

National conference delegates getting closer look at NESDCAP/NESDEC projects June 7

Five buses carrying more than 200 representatives from 38 states will be traveling through Sisseton and the surrounding area on June 7 to get a closer look at some of the projects that have been carried out by the Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program (NESDCAP) and the Northeast South Dakota Economic Corporation (NESDEC).

The tour is part of a four-day conference sponsored by the Rural Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC). The conference brings together development corporation representatives from LISC agencies in the 38 states who come together to share ideas on how to encourage and promote business, housing and economic development in their communities.

Each year the conference is held in a state where a Rural LISC agency is located.

"We have been a member since 1995," said Lori Finnesand, NESDEC Executive Director, "and this year they asked us to host the conference."

NESDCAP/NESDEC is the only agency in South

Dakota that is part of the Rural LISC group. Because of the number of people attending the conference, and the need for convenient flight connections, most of the conference will be held at the Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center in Sioux Falls, SD.

In addition to attending the conference, participants are also taken on tours to see how agencies have used grant monies they have received.

On Thursday, June 7, conference attendees will step on to five chartered buses in Sioux Falls and head north. Finnesand, along with NESDCAP Executive Director Marcia Erickson and NESDCAP Housing Director Lori Moen, will each ride on one of the buses and serve as tour guides.

Their first stop will be at the Redlin Center in Watertown. There two other NESDCAP employees – Sandy Leiseth and Maureen Nelson – will board buses to assist with tour commentary.

The group will then continue on to Sisseton where they will tour Woodland Cabinetry and

examples of homes provided through the Governor's House program.

Rural LISC is geared to creating sustainable rural communities. In 2000, the corporation created a video that included a segment on the Veblen, SD, community. In 2007, conference attendees will get to visit Veblen in person and see how it has changed.

The tour will end with a barbeque at Prairie Sky Ranch – complete with music and wagon rides – before returning to Sioux Falls that night. "They wanted to see where the buffalo roam," said Erickson, "so they're looking forward to the visit at the ranch!"

Together NESDCAP and NESDEC serve 25 counties covering 27, 166 square miles with a population of 180, 965. In the business assistance areas alone, NESDEC has made 1,250 loans, amounting to \$30.7 million to 843 businesses generating nearly 5,900 jobs.

She continued, "We see this (hosting the conference) as a chance to market our agencies nationwide," said Erickson, "and show them what we do."