

Marketing Hometown America Comes to Seward County

Seward, Neb. – People move to Seward County and people leave – why? Is it just about the job opportunities or are there other reasons? Are there things Seward County can do to help recruit new residents? Once they are here, what might help them stay?

These questions and others will be addressed in a program, *Marketing Hometown America*, beginning in September.

Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership is sponsoring the program, with support from Great Plains Communications.

“Charlotte Narjes and I are excited to be able to offer this program in Seward County”, said Marilyn Schlake, Extension Educator in Community Development. “It is based on research done right here in Nebraska and it really gives a community and county tools for the future.”

People who participate in the program will:

- Learn what new residents are looking for as they relocate to a rural community;
- Discover often overlooked local assets that attract potential new residents;
- Understand the importance of local family and friend referrals and the positive image that can be projected through a community web site and social media;
- Learn and practice the skills of positive community dialogue to increase involvement and confidence in their ability to market their community;
- Build and implement a marketing action plan that incorporates realistic and achievable actions to successfully market their community; and
- Increase the community’s human capacity and confidence in using the dialogue approach to address future community issues.

The process includes community kick-off events across the county. ***Milford’s is scheduled for Wednesday, September 28, 2016 @7:00 pm, Webermeier Community Room.*** During the Kick-off events, program goals will be shared, local discussion facilitators will be introduced and community members will have opportunity to sign up and participate in local community discussion groups. Participants are given a community guide that provides background information, lists discussion questions and activities.

Each small group holds a series of four meetings where they draft a marketing plan and identify activities they could do in the community to help make the communities within the county and the county as a whole more marketable. Each group reports back at an open community forum where everyone votes on their favorite pieces of the proposed plans and activities and has an opportunity to volunteer to help or lead one of the future actions.

“It helps a community with decisions on how to market themselves to potential new residents.

When new residents find a good community “match”, they stay and everyone benefits – the new residents, the current citizens and the community as a whole,” according to Marilyn Schlake.

**To participate in the program, please join us in Milford on Wednesday, September 28, 2016 @ 7:00 pm, Webermeier Community Room. The more people we have participate, the greater the input. **

Hope to see you there!

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