

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

o-u-n-c-i-l, I am getting an accent.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you Wyneckta. So Mathy, do you have any final comments that you would like to share with the council?

MR. STANISLAUS: Sure, one I enjoyed this conversation (laughing), but I want to continue the conversation. So, if you have any immediate thoughts right after that Pat Carry, Pat where are you? Stand up (laughing). Okay, shoot her an email but I would like to kind of schedule kind of a series of calls to really kind of hone in on a strategy.

So after this meeting let's kind of think about a sequence of that and I think I have also served on the NEJAC before. I did real productive work like it happened, if we do this in kind of an --- way so I will leave it up to you to kind of figure out a schedule for doing that. Thank you.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you so much for that offer and thanks for joining us.

MR. STANISLAUS: Thank you.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. If the next panel can come up and in the meantime Lisa Garcia is going to be making an announcement.

MS. GARCIA: Good afternoon, hi everyone. I just wanted to let everyone know that EPA is releasing its new draft for voluntary guidelines for selecting safe school locations and so this is where EPA provides new tools for communities making school siting decisions and it is going out today at 2:00 so I guess that is happening right now.

It is out for public comment for 90 days and comments will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on February 18th, 2011. You can go to the EPA schoolsiting.icfi.com for information or I am sure it is going to be on our main website.

But I would definitely encourage you, I know some of you were actually part of the committee that helped to draft some of the recommendations for that guidance, so I would encourage you to look at that and certainly go back to your communities and other members to talk about the school, the draft that is out. Thank you.

Environmental Justice Challenges Facing Rural Communities Panel

MS. YEAMPIERRE: We are very excited to have you join us today. This is the first time, unless someone wants to correct me there is always that one person around who does that and I may be wrong it happens, but I think this is the first time that we actually have an opportunity to engage rural communities that the NEJAC does that and we think that it is extremely important.

Some of us come from urban communities but we understand the important relationship between our communities and yours and the interconnectedness and we think that it is impossible to address Environmental Justice issues without addressing rural issues. So welcome.

I am going to introduce you. I am going to begin Vanessa Frazier. Vanessa Frazier is Executive Director of Howardville Community Betterment a non-profit community based organization that works to initiate and implement programs that address health disparities and the pressing health needs of at risk infants and youth in undeserved communities in the Missouri boot hill.

The community betterment also offers educational presentations on health topics and serves as a resource and referral contact for other rural communities. The impact of the environment on human life in rural areas caused Ms. Frazier to pursue studies in child development with a focus on psychology and the fusing of environmental laws and dispute resolution alternatives that contribute to the development, health, well being and productivity of every citizen.

She has over 33 years of experience in community based organization, volunteering, coordination, supervising, budgeting, surveys, data analysis, budget monitoring, assessments and working with diversity in communities.

Marcie McLaughlin is the Chief Executive Officer for the Midwest Assistance Program and she recently joined that program as its CEO. For the past six years, Marcie McLaughlin served as the Director of Constituent Relations for the Rural Policy Research Institute in Washington, DC which conducts policy relevant research and facilitates public dialogue to assist policymakers in understanding the rural impact of public policies and programs.

In 1995, Ms. McLaughlin found at Minnesota Rural Partners the State Rural Development Council and served as its Executive Director for 10 years. She was a Bush Foundation Leadership Fellow in 2002 and holds a master's in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Welcome.

I don't have biographies for the other two members of the panel, so when it is time for

you to get to the mic if you could just say a little bit about yourselves I would really appreciate that.
So, we will begin with Ms. Frazier. Welcome.

**Presentation by Vanessa Frazier, Executive Director,
Howardville, Missouri Community Betterment**

MS. FRAZIER: Thank you. I do have a presentation prepared, there it goes thank you very much. I will begin by requesting the next slide please.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: I just want to let the members of the council know that you actually have her presentation in your package if you want pull that up. They were handed out this morning.

MS. FRAZIER: I included this slide to I guess give you a general idea of where the community is that I am from in Missouri. This is basically known as the boot hill of Missouri because of its shape as the heel of a boot.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: These counties in the boot hill of Missouri serve as the portion of the state, the only portion of the state, that is included in the Mississippi Delta which is mostly absent in this part of the State of Missouri but it is good news to know that the Department of the Delta Regional Authority is working with EPA, I got that on a list --- and so I am proud to know that. I hope some good things come from that.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: Most of you who have this presentation I am not going to cover all of this because you have the information but there are some things I would like to say about it just to give you some of the ideas about how our community started, where we went, where we got stuck and now that we are moving forward.

Changes in the Department of the Boot Hill Regional Planning Commission which is agency that served six counties of the boot hill. President Clinton authorized a changing of structure department heads and these structure of changes were to take place in 2010 which it has done and that is the causing of some of the grass at the lower bottom part of the presentation is the ones that we recently received.

The Mayor has a meeting tomorrow with the contractors and the Regional Planning Commission people to get these projects started. Some of the, I guess you would say more communities that have a lot of things going for them are kind of upset about those two sewer projects because mostly no community has ever received two grants and being this is a minority community they are really upset as to how did they achieve that success of getting those two grants. So they are really going to be upset to find out that we have another street servicing project coming up on the Hills.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: Some of the EJ challenges in the rural community, I will not go over this slide as well, you have that information in your presentation but it will serve as I guess a reformer if you will, to speak to the next slide.

Speaking the exploitation and degradation of rural communities in the Boot Hill of Missouri and I would like to say across the country, I have been to several rural communities across the country and have traveled this country extensively.

They are in particular in our area there are universities and organizations who use our negative health data to write grants and these grants create jobs and to sustain these jobs for two to four years and the citizens of these affected communities are asked to volunteer.

But this ensures the cycle of poverty continues and one university in particular, Southeast Missouri State University, have professors there who are concerned about the plight of rural communities. They sought after and received a grant to study the poverty in the rural communities of the Boot Hill of Missouri.

That is where you got your 95 percent of the tumors that were extracted and analyzed they contained pesticides. This study was not accepted by the University but they did allow them to present this information to the public.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: Some of the challenges from the local and State government is with the elderly and grants and housing loans and more particular that is a serious barrier in the rural parts of the country because the way things are set up the elderly 62 years and older can get the grant which is \$7,000 to repair their homes.

