



Contact: Tracey Hogan, Executive Director  
National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA)  
Phone: 614-228-4725  
Email: [nreda@assnoffices.com](mailto:nreda@assnoffices.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*November 13, 2023*

**Robbins honored with NREDA President's Award**

**Columbus, Ohio** – Jenny Robbins, Manager, Community & Leadership Development with the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation, was presented with the National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) 2023 President's Award.

The NREDA President's Award recognizes outstanding commitment to the NREDA organization and rural economic development.

David Cleveland, NREDA President, presented the award at the association's 2023 NREDA Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, with more than 150 in attendance.

Cleveland noted the following regarding Robbins' selection as this year's recipient:

*"It was my honor to present this award to Jenny Robbins. She is a dedicated leader who is committed to excellence in all her endeavors. Jenny puts her heart and soul into the communities that she serves and is a champion for rural Georgia."*

**About NREDA:**

NREDA is an organization of economic development professionals focused upon the issues and opportunities of rural America. It is dedicated to meeting the unique needs of its membership through ongoing education and networking programs, while serving as an information source and conduit for developers, site selectors and prospective businesses to NREDA members and the areas they serve. For more information about NREDA visit [www.nreda.org](http://www.nreda.org).

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**Davis Honored with 2023 Rural Economic Development Leadership Award**

**Columbus, Ohio** – Stacy Davis, Executive Director with the Sumner County Economic Development Commission in Wellington, Kansas, was presented with NREDA’s 2023 Rural Economic Development Leadership Award for outstanding leadership in the field of rural economic development.

This national award recognizes outstanding leadership in the field of rural economic development. Nominees consist of economic development professionals, rural electric cooperative/rural telephone staff or board members who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in an economic development project resulting in the improvement of the quality of life, creation of new jobs, and opportunity for growth and development in rural America.

Davis was nominated by Laura Lombardi with PlaNet Productions, Inc. The award was presented at the association’s 2023 NREDA Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach with more than 150 in attendance.

Dennis Mingyar, NREDA Awards Chairperson, noted the following highlights related to Stacy Davis’ nomination and selection as this year’s recipient:

“For the past eight years, Stacy Davis has made a number of significant rural economic development contributions to the state of Kansas. As the driving force behind the quasi-government organization SCEDC, she guides its mission to provide vital resources to new and existing businesses, serves as a liaison between public and private entities, and aids all of Sumner County and its cities.

Stacy has a gift for visualizing and forming unique partnerships. One example is how SCEDC purchased and transformed a building in Caldwell, Kansas into a high-speed, internet fiber connected co-working space that is utilized by a number of entrepreneurs. She then broadened

the use of the “Caldwell Workspace” by partnering with Sumner County Treasurer’s Office to create a more geographically desirable local for the county to accept title and tag payments.

Another shining accomplishment has been the construction of the Cowley College Sumner Campus in Wellington, which came to fruition as a direct result of Stacy’s tireless campaign to bring a community college to the area. This facility provides young people with a local opportunity for growth and economic prosperity in rural America, highlighting Agricultural and Construction Trades curriculums. The college also provides a beautiful location for the entire county to enjoy public events and educational programs.”

Davis was chosen by a national selection committee representing electric and telephone cooperatives from across the nation. NREDA is a vital network of rural economic development professionals providing expertise and national leadership on rural issues.

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**Sherman County Community Development Corporation Honored with  
2023 NREDA Organization Excellence Award**

**Columbus, Ohio** – Sherman County Community Development Corporation in Goodland, Kansas was presented the 2023 NREDA Organization Excellence Award. This national award is designed to recognize a utility or economic development organization or an association or government entity that has implemented a successful rural economic development program for their area. The focus is on the success of communicating the program, improvements to the business climate and measurable results and outcomes.

Julica Oharah, Executive Director, accepted the award at the NREDA 2023 Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina with more than 150 in attendance.

Dennis Mingyar, NREDA Awards Chairperson, noted the following highlights related to Sherman County Community Development Corporation's nomination and selection as this year's recipient:

“The Sherman County Community Development Corporation (SCCD) was established in January 2021, after the City and County combined efforts to help the community grow and establish a solid foundation as it continues to develop and transform. The organization was created by combining economic development, the business enrichment network (chamber of commerce), and the convention and visitors' bureau/ tourism. In April 2021, the board of directors hired their Executive Director of Community Development, Julica Oharah. Mrs. Oharah was a Goodland native, she lived across the nation for about 10 years until she and her husband decided to return to their roots.

During the first few months on the job, Mrs. Oharah reviewed where the community had been, had conversations with local business owners, and worked with the board of

directors to develop a strategic plan. After much evaluation and discussion, the organization decided that its efforts would best benefit the community by developing new events to attract tourism traffic, rebranding the chamber, and focusing on building a sense of community in a post-COVID world.

Over the last three years, SCCD has added multiple new events that provide a sense of community and invited tourists to see what the community has to offer. SCCD has done an incredible job marketing the community. They have created a new website, updated and maintained the community Facebook page, and made it a focus to connect with community and non-community members via social media and digital platforms.

After meeting with local business owners for input, Mrs. Oharah pitched the idea of rebranding the chamber as the Business Enrichment Network. It was determined that they needed to take a new approach, so SCCD decided to offer this as a free program to the local business owners as a resource to enhance their businesses and practice. Some of the initial initiatives they kicked off were free monthly workshops free to businesses and employees to attend and grow in business development. They worked on developing stronger relationships with local and state partners that would benefit the business community, such as the SBA, SBDC, Fort Hays Business Department, Kansas Department of Commerce, and more.

As an organization, SCCD has done a great job focusing on the needs of the community, while adding value and a sense of community again. SCCD continues to evaluate and assess the needs of the entire county and work closely with both the City of Goodland and Sherman County to improve and build togetherness. SCCD has taken several areas of necessity and created a cohesive organization that focuses on all the needs of Sherman County.”

Sherman County Community Development Corporation was chosen by a national selection committee representing electric and telephone cooperatives from across the nation. NREDA is a vital network of rural economic development professionals providing expertise and national leadership on rural issues.

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