

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative  
Executive Committee Meeting Agenda  
Conference Call  
Thursday, June 13, 2019  
11:00 AM

I. Roll Call:

Committee Members Present:

Lt. Governor Gregg	Sandy Ehrig	Hollie McCormick
Chris Ball	Dave Duncan	Emily Schmitt
Jenae Jenison	Steve Gilbert	David Barker

Committee Members Absent:

Jim Thompson

Others on Call:

Rand Fisher	Taylor Collins	Amy Kuhlers
Logan Shine	Liesl Seabert	James Hoelscher

- II. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the November 30, 2018 Executive Committee meeting had been distributed. Amy noted the meeting time was PM opposed to AM and has made the edit. David Barker made a motion to approve the minutes as edited and Emily Schmitt seconded. Passed unanimously.

III. Discussion of ERI Task Force Next Steps - Lt. Governor:

The Lt. Governor outlined two main objectives for each Task Force (TF). One implementing programs outline in the 2019 ERI Act and appropriations, and another to develop additional recommendations based on submitted ideas for legislative consideration. Objectives will be slightly different for each of the three.

a. Investing Task Force:

- i. Legislation provided \$100,000 for housing assessments and the TF will need to develop standards for grant criteria and awarding. A TF subcommittee may be the easiest way to proceed and can then bring input and recommendations to the full TF for consideration.
- ii. Legislature also approved \$300,000 (\$100,000 for each TF) for rural innovation grants to be applied towards scalable projects under each. A similar program was created for STEM and we should be able to replicate/modify the grant program from the standards already in place. Each TF will be charged with making decisions on awards distribution.
- iii. Develop strategies for housing infill development by looking at existing abandoned and dilapidated housing. There are several state government programs currently in place, but they need to be reviewed and streamlined. TF tasked with identifying how programs can be more effective and easier to negotiate

b. Growing Task Force – Sandy Ehrig:

- i. See ii under the Investing TF.

- ii. TF will be charged with developing a rural leadership program, looking at what young leaders need to know to take a leadership role in a community. Thinks this would be an advanced training, aimed at those who have already taken some leadership training through ABI or other.
- iii. TF to explore how creative placemaking can be utilized as a rural development strategy.

c. Connecting Task Force:

- i. See ii under the Investing TF.
- ii. Legislature did provide some funding and updates to the Rural Broadband Program, but not as much as wanted. Public and legislators need to know how important this is, so is asking TF to develop a strategy to drive applications for the grant program to help demonstrate need. Also need to build awareness of the importance of broadband for the state. Being intentional about where Connecting TF meetings are held could help demonstrate this. For example, a portion of a meeting may include a demonstration of rural telehealth, or at the national driving center at U of I where they are testing driverless vehicles. Visually help educate the public.
  - 1. Rand – precision farming will be another driver of broadband utilization and might be another avenue to pursue.
  - 2. David – can help coordinate with U of I and ISU.

IV. Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Meeting Plan – Sandy Ehrig:

- a. After the 2018 Iowa Rural Summit, the Iowa Rural Development Council was invited by the City of Bancroft to hold a meeting in their community. It was well attended and supported locally. At this year's Summit, Mount Ayr invited the IRDC to their community, and it seemed like a good fit to also include the ERI TF members to give them an opportunity to interact with the community. The meeting is scheduled for July 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11:00 – 4:00 at the Mount Ayr Golf and Country Club, with the proposed agenda topics:
  - i. Resource fair of local resource providers and a chance for interaction.
  - ii. Small group discussions and brainstorming on ERI key issues. IRDC members will have an opportunity to mix with ERI TF members.
  - iii. Learning from locals to discuss local efforts and challenges. Walking tours of PodiumInk – a creative design company, and Ringgold County Hospital to look at challenges and opportunities in rural healthcare.

Sandy will create an Eventbrite link for RSVP, which will be sent to task force members from Amy, and from Sandy for IRDC members.
- b. Lt. Governor: It will be great to see the integration of the ERI TF and IRDC members and will be a good opportunity to learn from the community. Asked for questions from committee.
  - i. Emily Schmitt: With the task forces looking at new recommendations, is there still opportunity for idea submission?
  - ii. Lt. Governor: Yes, ideas can still be submitted via the website. His office will provide any preparation materials ahead of the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and members can then have more time to meet on some of the issues to be reviewed. Is looking at holding another joint meeting towards the end of the year for final recommendations to prepare for the next legislative session.

- V. Miscellaneous Updates
  - a. Need to inventory TF members as there have been some retirements, employment changes, etc. and some may not be able to be committee to meeting. Wants to ensure we have an active membership.
  - b. Center for Rural Community Revitalization: They have chosen the new director, and Liesl Seabert will be starting on July 1, (confidential until announced).
  
- VI. Questions and Comments from Executive Committee:
  - a. Hollie: Has been invited by the REC national association to testify with small group of congressmen in Washington June 25<sup>th</sup>, on FCC reporting and the challenges associated with the faulty broadband mapping reports.
  - b. Rand – On Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, IEDA is hosting a workshop on Opportunity Zones, how to market, regulations, etc., and on Aug 15<sup>th</sup> a special one-day seminar on Foreign Trade Zones and how they can be leveraged.
  - c. Sandy: Session at recent ABI conference provided by Emily on the ERI Initiative was great.
  - d. Emily: They had about 90 people at that breakout session with the charge to do something to further rural Iowa. Also, ISU is hosting a rural Iowa symposium on Aug 15.
  
- VII. Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by David Barker, seconded by Hollie McCormick. Unanimously passed.