Adults have to get a loan which is low interest rates, they say one to two percent, but when you live in a poverty stricken area of the country that is no good, you can not afford to get the loan and plus your credit rating is not 750. So, if it was hard in that we wouldn't be living there. But they massed to me either attachments to the grants that are given to seniors, they somehow encourage them to seek the loans as well.

They have to live in these homes for three years after the grants are completed, if they don't then this whole entire and this property reverts back to these agencies that provides these loans.

The weatherization programs, they have been given a boost of stimulus funding to repair homes in these rural communities that are very much dilapidated and the houses are basically rotting from the frames. You see new agency vehicles with their new logos but you do not see any housing repairs taking place and when you call and get your application in they will tell the waiting list is two years and that fusion of funds was there designed to remove and alleviate their waiting lists.

But within two days after you get your application in and call to see where you are on the list, you are still informed that the waiting list is two years old. So, some of their local and State agencies that have grants to help the communities get needed services they require a match and it is not in kind they want a cash match and how can you provide cash match when you have not tax space?

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: Some of the Federal challenges to small and rural communities is that grants are not designed with rural communities in mind. You have city lifers who are the reviewers and they know nothing of the rural areas and they have friends and cohorts and supervisors and they make sure these grants are geared towards their city.

Debriefings are good because you get to tell them the problems and you get to hear why your application was not successful. Some of the pointers that they pointed out of why the application was not successful were insulting. They were just designed to use the so good opinion to reject the application so rural communities suffer with that.

There are frequent re-writing of guidance which is good and it causes people who write grants in rural areas to pay close attention to the guidance because it often changes. There is a parasite versus a welfare mentality among our Congressmen. We do have one in our area who have been given eight million dollars to an agency in Washington, DC every year to study poverty and we are her constituents who is living in poverty who better can tell her what the problems are.

The criteria is hard to meet meaning the private sector partners do not exist. In rural communities you have nothing, all you have are the citizens in their homes and whatever transportation means that they have.

So some of these criterias that are written in these grants, they are very hard for rural communities to apply for them so sometimes there is a mistake in presumption that there needs to be capacity building within these communities. The capacity building is there, they just cannot meet the criteria because they are designed more for urban and cities.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: Some additional challenges to Federal grants are an assistance and investigations are glazed over, requirements for minority contractors are an area of workers in the effected community they are not honored, they are not honored.

We need LEED in the middle of the country. I visited the LEED building here in Kansas City a couple years ago. I was here for the nuts and bolts of the brownfield conference and we had the opportunity to visit this LEED building that was of green design and I know in a rural community that is exactly what we could use.

We do have buildings that are brownfield(s) within the community and communities are isolated in rural areas. If they could have a building such as this to accommodate their community citizens in case of a disaster something that could contain them and the Red Cross can come and assist them.

There is a lot of different things they could do with this building if it was designed in the way that it could give the most benefits to communities, but without that those objectives are hard to obtain as well.

We have some organizations there that are paying \$5,000 a month rent with Federal funds which equates to \$60,000 a year but they cannot buy buildings but you can rent and we also have only one State Certification Inspector so how can we get a grant and honor the contracts of requirements, WBE contractors when they don't exist.

We have a long list of people who are in line to wait to be certified but with only one State certification inspection that is going to be hard to obtain too so grants are elusive in those areas of compliance. Some of those on a liable cause are a big need and would be a great thing to help and rule communities across this country.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: A culture competency issues, there is a many short story that I could tell regarding my own life but I would save that for later if anyone is interested, but that is the primary root cause of rural communities ethnocentric that has been feeding and encouraged by the other two competencies beneath it blindness and imposition.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: Acculturation is what we call sell outs that live in your community, so don't ever forget that, there are those that do that. An assimilation is basically something that we don't normally deal with but in one community in particular, Kennett which is in Duncan County, has a very large Hispanic population and one thing I can say about them is they will not change their culture.

They will not talk to you. They will not open their doors. You are going to have to meet them where they are and it is a hard, hard thing to gain their trust. So that is one population that I know will adhere to assimilation tactics that are forced on them.

These two competencies is what is really needed in rural communities all across the country when you are addressing environmental issues.

(Slide)

MS. FRAZIER: My final slide I would basically like to say that immune systems, one point in particular is so stretched and so thin that people do not understand it and some of the things that you have to do in order to help the people is to educate them. You have to tell them exactly up front what is going on and let them decide the best issues of recourse of action that they need to take.

One primary example is we had an HIV/AIDS Program that came to the Missouri Boot Hill, the very first one in the history of the HIV epidemic. The powers and brokers that be in the Boot Hill part of Missouri wanted that program, they wanted to initiate it and the funders knew that they were not going to do what they were supposed to do by the grant and the people who were suffering with the disease.

So, instead of them allowing a minority organization to spearhead their program they refused to give them space to operate the program from so the program left the Boot Hill and went two counties up over in north, it finally phased out. So there is no HIV/AIDS Program. We do educational presentations but that is a critical need because with the contamination of our drinking water, one glass could be the end of their life and this is information most of them don't know.

But I know all of them just about in the Boot Hill, the six county areas, because I do presentations to local councils, city councilmen, who also some of the Aldermen are farmers so it is hard to get them to understand things that are important to their communities.

But if you are having a community based organization we should make sure that it is community based. Our community based organization is composed of citizens that live in Howardville, all citizens. Our Board of Directors are seniors. We have youth and senior committees, so whatever goes on in their community you can be rest assured that they are citizens at the table and not other organizations are representing their own interest. Thank you.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. Marcie McLaughlin?

**Presentation by Marcie McLaughlin,
Chief Executive Officer, Midwest Assistance Program**

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. As you flew to the middle of this vast and diverse country you saw the effects of human actions on the land. Rivers were damned for power production, flood control or recreation, mountaintops were removed for their mineral extractions, forests were harvested for their timber, groundwater pumped for irrigation, ribbons of highways and railways across the landscape for the movement of people and goods.

Livestock operations were concentrated in open areas, wind towers on the hillsides, a patchwork of fields, farm fields and pastures, oil refineries producing energy and much, much open space.

In that open space you saw small rural communities dotted across that landscape that were distant from metropolitan areas and from the resources that those metro areas can provide.

Yesterday you heard the results of those land use practices of the people living in the space. Those folks were in urban, suburban and rural areas and as you have mentioned so often there is indeed a connection.

