking of DTR activities demonstrate just how active Elwood residents have been in its development. The Elwood downtown project benefited 278 people, 142 of which are low-to-moderate income persons (51.08% LMI).

About the same time the library was built and the market was rehabilitated, Elwood applied for a DTR grant to develop a plan for renovating its downtown. This successful application resulted in a plan that won awards at the state planning/zoning conference. After completion of the DTR plan, Elwood was successfully awarded



second-phase funding under the DTR program, allowing the Village to implement certain features of their plan. These implementations complemented the recent additions of the new library and market. The project activities were funded for \$350,000 from CDBG and matched with \$230,518 from the community.

The commercial rehabilitation of 15 downtown buildings was one component. New roofs, windows and doors, new awnings, and new paint and facades significantly improved the downtown area in Elwood. This was combined with a sidewalk project that replaced broken and cracked sidewalks, increasing access to these downtown buildings. The final piece of the downtown revitalization project, the creation of a multipurpose gathering space, was completed in December 2014. The space is enclosed with brick pillars and black wrought iron fencing and boasts tables, benches, and an attractive place for senior citizens to gather near their building. The whole community of Elwood has gained a place to gather, whether for their old-fashioned Christmas celebration, a summer picnic, or just to relax. This gathering area completes the aesthetic of the center of Elwood, with the senior center, village office, and new library and grocery store, representing a significant growth for the community of Elwood.

Alma, NE – Streets and the Importance of Access and Safety

In 2012, Alma (pop. 1,133) participated in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Works program, which awards funding to Nebraska communities to do a various number of improvement projects, including replacing streets and sidewalks, and building community centers, among many other possibilities. The Alma street improvement project included new concrete pavement, driveway pavement, ten curb inlets, four junction manholes, and removal of unnecessary concrete.

The Alma street improvement project had a total budget of \$878,525, of which \$350,000 was CDBG funding. The project had \$528,525 in matching and leveraged funds, which came from General Obligation funds, and funds budgeted specifically for this project. The project activities benefitted a total of 1,129 people, 584 of whom were low-to-moderate-income persons (51.73% LMI).

The duration of the Alma street project was from March 1-June 1, 2012. Actual construction for the project was only three months. With this kind of turn around, the impacts were felt immediately by the community. Repaved South Street is the most traveled residential street in Alma. This street gives access to all of Alma, as well as access to Harlan County Lake to the south. Due to the increase in access, the project serviced the whole city of Alma.



Hastings, NE – Bringing Arts to the Community

The Listening Room was founded in 1991 by Robin Harrell as a concert series highlighting local and national singer-songwriters. However, the building that Harrell had been using to host the performances was not easily accessible, nor did it have the welcoming aesthetics expected of such a venue. This led Harrell to ask the City of Hastings (pop. 24,907) for help in securing a space that would represent an art and cultural center for the people of Hastings. The Lark in downtown Hastings, is now splendidly renovated and easy to access.



To fund renovations to the building, the City secured \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies, contributing to a project budget of \$785,067. The total project budget, including non-CDBG activities, is \$1.2 million, much of which is largely being provided through community donations. The funded building renovations meet the CDBG national objective of addressing blight issues.



The project was split into two construction phases that addressed each floor, respectively. During the first phase, the first floor was converted into a performance area, with handicapped accessible restrooms. The second phase will establish the second floor as an arts center, upon completion.

First-phase construction on The Lark began in April 2013, with doors opening in December 2013. The mezzanine level of The Lark also underwent renovations in between the two main phases, with a tentative opening in early fall 2014. The second floor is projected to open by fall 2015.

The main goal of transforming The Lark is to provide Hastings residents with a community center capable of hosting and supporting all types of public and private events. The purpose of The Lark, as stated on its website, notes that “The Lark will foster the arts in Hastings and surrounding communities; providing artistic and cultural growth through observation, education, inspiration and participation.” David Rippe, executive director of the Hastings Economic Development Corporation, echoed this sentiment. “The significance of The Lark and the long-term importance of its presence centers on quality community growth. With fewer and fewer people moving between zip codes in our country and with more and more people moving to urban areas, it is vitally important that rural communities develop and promote amenities and quality of life features that appeal to residents and visitors alike.” Rippe added “...it is critical that we continue to invest in ourselves and make Hastings a community of choice for talented people and quality businesses.”

