

OUTLOOK article about Empower

Empower! Dakota

Sometimes those on the Empower! Dakota Core Team refer to this program as “Empower! Eureka” or just plain “Empower”. The common word in each of the three phrases is pretty easy to spot. What does it mean? It means that power is being given to someone or something.

In Eureka, the power is being given to the people through this program. Everyone has been encouraged to take a survey to express their thoughts. Everyone has been invited to attend at least one Listening Session to express their thoughts about Eureka and the future. The next step, and probably the most important one so far, is to attend a Community Gathering on August 2. Every person from every facet of the community is asked to attend this evening of food, fun, interaction, and discussion. By the end of the evening, goals will be identified and more than likely there will be plenty of enthusiasm to get some projects up and going.

Why has the Eureka Community Development Company taken on this project? There are several reasons. It provides a positive place to express thoughts and ideas with no fear of someone speaking against those thoughts and ideas----Getting as many people involved as possible; there are people who may be hesitant to step forward who have great ideas and we certainly want them to be involved-----There are new people in Eureka who don't know a lot about the town and would like to be more a part of what is happening and we want to see that happen-----We've seen positive results happen in other small communities through this program and want to see that happen in Eureka.

The Empower program is one of many community building opportunities offered by Dakota Resources, an organization that serves rural communities statewide. They have a great track record and ECDC has been associated with them for many years. So, ECDC has gone into the program knowing that they are working with a reputable organization and high-quality trainers.

So far, a Core Team of a dozen people have met monthly to learn about the program, the process involved, and have learned how they will help in leadership roles in the future. One exercise that everyone enjoyed, and saw value in doing, was a personality test where their understanding of each other became more acute and they had a clearer understanding of why and how people are different from each other and how each sees things differently.

The Focus Groups were the listening sessions around town. For anyone who was unable to attend, the big Community Gathering will be here soon, so make sure to attend that!

Lots of surveys have been filled out and returned. Those, too, can continue to be picked up and you can express your thoughts on a variety of subjects through that written form or online.

The Community Gathering is definitely NOT the end to the program. It should be the beginning of many exciting projects for the town. Most communities continue their Empower programs for many years as ideas continue to surface and volunteers willingly pursue them.

Wednesday, August 2 is the date set for the Community Gathering. It will be held at the Methodist Church basement from 6:00-9:00 PM with a free supper. Everyone is invited to attend and share an evening of ideas and plans.

Wanda Jundt