I want to thank you for this invitation to meet with you today and to discuss these issues with the panel members, with my other presenters and to put before some of the specific challenges that rural communities face. I was privileged to be here yesterday for those comments and many of the issues raised in communities are the same whether they are rural or urban.

I am the Director of the Midwest Assistance Program called MAP. MAP is one of six organizations that are part of the rural community assistance partnership that covers the entire country including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. MAP states include Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming and the community that Vanessa represented is one that we have worked in as well as the Wind River community that Jolene occupies.

So right there you may see the diversity even within the nine states and complicate that by six more times and we know that each landscape is unique and each approach to their environmental challenges need to be place spaced.

The communities we work in are under 2,000 with an average size of 800 and most often these communities are first cited by EPA or State agencies of having their wastewater or their water systems out of compliance.

Now, these communities are too small and too poor to afford consultings on their own. They are geographically remote with limited availability of professional consultants. They are unable to independently compete for those limited public grants and low cost loans.

They have limited knowledge of the process and the procedures related to the regulatory compliance. They possess limited understanding of the ownership responsibilities that the local community or the local boards would have related to operation of a large wastewater system or water system.

The community has high unemployment or underemployment. They not only have aging systems that need attention but they have aging populations. What they do have is great passion for living in their space and wanting to make their communities the best that they can for themselves and for their children.

So the RCAP system, the Rural Community Assistance Program, was started during the war on poverty in the 60's as a water demonstration project, finding its home within the community action agencies and over the past 40 years thousands of small rural communities have been served throughout the nation. MAP and the RCAP partners funding sources are public and we receive and manage several of EPA funds including the EPA Drinking Water and Wastewater Technical Assistance Program, EPA National Brownfield Training and in our case EPA Region 5 Work With the Tribes in Training Program.

We also received funding from USDA Rural Development and you will hear more about that as well as many of the State agencies that have past due funds from the Federal Government in the revolving loan, if I get this right, the State revolving loan, right.

Okay, a critical part of our funding however comes from through the Department of Health and Human Services through the Office of Community Services and this is for capacity development. It is a very unique amount of small unique flexible that allows my staff to respond to community requests to do the pre-development in the capacity developing work in communities that don't have a Vanessa there to convene, identify, help them through the technical as well as the community system to get grants, to get operators, to get their environment and their facilities up to code. So we work with these communities in the construction, the repair and the operation of the systems.

So I have provided you with some information about MAP, about our newsletter and the executive summary of our past year's work. So as I said, I joined you yesterday for the public comment period. You heard from people on the land about their specific place spaced environmental challenges. Many effects are the result of a globalized economy, the movement of good and services concentration of animal agriculture are manufacturing production and natural resource extraction.

So much of what I have to say of course will endorse the comments that you all have made over the last 24 hours. But changing settlement patterns are also affecting the place that these activities occur in rural places.

Once located in urban areas, many industries and productions have now moved to rural areas where land is readily available, perhaps the public response would be more welcoming with communities considering the jobs created by these activities as a fair trade off to the perceived

environmental threats.

Rural communities across the United States are and have been for a long time places where poverty, political disenfranchisement, environmental degradation are common place. Rural residents are on the front line of experiencing the negative impacts of many of our nations environmental challenges.

Rural communities are also evolving contrary to the conventional images most people in rural America do not farm, they are increasingly new immigrants to this country and are people of color.

So the situation in rural America is not monolithic and will not be solved with the traditional frameworks that our nation has used to address poverty. The problems rural America faces in relationship to the environment differ from urban areas and perhaps their role in improving that environment are different too.

So just quickly some of the challenges as requested, we are talking about water quality and quantity. We talked about mountaintop removal, the effects of pesticides used on human health in rural communities, the mobile workforce that is employed in those fields and subject to those pesticides, the effect of concentrated animal agriculture activity not only in the production but also in the processing and the effect of pesticide use on traditional cultural use of native plants, animals, waterways and this is particularly true within Tribal communities.

Climate change. Climate change impacts on health, rural health, and economies particularly in communities where fire adapted eco systems, long exposure to smoke and all this during the fire season. Effective climate change on the coastal communities, on the fishing and commerce and on those communities that are impacted by hurricanes, floodings and disturbance which I don't have to tell you all about.

Certainly hazardous and nuclear waste disposal and special risk to youth and problems associates with inadequate housing. We will be discussing, I hope there are questions about the financing piece but a challenge about the finance I am here to say that probably the most recent challenge to financing of any of these projects is the huge national debt that we have and the recent elections.

Just by way of information, 15 of the 25 Democrats on the House Ag Committee were defeated in this past election and there is where much of our rural funding comes from. So, we will definitely see some impacts there.

I know my time is limited here but the lessons learned quickly are we need to build capacity within rural communities within those rural individuals. We need to be innovative and have cost effective solutions.

There are jurisdictional and structural challenges to those communities and we indeed need to partner with anyone and everyone who would help those communities including the RD&C councils, so good for you, there is a myriad of local, regional, State and Federal organizations that impact rural as quickly as all of those agencies can be working closer together I think benefits all of us. So, I look forward to your questions when we are done. Thank you.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you Ms. McLaughlin. Joining us also is Michael Linder who is the Director of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. Welcome.

***Presentation by Michael Linder,
Director, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality***

MR. LINDER: Yes, thank you. Oh my gosh, you all have been seating here two days, you must be getting tired. I would not be offended if you took up, not all of you, left but if you feel the need to get up and stretch please feel free. Hopefully this is very informal.

It is a pleasure to be here. I have been Director of Nebraska's Department of Environmental Quality since 1999. I had the pleasure of serving at the same time as Lang Marsh was Director of Oregon DEQ. In fact, in talking about small communities and outreach to small communities which I will be talking about, I think Oregon is one of the first states really to embark on that and I think it was probably under Lang's guidance if my history is correct.

I set up a little PowerPoint based partly on the thought that maybe a couple of you haven't been to Nebraska or if you have that you weren't just going across it on the Interstate, so I want to give you just a few facts about Nebraska because it is helpful to the discussion and I am going to be talking about very small communities in our state and the challenges they face and so I think you need to understand a little bit about the demographics of our state.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: Population is just under two million people. We generally track a little bit behind the National meeting household income, as you can see on that slide.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: And the distribution of the people in our state is we have a lot of very small communities in our classification system the villages of our communities are one to 800 and of the 530 some communities, 383 of those are villages.

