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Prairie Hills Small Business Loan Program Updates

Prairie Hills Small Business Loan program funded the new Sapphire Restaurant and Ruby Lounge in Macomb. Owned and operated by Deborah John, the restaurant offers a full menu and offers banquet rooms for weddings and other events.

In December of 2008, Di's Bridal Boutique in Canton received a new business loan. Diane and James Bell own this full service Bridal Boutique. They offer bridal gowns, bridesmaid dresses, prom dresses, tux rental and more. Staff is available to assist with dress selection, tux rental, and much more, for whatever event you may be planning. Please check out the new location at 114 N. Main St., Canton, Illinois.

Most recently, Prairie Hills along with several other local business loan organizations and banks, participated in a consortium loan for a 7 screen Multi-Movie Plex Theatre that will be opening in Macomb, at



Partners in funding the Rialto Theater are from l-r: Macomb Mayor Mick Wisslead; Kim Pierce-MAEDCO; Susan Nash—WIRC; and PHRCD's David King and Jere Greuel-Secretary/Treasurer

the old Eagles Grocery Store. This will provide Macomb with another source of entertainment for local and out of town residents drawing in more revenue and job creation for the City of Macomb.

It is also using an existing older building restoring functionality and improving the building's exterior looks along with generating more traffic for the nearby businesses.

Prairie Hills Small Business Loan Program is working with more applicants expects to close on several more business loans throughout 2009! Please contact the office at (309)833-4747 to find out how Prairie Hills Small Business Loan program can help your business. More information may also be found at www.prairiehillsrcd.org.

Volume 29, Issue 1

Winter/Spring 2009 Edition



PRAIRIE HILLS

Prairie Hills RC&D completes 30 years!

In 1976, the Soil Water Conservation Districts and County Boards of Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties began the formation of Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development.

After a few years, many meetings, and a lot of planning, Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development's application for federal funding through USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service, was officially approved in 1978.

Over those past thirty years, Prairie Hills RC&D has worked with many communities and individuals providing projects and programs improving the quality of life.

One successful program that is creating jobs and developing a stronger economy is the Small Business Loan Program. This program offers flexible terms and low interest rates to help new, existing, and expanding businesses.

There have been 80 loan applications with 52 approved totaling nearly \$15 million with 274 jobs created or retained. Of that amount private funding totaled \$12.3 million, Rural Development USDA funds \$1.7 million and nearly \$1 million Prairie Hills funds.

Prairie Hills has provided better rural fire fighting

capabilities for rural fire districts through the Dry Fire Hydrant program. This program has provided 55 rural home owners with pond sights an un-pressurized hydrant which may lower their homeowners insurance. Rural fire districts hook on to the hydrant to transfer water to tankers. This can decrease the amount of time it takes to retrieve water from a town source, improve efficiencies and save treated water.

Prairie Hills has worked on feasibility studies for greenways and trails and wind energy studies providing valuable information to the communities on the benefits of wind energy and greenways and trails.

Another project Prairie Hills has been working on is the Upper LaMoine River Livestock Exclusion program which offers livestock producers alternatives for watering and grazing livestock.

By fencing livestock out of streams and creeks it prevents erosion along stream banks, water pollution from manure runoff and promotion of a healthier habitat for wildlife by allowing grasses and trees to grow along the streams.

Eight livestock producers have received

nearly \$200,000 to date. One of the more recent programs Prairie Hills has started is the Prairie Land Conservancy [PLC]. The PLC offers landowners the opportunity to conserve their natural areas, open spaces, farmlands and forests through voluntary conservation easements and stewardship plans.

Prairie Hills has also started a literacy program called the READY Bus (reaching, educating, and developing youth). This program is designed to offer pre-K through 8th grade children an educational program along with a free book of their chose to keep.

Over the past thirty years, Prairie Hills has adopted 412 projects, completed and implemented 386 projects.

Prairie Hills is proud to serve the six county communities and would like to thank all those involved in making Prairie Hills so successful over the past 30 years!

NONE of the good works could have been accomplished without the dedication and commitment of our Council members, Executive Board, and committee volunteers over the years.

By Tracy Meredith & Dave King

Inside this issue:

Table with 2 columns: Article Title and Page Number. Includes items like 'Prairie Land Conservancy' (page 2), 'Prairie Hills RC&D Council Meeting and new members' (page 2), 'Prairie Hills RC&D Completed Projects for 2008' (page 3), and 'Small Business Loan Program Update' (page 4).

