MINUTES
TRI-COUNTY RETREAT
UNO-THOMPSON ALUMNI CENTER
OMAHA, NEBRASKA
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, 2001
9:00 A.M.

In Attendance

Lancaster County:
Kathy Campbell, Commissioner
Bob Workman, Commissioner
Ray Stevens, Commissioner
Larry Hudkins, Commissioner
Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Bruce Medcalf, County Clerk
Patricia Owen, Deputy County Clerk
Doug Ahlberg, Director Emergency Management
Gordon Kissel, Lobbyist
Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Director

Douglas County:
Mary Ann Borgeson, Commissioner
Mike Boyle, Commissioner
Clare Duda, Commissioner
Carole Woods Harris, Commissioner
Carol Bride Pirsch, Commissioner
Kathleen Kelly, Chief Administrative Officer
Steve Lee, Director Emergency Management
John Wiley, Douglas County Public Health Director
Carol Allensworth, Douglas County Public Health Dept.
Sherri Larsen, County Clerk's Office
Tom Cavanaugh, County Clerk
Steve Walker, Budget & Fiscal Director
Mike Kelly, Lobbyist

Sarpy County:
Inez Boyd, Commissioner
Tim Schram, Commissioner
Jack Postlewiat, Commissioner
Mark Wayne, Chief Administrative Officer
Joe Mastandrea, Director Emergency Management
Deb Houghtaling, County Clerk
Brian Hansen, Budget & Finance Director
Fred Uhe, Deputy County Clerk/ Lobbyist

A meeting between Lancaster County, Douglas County and Sarpy County was held at the University of Nebraska-Omaha's Thompson Alumni Center for the purposes of a tri-county retreat.

"Implications of Smart Growth"

Douglas County Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson welcomed the group to Omaha and introduced Steve Jensen with the City of Omaha Planning Department.

Jensen made a presentation to the group relating to several growth scenarios that could be used in the planning process for managed growth in each county. Discussion was held on the issue of acreage's and the impact of the cost of service to these areas in relation the property tax revenue they generate. Brief discussions were also held on the issue of SID's and their potential costs as well as population density issues in planning. Discussion was also held on the pro's and con's of the I-80 corridor and future rapid transit proposals.

"Legislation"

Gordon Kissel, Mike Kelly and Fred Uhe, lobbyist's for the three counties, gave a summary of the Legislature's Special Session and the budget impacts of the final bills sent to the Governor for signature. Discussion on LB692 (Tobacco Settlement Money) and the issues of K-12 Education funding were brought out as issues that may be 'on the budget cutting table' for the next session of the Legislature.

Eagan distributed the Lancaster County's Legislative Proposal's for the 2002 Legislative Session for the groups discussion. Eagan briefly outlined each issue to the group.

Discussion was held by the group on the new growth industry, the Criminal Justice System/Mental Health, and the financial impacts that they are having. Discussion was held on the best way to approach the Legislature with County concerns over State bills that are passed that become unfunded mandates. Boyle suggested the three counties lobbyist's work together to come up with a legislative strategy for this and other county issues. The Tri-County group will meet again on January 18th, 2002 in Lincoln, Nebraska to discuss the recommendations of the lobbyists. The meeting will be held at the Lancaster County Events Center at 9:00 a.m.

"Open Discussion"

Borgeson asked the rest of the County Commissioner's how they are handling their County Fairs and funding issues for the fairs. Lancaster County indicated they currently fund their fair with approximately $150,000. Hudkins indicated that there are currently about 17,000 kids that are participating in the 4-H programs.

Discussion was held on the issue of Extension Office Programs. Douglas County indicated that this was an area they considered not funding since it was not a mandated service the County had to provide. Douglas County was surprised to learn how much support there was for the program, even from the urban areas of the city and the program was left in place. Lancaster County indicated that their level of support for the Extension program was in the $600,000 to $700,000 range. Sarpy County is a partner in the Douglas County program.

"Domestic Preparedness"

Doug Ahlberg, Lancaster County Emergency Management gave a brief summary of the training and equipment issues in Lancaster County. He reported on some Department of Defense funded training relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and First Responder Training. Ahlberg indicated that on November 27th, 2001, a table-top exercise would be held in cooperation with the Federal government. Ahlberg stated that we cannot be totally ready for disaster, but can be ready to respond.

Al Burndt, Assistant Director- State of Nebraska Emergency Management, spoke to the group and briefly discussed the Leadership Council, of which the Lt. Governor is Chair. Burndt spoke on the issues of the State Emergency Operations Plan and how it relates to the Local Emergency Operations Plans.

Burndt indicated that all local emergency managers were currently compiling lists of their at risk infrastructures and they were being compiled into a database to assist in protecting those assets.

Burndt indicated that it was the responsibility of the local jurisdiction to provide the first response to emergency situations, but that should the emergency surpass what the local jurisdiction could handle, the State would come in at the request of the chief elected official. He commented that "the State program is consequence management".

Steve Lee, Douglas County Emergency Manager, spoke on their training programs that had been held thanks to a $320,000 training grant they had received. He briefly discussed the 9-11 impact they had felt due to community fears over the Anthrax issue. He felt they have primarily been dealing with people who just need to be talked through their apprehension.

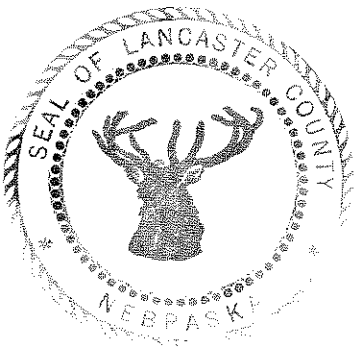
Joe Mastandrea, Sarpy County Emergency Manager, spoke of their work in assisting Offutt Air Force Base with some security issues following 9-11. He indicated they are working closely with the media to get the panic factor down. Mastandrea commented that they were unable to get the same training grant monies as Lancaster and Douglas due to population issues.

John Wiley, Douglas County Health Department Director discussed the role of the CDC (Center for Disease Control) in providing central guidelines. He indicated that the CDC did not respond in a timely manner in getting the information out on Anthrax. Discussion was held on the CDC stockpile of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment that can be accessed at a Federal level by the Governor if needed. The equipment would be flown to Lincoln on a 767, stored at the National Guard Armory and protected by the Nebraska State Patrol. The National Guard, FED-EX or UPS will assist in the delivery of the supplies to communities.

"HIPAA"

Sharon Smith, Douglas County Risk Manager, spoke to the group about new regulations that will require that any document that may have medical information on it relating to employees must be considered a confidential document. Fines can be assessed for non-compliance beginning in 2003. Various types of documents that may fall into this category were discussed by the group.

Douglas County Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson thanked the group for their participation and the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Owen

Bruce Medcalf, County Clerk