We have a lot of counties, it is a big state, we have 76,000 square miles divided up into 93 counties and some of those counties are very small and have only one community in them.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: And here is a picture of the state of where the communities are. The brown dots are the communities larger, now I am talking about 300 population, communities larger than 300 are the brown dots, the yellow dots are less than 300 and actually half of the population of the state is east of Lincoln which is in the eastern practically fifth of the state. So most of the rural population or the least distant kind of isolated rural is in the western part of the state.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: As far as the movement of people in the state, you can see the larger yellow squares or green I guess squares there are the larger communities and the yellow dots represent communities that are under 300 and are losing population and the brown dots are smaller communities that are gaining in population since I think 1950.

So you can see that our rural areas are largely becoming depopulated essentially and I am going to show you some specific facts about this area up in here and in particular Blaine County which is here.

This is a rural area, largely ranch country, it is the Sand Hills if you have heard of the Sand Hills of Nebraska ranchers, cow cap operations and small communities.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: I am going to show you the five lowest meeting household income counties in our state, Blaine County, Boyd, Keya Paha, McPherson and Rock Counties. Some of these, I don't know if they still have a distinction of being among the lowest income counties in the country. In one of the recent rankings of the 100 lowest income counties in the country we had something like six or seven of them and these were among them.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: You can see, if you remember the medium household income for Nebraska is about \$42,000 so these counties have significantly less income and I am just going to take the top one, they are alphabetical. I just took the top one yesterday and kind of broke it down into the communities that are in that.

If you remember I pointed to this county that is kind of in the middle of the state up in the Sand Hills. Three communities, the county seat is Brewster which has a population now of 27 people. They didn't designate that as a county seat because it was the big town, it happens to be in the middle of the county.

But you can see that these are very small communities. They are pretty isolated Dunning to Halsey is probably 25 miles, so any hope of trying to regionalize drinking water or wastewater is economically not viable and out of these towns in Blaine County I will just point out Dunning, Dunning is a town that is on our -- my agency does the State revolving fund for wastewater and drinking water projects and Dunning happens to be on our intended use plan.

Its lagoon system is really pretty much in complete failure. It was built in I think with some of the early construction grant money probably back in the early 70's has pretty much been neglected since then. The cost to upgrade is almost a half million dollars and as you can see that is divided by 65 people which is probably half of probably 30 hookups.

So, the affordability index I think that EPA recognizes it being affordable is two percent of medium household income which would be almost \$600.00 a year, pretty significant when your income is, your household income, is \$28,500. So, some real significant challenges for these communities.

A couple more things about Blaine County, the average age or the percentage of people living in Blaine County at 65 years or older is 26 percent as compared to Nebraska's average of 13 percent so it is an aging county population wise. As you can see, the population is declining.

Persons per square mile is .8. The Nebraska average is 22 folks per square mile and

less than one in Blaine County and it is about 711 square miles so it is a pretty good sized area.

I tell you this not just because of Dunning but just as an example of some of the challenges these communities face, aging population, a fixed income as you can see a fairly low income and so a number of years ago we started several efforts in my agency in dealing with environmental issues that face these communities.

(Slide)

MR. LINDER: We started with the very modest grant program where we formed a team within the agency and also within other State agencies and gave communities a very small amount of money, I think it was like a \$10,000 grant that would allow them to look at all the environmental issues facing their community and to rank them, prioritize them and then we would work with them on kind of working down their priority list.

By far and away the biggest challenge these communities face is water and drinking water systems and aging infrastructure and wastewater. So, we really even kind of stopped the broad focus of that because it was almost just obvious with working with the communities that at least in the things that my agency does water and wastewater were the main focus.

So, we were able to give these small grants. We had actually direct them appropriation for Nebraska to work on this project and have since run out of money in that program. But the takeaway from that is that we had tremendous success in getting communities with that small amount of seed money to at least look at their issues and begin a planning process.

Since that time, that has probably been 10 years ago that we began that, many of those initial modest planning efforts have realized with a project in the community which as I mentioned a small amount of money and a great deal of patience in working with the communities directly is kind of the key to success there.

We still maintain one or two staff people that work with those communities directly and keep in contact with them. We find by far and away the greatest success is keeping in contact with the clerk, often a part time clerk that works in the town, and our agency has kind of struck up a relationship with the State Association of the Clerks, I am not sure exactly what their acronym is, and that has been very beneficial because they are the ones who decide whether the letter from our agency goes in the trash or goes to the Board or the council, so we found it very important to keep in contact with them.

Another effort that has been, I think pretty successful in our state is what we call the WWAC, the Water and Wastewater Advisory Committee, and that is made up of my agency, our Nebraska Department of Economic Development which has the CDBG block grant money, USDA Rural Development, which we are going to hear from in a moment, and also our Department of Health and Human Services which has some funding available as well.

That group literally looks at communities that have gone a modest way in planning for a project, literally takes that community and figures out the best funding mix for the town with the goal of keeping the monthly fees that will result from a project well below that two percent because we feel that two percent is a very high number for a lot of our communities. So, we try to keep that at less than a percent of meeting household income if we can.

So, it often results in a mix of ESDA money and State Revolving Fund money, whatever pots of money that group can find has been a real successful, I think, advocacy group that meet every month and has yielded a lot of results.

The last bullet there is we are really meeting in-house and trying to figure out how will these communities survive? If you listen to a number of the environmental and senator initiatives and necessary initiatives are dealing with nutrient standards and other very aggressive wastewater standards that these communities literally cannot afford to meet.

So, we are internally trying to come up with an approach that will look at the demographics of a community, economic base of the community, the long term viability of communities and hopefully give us the ability then to determine the best type of facility for that community.

A lot of times with working with engineers it is just off the shelf, we will get a 20 year design and here is what it needs to be, et cetera or some of our loans are 20 and even 30 and I think even maybe longer than that years of payback.

Well, many of these towns may not be around that long and so does it really make sense to commit those communities that far into the future? So, that is kind of a work in progress still at this point.

I guess the main takeaway if you are looking for the best ways to work with small

communities I think the little bit of money, seed money, the little bit of attention there but really good communication and a lot of patience are the best remedies that we have found. So, I will turn it over to Richard.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. Mr. Richard Boyles is Area Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Welcome.