Crawford, NE – New Facility Ensures Safety and Efficiency

Many small communities in Nebraska have facilities and infrastructure that are in dire need of replacement or upgrade simply due to age. The wastewater facility in Crawford (pop. 997) had been in service since the 1930s. When it started malfunctioning and incorrectly discharging, the community was faced with the decision to either upgrade or replace the entire system. While the cost to do either option was prohibitive, the town was left with no other options.

However, in 2012, Crawford was awarded \$350,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to build a new wastewater facility. All communities seeking financial assistance for water-wastewater projects must be approved by the Water Wastewater Advisory Committee, which is comprised of different state and federal agencies that distribute water wastewater-based funding options. Along with the CDBG, Crawford received \$2,328,703 from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality's Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRLF), which was used to match the CDBG project activities. With Crawford only expending \$296,642 in CDBG funds, the total project cost was \$2,625,345. The project benefitted a total of 997 people, 601 who were low-to-moderate income persons (60.28% LMI).

Crawford's situation helps highlight the necessity of these kinds of grant projects for smaller communities. Because the only option was to fix the treatment facility, the CDBG funds and other sources, including the DWSRLF, helped them succeed in doing that. The cost of carrying out this project without financial aid was prohibitive, so these kinds of services are necessary for communities to stay in compliance with state regulations. It is important that these funding sources exist for communities all throughout the state.

The project replaced the outdated wastewater treatment facility with a new facility that sits on a 200' x 400' plot of land. This new facility provides stable wastewater infrastructure that ensures safety and efficiency. The community also determined that the return on investment for a newer facility was much higher due to the age and disrepair of the previous system.



Construction began in late May 2013 and was completed in February 2014. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new facility occurred on September 25, 2014. The turn-around for project activities allowed the least amount of disruption to the daily function of the community and provided a necessary service as soon as possible. These kinds of projects are common throughout the state, which represents a consistent need to maintain and replace wastewater infrastructure.

The importance of these CDBG grant projects cannot be overstated, since these types of facilities are used by every community, in some regard, throughout the state, regardless of the size of the community.

Fairmont, NE – CommunityWide Housing Rehabilitation

Community members and elected officials of the Village of Fairmont (pop. 561) in Fillmore County, NE, have taken a proactive approach to community improvement through the years. Their planning, developing and implementing of community-wide projects has led to improved quality of life and economic sustainability, and will continue to do so long into the future.

In 2009 and 2013 the Village of Fairmont applied for and received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) for two separate projects. The grants were awarded to implement a community-wide Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation program. The program has assisted 17 low-moderate-income homeowners to make needed repairs to address housing quality standards, building codes, and safety issues.

“One significant result of implementing a housing rehab program is that it makes the town more appealing to visitors and perspective new residents,” said Fairmont Village Clerk Linda Carroll. “Seventeen households being rehabilitated in a town of 561 people is tremendous.”

The most recent round of construction to take place as part of the implementation phase began in October 2013. Construction is projected to be completed by spring 2015. The total cost of the 2013 phase was \$193,032, of which \$186,000 was from CDBG funds. Of the two projects, the 2013 project is building six units for the purpose of low-to-moderate households, which meets the national objective of aiding low-to-moderate income persons.

The Village Board of Trustees appointed a volunteer citizen’s advisory committee to oversee implementation of Fairmont’s Housing Rehabilitation Program. The Village also retained grant administrative assistance, housing program management, and lead testing and clearance services from the Southeast Nebraska Development District. This volunteer committee is a perfect example of Fairmont’s dedication to true community-implemented improvements as opposed to improvements only made by elected officials or administrators.

Fairmont resident Janelle Verhage, a single parent who operates an in-home daycare business, participated in the program. Her home needed exterior lead paint abatement as well as other code and safety issue upgrades. A list of repairs included new electrical panels brought up to state electrical standards, replacement windows, replacement doors, new gutters, a new front entrance, new vinyl siding, and removal and clearance of lead-based paint on the exterior.

“This was a perfect solution for my needs as my family and my in-home daycare are low income,” said Verhage. “I’m happy to say that thanks to this program I have an energy efficient beautiful home. This is a wonderful program. Thank you!”

The program has prevented loss of existing housing stock, addressed nuisance and code deficiencies, and improved the quality, safety, and affordability of existing affordable housing for residents in the Village of Fairmont.

