

## **Nearly \$1 Million in Grants Awarded to Hartington in 2010 Projects Planned for 2011 and Beyond.**

The City of Hartington and the Hartington Community Development Corporation was awarded nearly \$1 million (\$955,762) in grant funds last year for projects that will provide a better economy for Hartington and the area. The City's Comprehensive Plan which was completed last year is paving the way along with the City Sales Tax collections (LB840) which provides funds to help meet the matching requirements for grants. These grants help stimulate our communities growth and plans for the future.

2010 began with receiving a BECA (Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act) grant for \$1,800. This grant began in the 2010-2011 school year by providing ESI Curriculum materials to teach students about starting and growing a business and what it takes to be an entrepreneur. The grant directly impacts the Wynot, Coleridge, Fordyce, Bow Valley area schools and both Hartington schools.

A \$54,293 grant was received from the Department of Environmental Quality and in March of 2010 a new recycling baler was purchased to help the recycling transfer station with more efficiency and productivity of baling more recyclables.

An \$82,069 Energy grant was received this past year and work will begin in March 2011 to bring positive changes to two city buildings. The City Auditorium which was built in 1922 and is on the State of Nebraska Historical Society Register. Careful consideration will be given when replacing the original windows. In the City Hall all windows will be replaced, new lighting will be implemented for the interior of the building, and a new handicapped accessible door will be at the front entrance. These improvements will help reduce energy costs for both buildings.

In May, Hartington received recognition as a Nebraska Department of Economic Development "Certified City". This was an extensive application process where many economic activities within the community must be properly identified and documented as ready for economic development (labor studies in place, buildings listed on NEDI and LOIS and TARGET analysis completed). This places the community on the fore-front with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in being marketed to business and industry prospects. Being a certified community also opens doors to other opportunities in applying for grants. One of these awarded was a \$379,000 Downtown Revitalization Grant. Phase I will be the first year and will consist of planning for replacing streets and infrastructure. Beautification and historic aspects of our downtown will also be considerations during this phase. Phase II will be a two+ year process of implementing changes. With these changes a whole new economic stimulus will be created helping businesses create innovative ways to bring business and visitors to town. "It is very fortunate that Hartington has received these grants over the past year. With the citizens of Hartington taking the first step in approving the city sales tax, and the collection of these funds over the past years, it has provided the opportunity for our community to go after and receive many new grants. These grants provide a lot of outside money which helps stimulate our local economy and provide future growth to the community", said Chris Miller President of the Hartington Area Economical Development Corporation.

In August, Hartington received word that they would be awarded a \$400,000 housing grant for the new Westfield Acres residential housing development project. Extensive time and work went into the grant application however the result was well worth the effort. \$160,000 of the grant funds will go toward sewer, water and paving infrastructure and \$168,000 of the funds will be used for homebuyer assistance to individuals who qualify. The remaining \$68,000 of the grant funds will go toward housing management and administration of the grant by the Nebraska Department of Economic

Development. "The \$400,000 housing grant was a critical component in getting the Westfield Acres housing project off the ground and financed and it also helped to secure the important TIF Bonding for the project," says Dan Kathol the coordinator of the housing project.

In addition, Security National Bank partnered with Hartington Economic Development in obtaining a \$25,000 housing JOBS grant that will assist with the Westfield Acres project costs.

Fall recognition from the State's NCIP program (Nebraska Community Improvement Program) presented the county with an award that was spearheaded through the Hartington economic development along with the Village of Fordyce. The project included a website entitled [www.wehaveitallincedarcounty.com](http://www.wehaveitallincedarcounty.com), a Facebook page, and 2 area DVD's to attract families, businesses, retirees, and visitors to our area. This free website hosts a place where people can list available buildings to draw businesses into their communities, area recreation, business resources, a listing of job opportunities. Hartington also received 3<sup>rd</sup> Place recognition along with a cash award in Community Development for their population group.

The year concluded by receiving another BECA grant in December for \$3,400. This grant was again partnered between Hartington Economic Development and the Village of Fordyce. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) and Nebraska Rural Development Commission (RDC) awarded \$154,375 in grant funding for 12 partnerships through the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA), which supports regional economic and community development partnerships in rural areas of the state. "Building Entrepreneurial Communities projects have assisted communities in their efforts to strengthen small businesses, attract new residents, and engage youth in entrepreneurial activities. The grant funding has also encouraged new regional collaborations and cooperation," said Linda Fettig, RDC director.

The Village of Fordyce and City of Hartington received \$3,400 for their project submittal which was "Building Opportunities for Future Growth". This project comes at a great time for area communities, and for Hartington as it prepares for its Downtown Revitalization project as this will give businesses new innovative growth ideas.

A Business Fair will be planned as several area businesses will give an overview of how they started their businesses and how it has evolved. Professional organizations will give overviews on business assistance programs and other businesses will be present with booths for people to learn about them and their services. This will be open to the public and students (including classes) will be encouraged to attend.

Also offered as part of the grant, will be a Marketing Seminar for residents and business owners in the region. A speaker will be brought in to present about leadership, advertising strategies, efficient brochures, techniques for getting your ads noticed, tips for radio and other media advertising, impact of a web page, and how to find your unique selling point.

A Business Resource Guide will include community information and area organizations available for business assistance. This will be introduced at the Marketing Seminar and the Business Fair.

"With nearly \$1 million dollars in grants coming into our community to help with economic efforts, these projects will be a big boost to our existing businesses and our communities, while improving our quality of life. In economic development one of our goals is that these efforts will be recognized by others and this will encourage individuals and businesses to move here and be part of our community and become involved in our efforts to grow our community and region," said Carla Becker, Hartington Economic Development Coordinator.