***Presentation by Richard Boyles,
Area Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development***

MR. BOYLES: Thank you. Since you didn't have my bio I will kind of string my bio through my presentation if that is okay with you all and I guess I am kind of the last one in the long stream here, so I may be between you and a break, so I recognize that right up front.

Thank you for inviting us here today and bringing some light into rural communities. I could echo everything everyone has said, rural communities are not unlike our urban partners. The complexity primarily is in the fact that someone like me, I am from Jewel County, Kansas. Jewel County, Kansas may not mean anything to you all but we out migrated two-thirds of our population in that county. We are the poorest county in Kansas since the 1950's.

So, I have worked the majority of my 20 plus years on the policy side of this agency and have decided that through a lot of searching and deciding that maybe the best place for me is actually back here working and implementing some of the things that the policymakers in DC have tried to accomplish.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: So one thing that we like to do is we like to look at ourselves as being an agency that can ask the tough questions, what is needed to improve and maintain quality of life in rural America? We offer some 40 programs. They are strung between three business areas. Many of those areas have been described by Marcie, Mike and Vanessa, successful and we struggle in some of those areas.

We are a big agency and I don't think anyone that works for the Department of Agriculture Rural Development is going to say that we don't struggle because maintaining quality of life and improving quality life in rural America is very different and it is very challenging.

Understanding the mechanics of rural America, many times you have farmers or businessmen or housewives on councils and we are talking about four in six council members and those people are affecting the lives of the whole community or the county and the water rates that Mike described that is right where we go. We are a lender in a lot of ways.

We realize that these councilmen are putting the real dollars for the income earners on the table when they decide they need to update their water systems or when they talk about capacity building or when they talk about improving the EMS or the fire stations, some of those things that cost lots of dollars.

It is half a million dollars, it is millions of dollars and in some cases five million of dollars to correct the deficiencies of their systems, arsenic is in my part of the world in south central Kansas, arsenic is a major problem and communities cannot just solve that overnight and they cannot solve that by themselves in a lot of cases.

We are looking at regional approaches to solving water quality problems. We are encouraging communities to work with KDHE which would be Mike's counterpart in Kansas looking at feasibility studies, trying to determine what is the best scenario to make sure that that water quality problem is corrected and what is the least cost, real dollar cost.

We are talking about some of these families pay for fresh water \$100.00 to \$110.00 a month for five thousand gallons. That number is staggering and that is for fresh water, that is not sewer, that is not their taxes, that is not their insurance on their home, that is not their mortgage payment, that is what they are paying for water for five thousand gallons. So, it is staggering in rural communities.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: What we really encourage communities to do is not unlike anything that you all have talked about, it is visioning, understanding what the capital needs are and also understanding that communities don't want to and should not put their community in a situation to where they are buried in debt.

I am throwing around lots of big numbers here but at the end of the day someone has to pay the bills and we are talking about communities incurring debt to fix their water quality problems.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Many things affect that, you all have identified that. I have way more slides here than what we can go through but what we look for is a spark plug, I often call them silent kings. Those folks that sit around the coffee shop who are the go to people. Those are the ones that usually are the ones that are in the know, maybe they are the non-profits, maybe they are the community action groups, those are the people that actually get things done and those are the ones that we look for.

If they are not in the room I encourage we say, okay who are the leaders whether it is the mayor, whether it is the banker, whoever it is those kinds of people will shepherd the project along. These are big projects, these are complicated projects.

An engineer like Mike said will pull it off the shelf and say, okay here it will last 20 years go build it. Well, that is overwhelming to a rural community, they are not equipped. They are not equipped for go build it. They don't have the engineers, the architects, they may have one attorney in the county if you are lucky.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: We look for partners, partners are critical. We want to layer in as many partners as we can possibly find. Those partners can help spread those funds around whether they be KDHE, whether they be Department of Commerce, whether they be CDBG grants, those will reduce the costs.

What we are going to look for again, I am going to put my lender hat on just for a minute, We are going to look for cash flow. We are going to see what the individual cost is to those homeowners. The Agency does have grant ability to where we can put some grant dollars to that and make that more affordable but in a lot of ways it is a loan.

These small communities, I hope you are getting this message, small communities are incurring enormous amounts of debt in order to maintain their water systems.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Briefly who we are, what we do. We are a rural lender. We provide our technical assistance, our dollars to rural communities. Based on the program is the size of the community. The water program that I am talking about were in communities of 10,000 and less.

Many of the communities that I work in have fewer people as users are sitting around this table, imagine that and you have six people of you deciding the fate of your freshwater or you sewer treatment plan.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: There is a myriad of programs that we offer. Our utility programs. Broadband is a big thing of what we do, our housing programs and we provide technical assistance.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: You got this in your packet, our water programs I mentioned were in population areas up to 10,000. In Kansas, there is a lot of Kansas that is smaller than 10,000.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: The program itself it is a priority. Many of you have heard of the stimulus dollars and we are open and transparent about this. Lots of dollars went into water quality from stimulus programs. We didn't change the program but a lot of dollars went into that.

We thought we were doing a pretty good job as far as meeting the demand, things like that. Well, you talk to my counterparts across the country we were overwhelmed by the applications that came in to either protect their water rights or provide clean water, provide sanitary sewer systems, updates, storage, reducing chemicals, we were overwhelmed by the number of applications that we got. We will be dealing with those applications for quite some time.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Under the Water and Waste Disposal Program what we look at is not only what is possible capacity wise but we also want to look at who are the eligible entities? Pretty much any community type based organization is an ineligible entity for our water programs and what I mean by that is it is a municipality accounting of special purpose districts. Indian Tribes are eligible and not for profits.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Some of the purposes, I will get to those probably through a picture or two pretty soon.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Some of the ineligible things we cannot do, we cannot pay for finder's fees. One thing that Marcie brought up is critical to rural communities is they don't have the resources to

go out and engage an engineer or hire an architect or do a feasibility study. They are lacking those funds.