Fairmont is just one example of a successful housing project in Nebraska. However, the state has seen much success in housing over the last five years. Over \$7 million in CDBG funds have been dedicated to housing projects. The projects aim to help owners rehabilitate their homes, so that they may better serve the families that occupy them. These housing projects always benefit low-to-moderate income families and approximately 200 houses for these families have been rehabilitated through the OOR program from CDBG. These projects, as Fairmont demonstrates, help homeowners meet safety standards, resulting in improvements to their quality of living.



Before the project



After the project

North Platte, NE – Renovated Building Will Help Creativity Thrive

The historic downtown post office building in North Platte has been standing since 1913, over 100 years. In 2008, the Creativity Unlimited Arts Council (CUAC), based out of North Platte, bought the historic post office from the city. CUAC wanted to help restore the building, which is registered with the Nebraska State Historical Society, and make it wholly accessible to the community for the purpose of public events and art education and outreach.

The goal is to completely move the Prairie Arts Center into the historic building. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money they received is helping them achieve this goal, which, in turn, will lead to community-wide access to the center, for those living in North Platte, as well as western Nebraska.

The overall renovation project is comprehensive for the building, totaling approximately \$3.2 million. The CDBG money represents the first phase of this project. \$300,000 was awarded in CDBG monies, with \$148,995 leveraged by local money, raised through donation campaigns held by CUAC. The project is benefiting a total of 9,458 residents of which 4,824 are low-to-moderate income persons.



The project's first phase consisted of removing barriers from the building to make it compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and increase access to the building. This included installing new stairs and a new elevator, and adding a handicap accessible restroom. Additionally, each floor of the building is being renovated. The project is a partnership between the CUAC and Mid-Plains Community College; the college hopes to hold classes in the building's basement,

thereby making the center accessible to community members for broader educational activities as well. The scope of future improvements for the arts center reaches beyond accessibility improvements. These include building a new entrance and sculpture garden, as well as adding an art gallery and classroom. The first two floors of the building are projected to be open for use by summer 2015.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held December 12, 2013. Although the project still has progress to be made, the ceremony celebrated the completion of some classrooms, studios, restrooms, a wood shop, and the elevator (provided by CDBG money).

The Prairie Arts Center project shows that CDBG monies can be used by communities to create partnerships between cities, local organizations, and even educational institutions all across the state. With the growing importance of preserving the arts, projects like this one show the state's dedication to fostering opportunities to increase access to art education and community growth through the arts.

Hastings, NE - Restoration and Improvement Aims to Help Downtown Thrive

Downtown areas often function as the center hub of a town's primary business and entertainment. A thriving downtown is the sign of an active community. The downtown also often impacts peoples' impressions of a town. The City of Hastings (pop. 24,907), believing that their downtown is the "face" of their town, looked to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to help them update and "refresh" their downtown area. The city stated that they see a 'vibrant downtown' as the "social, cultural and business center of the community..." and that their goal is to transform their downtown into this image for the community.

As is true of many downtown revitalization projects, one main goal for the Hastings project was to help fund façade improvements for existing buildings and businesses, to attract more people, in and out of town, to the downtown area, as well as attract new businesses to become stakeholders in downtown Hastings.

Another goal is to open up and create more public space for the community and make the downtown feel more open and welcoming to residents and visitors alike. Former Lt. Gov. Sheehy stated in 2012 when the project was first announced that, "Downtowns really are



During the project



After the project

the heart of our community and Hastings has taken to heart the revitalization of the downtown area.”

Hastings received \$350,000 in CDBG monies, matched by \$112,000 from the city. The total project budget is \$462,000. The national objective for this project was to address slum and blighted areas. Project activities began in fall 2013 and are projected to be complete by mid-to late-2015.

Along with aiding façade improvements for businesses, this project targeted certain buildings for restoration. For example, the Block 24 project on 2nd Ave. and St. Joseph was targeted to renovate two buildings that had fallen into disrepair and were no longer totally structurally sound. The exterior and the interiors of each building was restored to add 5,000 sq. ft. of retail space to the area. Additionally, the green space next to the Block 24 project was fixed up to be aesthetically welcoming, which gives the east side of the downtown area a new look with the renovated buildings and now-verdant green space.