Prairie Land Conservancy Needs You!

The Prairie Land Conservancy needs you! You are needed to join the PLC to help with land stewardship, building a new conservation land trust [policies, bylaws, trustees, officers, marketing, and much more]. Memberships start at just \$20 per person.

Activity to date is a new logo! Can you find it? We are working with Info-bahn Outfitters to design a web site which will feature all aspects of a conservation land trust, membership and donation information, current events, and much more. Look for www.prairielandconservancy.org
We are working with landowners in



Hancock County who will donate to us nearly 200 ac for the second largest private land preserve in Illinois! We are working with several other landowners about donating conservation easements to protect their land and critical habitats. Call 309.833.4747 to receive a PLC brochure.

Prairie Hills RC&D Annual Council Meeting

Prairie Hills RC&D held its annual Council Meeting at Roseville Lanes in Roseville, Illinois on 1/29/09.

Council members were asked to share projects and events their community is working on. New Business included an overview of Prairie Hills RC&D 2009 Budget, the 2009 Business Plan of Operations, and highlights of the READY Bus program, Prairie Land Conservancy and the Revolving Loan Fund Program. Prairie Hills also welcomed the following five new council members: Lyle Johnson, Knox County Board, Scott Schwerer, McDonough County Board, Abby Sperry, Hancock County Soil Water Conservation



New Council members: Lyle Johnson—Knox County, Abby Sperry—Hancock County, and Don Johnson—McDonough County. Not pictured Scott Schwerer and Elaine Stone.

County. Prairie Hills RC&D welcomes the new members and looks forward to working with them.

District, Don Johnson, McDonough County and Elaine Stone, Fulton

The Prairie Hills RC&D Council also voted Rick Winbigler to serve as the President for the third year. Congratulations and thank you to Rick! Also up for re-election were three seats on the executive board committee from the following counties: Knox, Fulton and Henderson Counties. Bob Champlin was re-elected for Fulton County, Dale Parsons for Knox County and Larry Sterett for Henderson County.

Thank you to the executive board members for the dedication and efforts to make Prairie Hills RC&D and each of its programs run smoothly!

For more information on Prairie Hills RC&D please visit the following website: www.prairiehillsrcd.org

Prairie Hills RC&D 2008 Completed Projects

Project Name	Project Number	Status	Approved FY	Est. End FY	End FY	Benefiting Counties	Est. Project Cost
Henderson County Maps	071-213	Completed	1998	2009	2008	Henderson	\$306,230
Land Conservancy Feasibility Study	999-401	Completed	2007	2007	2008	All Counties	\$3,000
Prairie SMART Literacy Feasibility	999-430	Completed	2007	2008	2008	All Counties	\$10,000
RLF 70-Flores Printing 2	097-432	Completed	2007	2009	2008	Knox	\$46,000
Mined Scarred Land Grant Proposal	999-434	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$6,800
Hazardous Petroleum Grant Proposal	999-435	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$6,800
PLC Capacity Building Grant Proposal	999-433	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$4,000
RLF-69 Graham Field of Dreams	057-427	Completed	2007	2008	2008	Fulton	\$1,000
Prairie Land Conservancy Capacity Building	999-437	Completed	2008	2009	2008	All Counties	\$67,000
14th Annual Fee Hunting Workshop	057-436	Completed	2008	2008	2008	Fulton	\$22,200
RLF-71 Vazquez Gearsoundz	109-44-	Completed	2008	2008	2008	McDonough	\$1,500
DeCounter Livestock Exclusion	109-444	Completed	2008-	2009	2008	McDonough	\$100,200
Hancock County Tillage Day	067-446	Completed	2008	2008	2008	Hancock	\$17,380
RLF-73 Sapphire Restaurant and Ruby Lounge	109-449	Completed	2008	2008	2008	McDonough	\$525,000
Target Literacy Grant Application	999-455	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$500
Scholastic Book Literacy Grant	999-456	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$1,250
Tracy Family Fund Grant	999-454	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$1,250
Area Plan Revision 3	999-457	Completed	2008	2008	2008	All Counties	\$10,000
Total							\$1,130,110