Not only do they not know where to find them but many times they cannot access them because of their size. So many times the opportunity for a large community to look for an exploration grade doesn't exist in a small community.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Just a picture slide of a few things that we do, distribution systems.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Protection and improvement of the water sources. This is a picture of a lake, a lot of communities still pull their fresh water from a reservoir.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Water plant improvements, again you can kind of get a sense for a small community this would be a big decision on moving forward.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Water storage Greensburg. When the tornado came through Greensburg I think you heard from the Mayor of Greensburg totally wiped that thing out. We partner very closely with Greensburg in a lot of ways, water was one of them.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Sewer treatment plants. Different solutions based on what the need is.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Helpful hints. I wanted to provide this in my slide presentation. This is directly out of what we give communities, what they need to do because a lot of times they need a roadmap. They need to, what's next? How do I do this? What is first? What is next?

So, we provide critical path for them, a little overwhelming so some things we want them to look at is pursue a funding package not just a grant. A lot of communities are grant driven, they need to look at the whole package at the loan piece obviously because that is the capacity piece.

Keep in mind that you are financing a system, there are a lot of different options out there. Rural communities are not that different from our urban partners is, they need to operate their water system as a business. That is a concept even though you are an elected official you still need to operate that thing as a business.

(Slide)

MR. BOYLES: Develop a relationship with your funders, know your funders, explore those funders. Have an engaged board. Again, it is critical when you only have a small number of leaders in a community that those people that are on these systems or on these boards are elected to be engaged.

That is the end of my slide presentation. Thank you for your time. I think we will be around for questions.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: All right, thank you and thank you for joining us. This presentation reminds me of the impact that the presentation from the community of Mossville had on me when I first heard then it was really transformational, so thank you for sharing this.

Questions and Comments

MS. YEAMPIERRE: We are going to take questions and comments from the Advisory Council. We are going to first defer to those members of the council who come from rural communities, the members of the council who come from those communities come from a variety of communities, all very different from each other. So, I am going to call on Peter Captain.

MR. CAPTAIN: Thank you and congratulations on your reports, you know, your reports are synonymous with every village we have up in Alaska. We do have all these problems and the fact that we do get down to 60, 70 below further and I just want to say that the healthful hints that the USDA is really what we need to look forward to and partnerships, we do a lot of partnerships up there in Alaska solely because that is the only way we can get by.

A lot of communities up there are foregoing their food because they have to heat their homes, so it is an either or. Goods up there are three or four times higher than down this way so without any road system and infrastructure it is just about your plight, a little bit more but I do want to thank you for your presentation.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Savi?

MS. HORNE: Yes, Savi Horne, Land Loss Prevention Project. We work in Durham

which is not rural it is an urban center of North Carolina but we service 100 counties in the state with legal services, economic development and Environmental Justice representation and I just want to thank the NEJAC leadership including its DFO and EPA for the vision to have this panel before us.

I do believe it is the first that I have seen and the viewpoints, diversity of viewpoints, but what it does paint is just how much there are really two Americas, one rural, one urban and just when it comes to the rural intersection then it kind of dichotomizes into one black, one white and now of course we now have a growing Latino presence in these rural states.

I am assuming Nebraska is one of those given the population optic. I cannot imagine it being otherwise and so it seemed to me given your presence here that it would be just a really brilliant moment in time and an opportunity for the EPA and the USDA to really have a serious partnership to develop rural communities especially some of the small grants programs that EPA has really benefitted rural communities including those rural communities having brownfield issues and food security issues.

So, while I think and I am not really sure world development, do you have like you have to have a match when you do your granting?

MR. BOYLES: It depends upon the program. We do have some programs that do require match or I should say the applicant gets additional points towards their application if there is a match.

What we do obviously encourage that if the community can provide any resources towards their project it is usually a more successful project. It is not always required.

MS. HORNE: Okay, well thank you. I just want to uplift the issue of access to clean water which also becomes rationalize in these rural counties where African American populations that Ms. Frazier represents throughout the U.S. are excluded from clean water access to it and that is one way in which world development and USDA could work in partnership.

I just see a continuation of this dialogue would really benefit these communities, so I would really encourage it and again I just want to compliment the NEJAC and EPA and yourselves for making yourselves available to us. Thank you.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. Hilton?

MR. KELLEY: Yes Hilton Kelley with the Community In-power and Development Association in Port Arthur, Texas along the Gulf Coast area.

I commend you all for coming forward and speaking on the issue of what is happening in rural communities, I mean I am really floored. I was born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas even though it is a small town I always thought it was a big city until I went to other communities.

But yet, when I think about the water issues and food issues in the United States you always think that we have enough and when I think of food issues I think of other countries where you see people desolate because there is no food or in the desert because there is no water and no way of getting any.

But you never think of that happening right here in the United States and I think it was our last council meeting where we had that issue come up with water variances and that is a very serious issue with me because I love to drink water, my wife always tells me you drink so much water, I love water and I cannot imagine not having a good cold glass of water whenever I need it.

Yet, it really disturbs me to know that there are so many people across this country who don't have safe drinking water and yet our young men and women are called upon whenever there is an issue abroad. The communities provide those people, to make a strong nation you have to have a strong community.

To make a strong town those communities come together, those towns make up the city, the city makes up the state, the state makes up the nation. I think that the United States Government should put first priority on ensuring basic necessities for all Americans in this country and I think we should find ways in which to provide safe clean drinking water for everyone whether it is rural or whether it is urban.

It is time that our Federal Government look at ways in which to make this happen because if we can do the celebration overseas or at sea, I was in the Navy and you can take salt water and turn it to fresh water, why can't we do something here in our country to make water safe to drink for all Americans?

So, I commend you all, keep bringing this issue forward and anything I can do to assist I would like to get all of your information to see what we can do to bring some census to your area.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you Hilton. Jolene?

MS. CATRON: Thank you panelists, my name is Jolene Catron and I am Executive Director of Wind River Alliance.

I live in a small town in Wyoming, the very middle of Wyoming called Hudson, there is about 400 people there so I live in a very rural area and the communities on the Reservation, I am just south of the Wind River Reservation where I reside, the communities on the Reservation are probably no more than 1,200 at the most probably even smaller than that.

There are a couple of thoughts going in my mind, I don't necessarily have questions but just kind of trying to think about the Environmental Justice component of what you have presented and Mike I would like to take some of your examples as a point.

When we talk about Environmental Justice we talk about giving a voice at the community level to those most affected, those most affected in small rural communities are everyone in the community.

So, how do you -- I am wondering how EPA is framing Environmental Justice Small Grants, say that is one of the programs that they have Environmental Justice Small Grant to a small rural community when it is the whole community and are they able to apply for those grants? I guess I just don't know the requirements of those grants very well.