Having a welcoming and open downtown area that encourages business to thrive instills confidence in the community and reaffirms the idea that Nebraska supports the growth of all of its communities. Nebraska wants to see communities thrive and it is projects like these that show this is the direction the state is moving.

Sarpy County, NE – Business Expansion Increases Job Growth

The economic makeup of Nebraska is diverse, both in size of businesses, locations, and types of industries. This diversity allows different communities and businesses to contribute and grow in their own unique ways. The main goal of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Economic Development program is to help create jobs for low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons all over the state.

Sergeant’s Pet Care Products, Inc. was awarded CDBG monies in early 2012 for the addition of a production building and to aid in the purchase of additional equipment and machinery. Sergeant’s is a national producer of pet products, ranging from flea and tick treatments, pet health and grooming products, and pet treats. They have been in operation since 1868, but became a national producer in 1930.

The addition is a 131,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility, where the purchased equipment is used. Sergeant’s started the project originally intending to create 58 new jobs, 30 of which were to be LMI in the new facility. However, the project produced more jobs than expected; 74 jobs were created, 47 of which benefitted low-to-moderate income persons (63.51%). The addition of the new manufacturing facility and machinery increased the company’s production capabilities and further strengthened its presence throughout Nebraska and the entire Midwest region.

The total project budget was \$7,505,000. In addition to \$505,000 awarded in CDBG funds, \$480,000 was provided directly by Sergeant’s for project activities, and the remaining \$6,520,000 was financed by Bank of the West. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on March 19, 2012. The project was officially finished and closed out by the end of 2013.

The combined effort of Sarpy County and Sergeant's Pet Care Products, Inc., shows that businesses can succeed and grow with CDBG money, while staying in the state of Nebraska. Efforts like this one show why Nebraska has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country and is considered one of the best states in which to conduct business. Since one of the main concerns for companies is whether or not they should relocate, it is investments like this one that incentivize companies to stay here. This means that companies provide jobs to local workers, creating a healthy trust in the direction of the state's market, while they contribute to its growth.

Downtown Revitalization Success Stories

The Downtown Revitalization CDBG program aims to address the need for new infrastructure, updates to possible safety hazards, and to foster economic prosperity for local businesses in the downtown areas of our rural communities. The city's downtown stories can be found on the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's website at <http://www.neded.org/community/success-stories/dtr-success-stories>. The downtown project photos below provide a glimpse into the improvements that CDBG funds and other private/municipal funds investment into commercial businesses and municipal infrastructure.



Kearney downtown infrastructures



Fremont commercial rehabilitation



Norfolk commercial rehabilitation



Columbus commercial rehabilitation



Plattsmouth commercial rehabilitation



Lexington commercial rehabilitation

INVESTMENTS & IMPACTS

Showcase Community Award Features

Every year there is a week in the spring that is nationally dedicated to community development, aptly named Community Development Week. This week recognizes the efforts made by communities across the nation to improve the livelihoods and growth of their towns. Nebraska honors its communities during Community Development Week by awarding the Showcase Community Award (SCA) to the community that has shown the best effort and accomplishments in a five-year period, with a primary focus on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. The 2014 SCA winner was Hartington (pop. 1,540), with an Honorable Mention awarded to Norfolk (pop. 24,210). Both communities proved their dedication to good life and growth by completing a slew of projects aimed at community improvement.

Hartington focused heavily on revitalizing its downtown area, procuring a \$350,000 CDBG grant to help fund infrastructure improvements in 2011. Community leaders also recognized the necessity of adding more affordable housing to meet the needs of community members, as well as to attract possible incoming residents. The Westfield Acres housing project built 19 new homes with \$400,000 in CDBG money aiding the development. With an attractive downtown and booming residential area, new businesses followed, which is a sign of good economic growth for the City of Hartington. Hartington also assisted in the start-up of Trail Manor Mfg. Company, LLC, by providing \$505,000 in CDBG funds. The money went towards addressing inventory, equipment, and building renovations, resulting in the creation of 20 new jobs. A warm congratulations is due to Hartington for its ability to unify community support to address community needs, as it maintained a balanced focus between housing, economic development, and downtown revitalization.

