



## Furnas/Harlan Partnership Meeting January 21, 2003

- The Furnas/Harlan Partnership meeting was held at Southern Valley School on January 21st, 2003. There were 25 people in attendance.
- Ken Johnson, Twin Valleys PPD, greeted those in attendance and invited each person to make their own introduction. He then gave an overview of the September 24th, 2002 Public Forum.

### • Focus Group Reports:

Business Retention/Expansion - Ed Newcomb reported that this focus group had decided to get all the communities in the two counties activated on the NEDI Online Program. A brief description of this program along with the benefits it provides was presented to the group. The towns that have not yet been activated will hopefully do so in the near future.

Business Start-Up - Todd Eichenberger reported that they would like to look into the possibility of doing a survey to see what new businesses people felt were needed. After discussing the interests of this group and the goals it was decided to combine the group with the Business Retention/Expansion Group.

Tourism & Recreation - Raylene Stephens reported on the project this group is undertaking, the Women's Fishing Seminar to be held at Harlan Lake. This will be an extension of the Women's Wilderness Weekend that has been held in the past. They have also discussed a Women's Hunting Seminar as a future project that may be planned somewhere in Furnas County.

Alternative Agriculture - Keith Roberts reported on the progress being made on establishing a Goat Meat Cooperative in the Orleans area. The Orleans locker will need to have the ability to be Federally Inspected and would work with this cooperative.

Technology/Telecommunications - Roger Hoffman compiled a map of the cellular towers in the area and also a chart listing all the communities along with their Internet Services/Providers.

Housing - Jim Cooley reported that he has been in contact with some realtors and bankers and that there are approximately 77 houses for sale in the Oxford, Cambridge, Arapahoe and Beaver City areas, with 30 houses for sale in Cambridge.

- The BRE Conference was to be discussed by Linda Fettig, DED. However, she could not attend due to the weather so Ken passed on information and also discussed the Business Visitation that is scheduled for February 25, 26, & 27. Each community is to compile a list of businesses to be surveyed and get this to Ed Newcomb by Friday, January 24, 2003 so that letters to the Governor can be sent.
- Rich Mullaney with the Southwest Nebraska RC & D in Cambridge gave a report on the Alternative Ag Conference to be held in Curtis on February 1.
- The focus groups then spent some time discussing ideas and projects that they may want to work on in the future along with progress reports on existing projects.
- The next meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2003 at the Southern Valley School. It is anticipated that the results of the BR&E Surveys will be available for review with the group.