Just kind of thoughts flowing through my head, the issue about clean water, drinkable water and the availability of that water is, you have heard it from the other commentators, that it is one of the top priorities.

I am lucky in that, I live at the headwaters of this great Missouri river that is flowing right next to us and I am always telling my community this, we live at the very beginning we are really lucky in that our water source, our drinking water source, our surface water source is fairly pristine. That is not to say it is not impacted.

Travel 40 miles down river from the top of the mountain down the river, the river has already been polluted by uranium impacts, legacy waste from uranium melt hailings, non-point source from pesticides and fertilizers to just oil and gas waste and things and suddenly our surface water source is very polluted and suddenly on the Reservation the drinking surface water source is very polluted and so it is really interesting how you can go from a rather pristine source to a rather dangerous kind of source of water within 40 miles.

So, these are some of the things that I am thinking about. I guess just the one quick question that I had, Richard you talked about you do septic rehabilitation programs, do conservation districts do they get funding from you? We have like two conservation districts, there are three in my watershed, and they do a lot of septic rehabilitation programs. I am wondering if they are part of your program?

MR. BOYLES: It is different. That is a USDA NRCS Program where they do individual updates of septic systems and they provide at match grant for that update.

MS. CATRON: Okay, because I think that is another one of the real big issues that we should flag and that I would like to flag in this opportunity is really the issue of septic rehabilitation on our lands and on our waters.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Teri?

MS. BLANTON: My name is Teri Blanton from the Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and Vanessa I just have to hand it to you, you are truly brave and being an Appalachian I know what it is like to -- and also I grew up in a Federal superfund side, and many, many people made a lot of money over my community's misfortunes by their grant writings and their studies of my community.

And your bravery for talking about the fact that many people are making a living off of your plight and your community's plight and I refer to those people as poverty pimpers because lots of people make money. I mean, I come from Appalachia and my people are the casualties of many wars just like yours, the first one being the war on poverty and now we are separating the casualties of the war of drugs.

So, thank you and thank you for bringing that our attention and I think it is really sad when we sit here in the land with so much water and we cannot have access to clean drinking water and when we talk about the expense that it would put onto the people to have access to clean drinking water.

I live in a state that has 40 to 50 inches of rainfall annually and also the headwaters of the Mississippi, the Cumberland River, the Tennessee River, the Kentucky River, the Ohio River and that is where I come from is the headwaters of these rivers and cannot have a clean drink of water.

I think that when we start putting that expense onto the people maybe we should start

putting that expense of the people or the industries that are taking it away from us and making them be responsible for the fact that we don't have access to clean water.

So thank you Vanessa for bringing that to our attention and being brave enough to sit here in front of us and remember that term poverty pimpers.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Wyneckta?

MS. FISHER: Hi Wyneckta Fisher, E2, Inc. I want to commend everyone and I am really glad that we had an opportunity to hear exactly what you are going through because a lot of us are from mainly urban areas and there are some issues that impact you that we don't necessarily think about as we go about our days but I actually have a question, I actually have two questions.

But the first one is, and you might not see it as much as where you are but where I currently live in Louisiana and I notice this when I lived in the Metropolitan DC area, one year it is farmland and then two years from now the suburbs decided that they needed to grow a little bit further.

So, what used to be farmland now becomes a new subdivision and at what point, we have to realize that there are some people that really like their space and as I get older I am liking my space more. I used to want to live on top of someone but now I have no longer that desire I want some acreage.

But saying what I have to say is, what you are looking at is it is an impact on your infrastructure and based on what I saw there really isn't a lot of infrastructure to begin with and so I don't know if you are experiencing this but when these new suburbs come out there or when these new subdivisions come out there, do you benefit from it at all? That is one question.

And then 2, at the NEJAC body we provide advice, correct Victoria, advice? Okay, so what advice would you like us to give to EPA. I mean I heard Vanessa what you said, that really I really thought about that especially when you have a grant reviewer and that is something I struggle with when I was at Region 6 and we would sometimes look at our grants and then someone in the northeast reviewed and they are like, well why didn't you talk about density in the cycle? We don't want density here, you might want density but we don't want density so I can relate to that.

But, what advice would you like us to give to EPA? I would like for each of that to answer that if you can.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Well, let me just start out first that it is the whole rural urban interface and I think what you are talking about impacts the rural, formerly rural places, that are closer to a metropolitan area.

So there is not one rural and I think we are all clear about that. There is the middle of Nebraska rural, there is the Tribal space rural, there is what is going on in all of your communities.

But to the point of urban, supposedly urban encroachment, there is a social issue that certainly goes out and encompasses all the things that you have talked about from land use and zoning issues to who is responsible for the infrastructure to even the housing crisis that we are in right now.

I grew up in Chicopee, Minnesota which was 30 miles from the metropolitan area and in order to go into Minneapolis we would like plan it for a week, it was a big deal. Now, there has been a bridge across the river, people have work in the cities and live in the countryside and it has just gobbled up all kinds of farmland and cost huge investments in infrastructure.

The community that my office is located in went ahead and invested in, it is a fairly medium sized rural area, invested in the infrastructure to support these developments and now almost 20 percent of the housing stock in that community has been foreclosed upon and for those that remain in the community, they are responsible for those dollars.

I don't know how we unravel ourselves from this but it is the connection between the financial system and the investment system, it is the Federal grants or local economic development grants that were given to the developers in order to build the housing stock.

So I guess I started it just to give you a look at a formerly rural county that has now felt the impacts of urban sprawl and is left with the remains of what is happening in the economy.

MR. LINDER: Well, advice to EPA is sometimes, and not just EPA, but sometimes we all in government tend to over engineer things in fixing a problem and there have been attempts to address some of these issues like growth by adding additional requirements on the State revolving fund for example or require planning whenever these loans are made.

But my problem with that is I need that fund to be flexible so that it can be competitive with the private market to provide a low interest rate and the more restrictions you put on it, the more costly that money gets. So the community is now spending more money to do planning, more money to

do additional design, more money to show a smart growth.

We don't want to lose our flexibility in administering those programs I don't think and the other part of that on growth is, you saw our state there is kind of two types of growth. There is communities that are growing too fast and they have to try to keep up with infrastructure and there are communities that are losing population and they would love to have some growth.