Norfolk was a close second to Hartington, showing that progress in the present can help to preserve the community in the future. A top project priority for Norfolk was addressing its persistent community-wide concern for more housing. Norfolk received more than \$375,000 in CDBG funds to invest towards housing rehabilitation citywide. Norfolk has also committed more than \$900,000, through the Comprehensive Rehabilitation program toward housing rental rehabilitation and street improvements planning and implementation. These commitments show a well thought out focus on accessibility and bettering the living quality throughout the community.



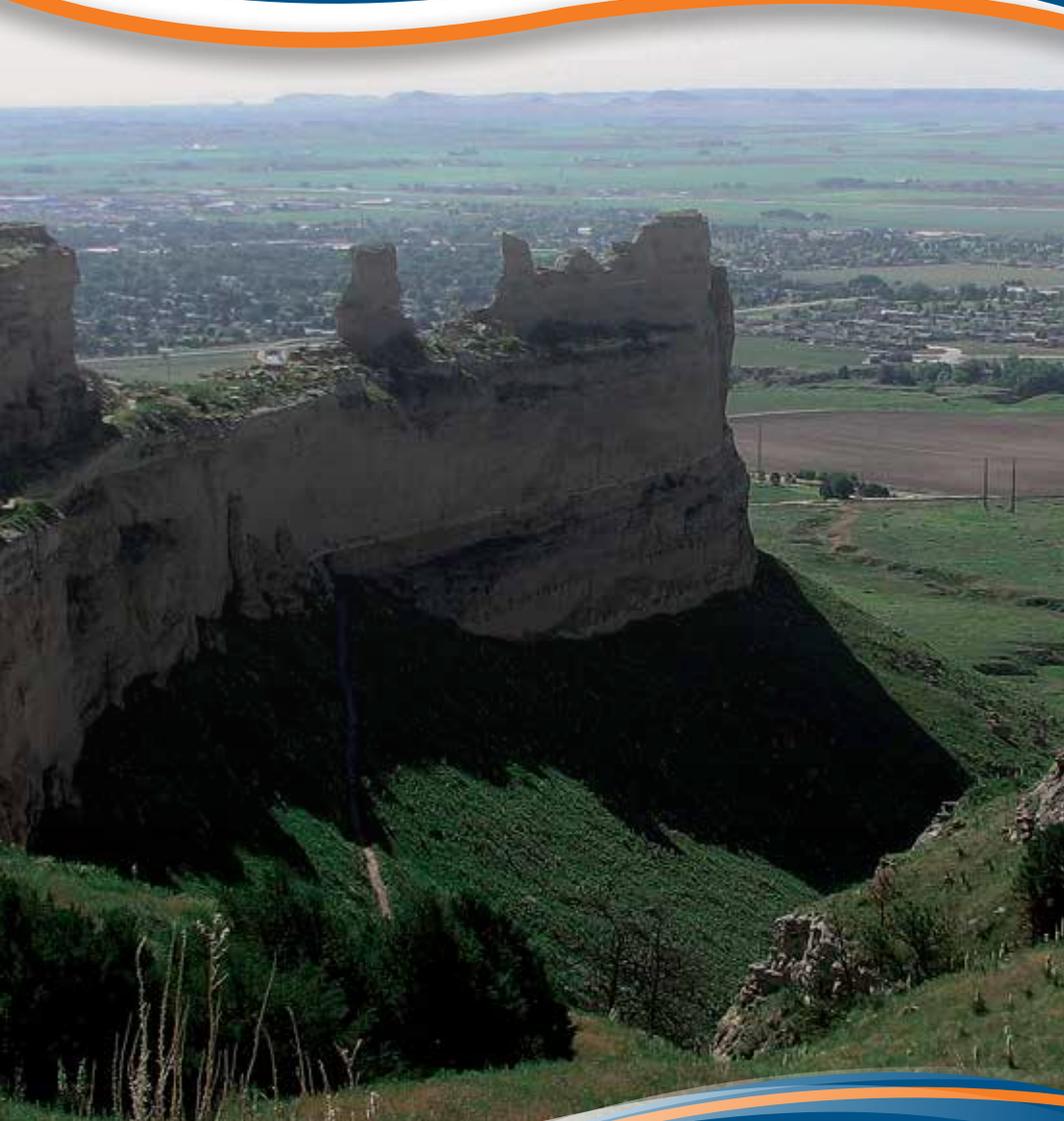
Hartington downtown



Hartington Westfield Acres

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Department of Economic Development



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**Nebraska Department of
Economic Development**
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4666
1-800-426-6505