

# Executive Director

## CJ Poltack



December 2017



## WCNDD Operating Under New Leadership

The Governing Board of West Central Nebraska Development District has recently appointed CJ Poltack as Executive Director of the agency. Poltack joined WCNDD in 2004 as a Community Economic Development Specialist assisting communities and counties in the 18 county-wide region with state and federally funded projects. Some of these projects have included water and wastewater projects, streets, senior centers, energy projects, owner-occupied housing programs, workforce housing, sirens, scrap tire programs, and nuisance abatement. Poltack has been instrumental in the development of the nuisance abatement program.

Poltack has played a pivotal role in the advancement of multiple legislative bills that have prevented the sunset of the scrap tire program (LB549), as well as legislation that has made it possible to impound mobile homes in place (LB1044). She has been responsible for grant writing and administration of funding sources, which included project compliance and oversight. With more than a decade of experience, Poltack has a vast understanding of community and economic development. Poltack will take over immediately as former Director Karl Elmshaeuser has been appointed as the new State Director for USDA Rural Development.



## Shrinking the Rural Leadership Gap

What happens when the leaders in your community retire, move or step down? Is there a leadership succession plan happening in your community? Is the next generation of leaders being mentored?



Leadership is important and even critical for long-term success and vitality of rural communities. In my experience, leadership tends to be the major factor that distinguishes thriving rural places from those that are lagging behind.

As we look deeper, it becomes apparent that the transfer of leadership from one generation to the next may be another important factor and could serve as a powerful tool for communities.

The rural leadership gap is real and is amplified because of outmigration of the millennials. According to a research published in the Cornhusker Economics, some young adults, especially young families, are looking to relocate from metro areas to nonmetro areas. They want to live in family-friendly communities to raise their children. They also need a way to support themselves, so employment opportunities are critical.

In most rural communities, the majority of leadership positions — elected service and volunteer — are held by the oldest two generations in the communities. The 2012 Nebraska Rural Poll showed that of young Nebraskans (under the age of 36) that took the poll, only 8 percent held elected offices and less than one-third held formal leadership roles. This is not a new phenomenon. It has happened for decades, but the unique part of this trend is that the lack of leadership transfer is now coupled with the huge transfer of wealth occurrence.

The Nebraska Community Foundation researched the transfer of wealth in Nebraska, predicting that during the next 50 years, more than \$602 billion will be transferred from one generation to the next. This will be the largest intergenerational transfer of wealth in our state's history.

For more on this story, visit <http://ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/shrinking-the-rural-leadership-gap/>

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## Are Year-End Payment Problems Hurting Your Business?

Americans love to spend money during the holiday season, and a lot of that money finds its way into the coffers of small businesses. The average small or mid-sized business earns a whopping 20% of its annual revenues in the weeks between Thanksgiving and December 31, according to a new survey. Small and mid-sized businesses that sell products (as opposed to services) earn 28 percent of their annual revenues during that period.

More than 70 percent of the business owners surveyed say they dined at least one serious business problem during last year's holiday season, the most common being late payments. More than 21 percent of small and midsize businesses surveyed struggled with late payments between Thanksgiving and December 31, 2016. What's more, over two-thirds of those surveyed say at least 10 percent of their customers fail to pay on time.

When your business doesn't get paid on time, it not only puts a major crimp in your cash flow, but it also eats up valuable time you could be spending on more important things. Nearly six in 10 business owners in the survey say they have to follow up at least twice to get late-paying customers to meet their obligations.



Even small business owners who get paid immediately at the point of purchase, such as retailers and e-commerce businesses, struggle with their own financial issues during year-end. In fact, 26 percent of respondents lost money to fraud or chargebacks (disputed charges) in the last 12 months; 22 percent of those lost \$5,000 or more. Making matters worse, if you have too many chargebacks, you may run into problems with your payment processing company.

For more information,

[https://www.score.org/blog/are-year-end-payment-problems-hurting-your-business?utm\\_source=eNews\\_December\\_2017\\_Final&utm\\_campaign=eNews\\_December&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.score.org/blog/are-year-end-payment-problems-hurting-your-business?utm_source=eNews_December_2017_Final&utm_campaign=eNews_December&utm_medium=email)

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## #whatshappeningWCNDD

What are you doing this year? Send us your pictures to [mburke@west-central-nebraska.com](mailto:mburke@west-central-nebraska.com) with the hashtag #whatshappeningWCNDD and we might feature them in our newsletter. Meanwhile, see if you can guess where this is ...

### Civic and Community Center Financing Fund

Annually, the Department of Economic Development accepts applications from Nebraska municipalities for grants to support the development of civic, community, and recreation centers under the Civic and Community Center Financing Fund (CCCFF) program.

The fund may be used for new construction of or the renovation and/or expansion to existing civic, community, and recreation centers, which may include the conversion, rehabilitation, or reuse of historic buildings. The fund may also be used for preliminary planning related to the development or rehabilitation of eligible projects. The definitions of eligible projects are:

- Civic Center- a facility that is primarily used to host conventions, meetings, and cultural events and/or a library. A civic center therefore includes space for conventions, meetings, and cultural events and/or a library.
- Community Center- the traditional center of a community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged around a main street and intersecting streets. A community center is therefore an area of multiple buildings with both internal and external elements. A civic center may or may not be in a community center.
- Recreation Center- a facility used for athletics, fitness, sport activities, or recreation that is owned by a municipality and is available for use by the general public with or without charge. A

recreation center does not include any facility that requires a person to purchase a membership to utilize such facility.

- Planning- engineering and technical studies directly related to eligible projects.

The program operates on a two-part application process on an annual cycle. A municipality seeking a grant will submit a letter of intent to apply signed by the applicant municipality's chief elected official and received by DED on or before January 15 of the current program year. To be considered for CCCFF assistance, applicants must meet eligibility requirements, provide a signed letter of intent to apply, and submit a completed application online using <https://neded.fluidreview.com>. Applicants may submit their application at any time from January 15 to February 15.

To see if your project is eligible to apply, please review all of the program fund guidelines, <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/program/civic-and-community-center-financing-fund-cccff/> or contact Jenny Mason with DED for more information: 402-471-6280 or [jenny.mason@nebraska.gov](mailto:jenny.mason@nebraska.gov)

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### **Important Deadlines:**

National Small Business Week Nomination Deadline	January 9, 2018
Civic and Community Center Financing Letter of Intent	January 15, 2018
USDA VAPG Grant Application	January 24, 2018
Waste Reduction and Recycling Application	February 1, 2018
Civic and Community Center Financing Application	February 15, 2018
CDBG Water & Waste Water	Open Cycle