So we cannot have a policy that is going to stifle all growth and so I guess the advice would be to make sure you are not creating more problems by solving one.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. So, oh I am sorry.

MS. FRAZIER: Yes, I would just like to offer the advice to EPA, I have been watching the guidance and I have seen some changes in the debriefing sessions that we had with EPA and the grant proposals are bringing equality in distribution to rural areas as well as to cities.

So I see improvement in that and I do believe EPA has an honest sincere effort for all humanity to find ways to create and alleviate their health issues in their various communities.

I also think that some terms are used because it sounds good but they actually need to grow legs and walk off the paper and that speaks to accountability and transparency as particularly with the partners that have their own agendas that doesn't comprise of anything that has been official to the communities.

We did receive environmental grant from EPA back in 1998 for three years, it was the Child Health Champion then and we had so many struggles and barriers with that grant that we ended up being the pilot model for the Nation. All we could do was raise hell because we couldn't get anything out of the money.

The benefits that we didn't see the grant, we didn't know what it entailed for us to do. It was a grantee who turned out to be farmers, so a lesson learned that we took from that was to organize our own organization and become 501C3 to hand out our own funds.

The next grant that we applied for was an EPA Small Justice Grant and what we did with that grant the citizens in the community, as I mentioned earlier, were helpless, hopeless, full of apathy, they just didn't care anymore about what was going on.

We worked with youth in the 11th and 12th grades and that inspired hope in the citizens who saw that they were doing something so people climbed on board and because of that assessment that they did about our drinking water we addressed indoor and outdoor air.

We addressed solid waste, illegal dumping, refrigerators, stoves, the community was just saturated with those things because we didn't have a police and people would come through in the disguise of night and just throw out things that just piled up over the community, we addressed all of those things.

Under this past Administration that we had 14 years, he just sat there and didn't do anything but my husband said back there, Jesse was the current Mayor here now and he was elected in 2008, now that grant was from 2005 and 2006 but we were so proud of what we had accomplished we held on to the results of that grant and submitted it to the Missouri Community Betterment and our youth won first place in the state because they got out and addressed those environmental health issues themselves.

But Jesse took those outcomes from our project and addressed the illegal dumping. He saw enough funding in the city budget to get a part-time police and he moved on with some of the other things and just from his second term he has managed to get two grants to readdress our sewer system.

So, we are making some small improvement but they are priorities for the citizens and they see that and that is what needs to be done, the Environmental Justice Small Grants are wonderful for minority rule and other underserved communities across this country that just need someone who is adamant about making sure every dime and dollar goes toward their benefit.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. We are over time but I feel that before we end I have to make a few comments. Yesterday I made a comment about mainstream organizations supplanting local leadership instead of facilitating that and I called it contemporary missionary and some people responded negatively but today the word poverty came up, I didn't take it there the sister did.

So, let's see what you hear. But the issue of Latinos came up twice and I feel that I would be remiss if I didn't address the issue because I think that as a movement, as part of a movement, it is important for us to work in solidarity and understand each other's history and our presence in the United States and how we could work with each other in a way that lifts each other.

So I want to do that not so much for you but for folks in the audience that may not have

an understanding of our presence here in this country, partly because I am one of the very few Latinos on the Advisory Council.

So, I come from Brooklyn, New York where Latinos come from, 21 Spanish speaking countries. Some of African ancestry like yourself and like me, some of indigenous ancestry I am of both, some of color, some not, some of privilege and some from struggle.

When you refer to Hispanics in your community, I don't know who they are or where they come from, what nationality are they? How can we provide you some guidance on how you can reach them? I was happy to hear you say that they don't want to change because that said to me they are not acculturating and so they are not selling out and that is a good thing, right?

But and also that half of this country was Latino before it was invaded by the United States so there is this perception that we just got here when in fact we have been here and we just keep coming, right, whether people feel that or not, right?

So, I want to say that because there is always this misunderstanding and like we are new and so we have to deal with these new people. So, cultural competency as you said is extremely important and how we work with each to lift each other is extremely important and so it is probably much easier in urban environments when we are right next to each other and we have kids names Shaniqua Garcia and it is all good, right?

But in rural areas where people are much more segregated and divided it becomes a challenge. But I would urge you to reach out to places where we understand how to reach out to those communities so that we can help you with that because that only makes you stronger and that makes them stronger too and I think that it helps build consensus and gets communities to understand that we are all in this together.

So I just wanted to share that with you. But thank you so much for coming before us. This is an extremely important issue and I am sure, I know that this is going to be part of the work that we address moving forward. This has been a truly inspiring and transformational. So gracias.

We are going to break for 10 minutes because we are behind and I think we need a moment. So, 10 minutes please and we will be right back.

(Whereupon, a break was taken.)

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Plan EJ 2014 we have a committee that has been working very hard for the last few weeks led by Kim Wasserman who is a new member of the NEJAC and she will be presenting what that process was like and what some of the recommendations made by the committee were. Kim?

But before Kim begins, Lisa Garcia would like to make another announcement.

MS. GARCIA: All these announcements, I just wanted to mention that we went back to SEQ and the White House on the request, well the two requests on the White House Forum and so we will be able to do a video, an online video stream of the conference and so hopefully we can get that information out since it was requested. So that is one request and we did go back and say of course that we need to visit the question of grass roots groups and potential scholarships.

But at least for folks who cannot come or have other commitments if they can hop online for a few hours that would be good. So thank you.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. Kim?

NEJAC Comments to EPA Plan EJ 2014

MS. WASSERMAN: Sure. So again my name is Kim Wasserman, I am with the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization. I would first like to thank our Chairwoman and our Co-chair and Victoria for allowing me the opportunity to take on this initiative my first time into NEJAC and so it was a very exciting process and I would also like to recognize the Administration Agency for the priority that they are putting towards Environmental Justice and its anniversary.

I am going to really quickly go over the names of folks that worked with me on the subcommittee. We had Jolene, we had Wynecta, I am sorry should I do last names too? Okay. Wynecta, Stephanie, Savi, Langdon and Nicholas working with myself, and Elizabeth I am sorry, working with me on this endeavor and so thank you all very much for all the time and effort that was put into this.

As many of you know, we have actually passed the deadline for comment on EJ 2014, however we were fortunate enough to get a draft put together in time and that was submitted to the EPA and this is our chance now to review that draft and make comments and changes to it and hopefully submit pretty quickly our final comments.