



Kansas PRIDE Newsletter

Fall 2005

Celebrate Award Winning PRIDE Communities

Celebrations are an important part of the life of a community, without them there would be no way of marking events and changes. It is time to celebrate the PRIDE communities that have been selected to receive the Community of Excellence and/or STAR Award for 2005

Sixteen Kansas communities will be honored by receiving 2004-2005 "Community of Excellence" award during the Kansas PRIDE Day luncheon on Thursday, October 20 in Emporia, Kansas. Winners of the "Community of Excellence" award include:

Almena, Norton County
Alton, Osborne County
Argonia, Sumner County
Cunningham, Kingman County
Eskridge, Wabaunsee County
Goff, Nemaha County
Grinnell, Gove County
Highland, Doniphan County
Lakin, Kearny County
Lenora, Norton County
Lucas, Rooks County
Melvern, Osage County
Mount Hope, Sedgwick County



Spook Parade in Lucas

Park City, Sedgwick County

Potwin, Butler County

Rossville, Shawnee County

The STAR Award goes to communities that successfully planned and completed outstanding community projects. Projects are evaluated on quality planning, level of community involvement, and overall impact that the project has on the quality of life in the community. The following community projects received a STAR Award

Almena – All Weather Rest Room

Argonia – Argonia Mart

Axtell – Emergency Services Building

Cunningham – Murals

Fort Scott – Signage in Gunn Park

Glasco – Corner Store Activities

Goff – Skee-zix Farm Toys

Grinnell – Hometown Grocery

Melvern – City Park, Playground and Rest Rooms

Park City – Chisholm Trail Elementary School

Potwin – PRIDE Youth Organization

Stockton – Old Tire Disposal

Welcome New PRIDE Communities

- Stafford
- Lincoln School Neighborhood Association – Hutchinson
- El Pueblo Neighborhood Association – Wichita
- Dover

I cannot emphasize strongly enough that we're at a historic moment. The next America is going to be forged at the grassroots! It's going to emerge from the communities of this great nation.

— John Gardner

Youth Leadership Award Winners

The Kansas PRIDE program recognizes five outstanding youth for providing leadership in their communities.

Linda Poe, Norwich — Linda has displayed numerous leadership qualities as Students Against Destructive Decisions President throughout the year. Her enthusiasm and leadership resulted in many successful SADD events.

Jessica Ann Rehmer, Grinnell — Jessica's leadership in the PRIDE Organization keeps youth understanding and passing on the importance of their involvement in many projects. When there is an activity that the community needs help, that is where you will find Jessica.

Honorable Mention, Joey Copper, Almena — Joey participated in a variety of projects that included refinishing the downtown benches to helping to put up Christmas lights and decoration.

Honorable Mention, Kayla Adams, Argonia — Kayla has been involved with the Friendship Meals. This project is a great intergenerational activity.

Honorable Mention, Cole Mettlen, Lucas — Cole's leadership among the youth of the community has inspired them to work as a volunteer group in the Lucas community.

Youth Community Service Award

The Youth Community Service Award gives an opportunity for young people to be recognized for volunteer service in their PRIDE community. The award is presented to youth who have significantly contributed to the efforts of the local community. The Kansas PRIDE program recognizes four outstanding youth for their outstanding investment in their local community.

Colby Naegele, Lucas — Colby has given several years of dedicated service to the Lucas PRIDE community and its youth.

Lindsay Turner, Norwich — Lindsay has an unusual dedication to serve her community. She clocked over 40 hours volunteering with the Norwich Fire Department during an ice storm.

Christopher Maxwell, Lansing — Christopher's community service and personal impact extends well beyond the borders of a city limit sign. The list of service to his community is very impressive. Christopher has made a difference in Lansing.

Honorable Mention, Jena Jessup, Almena — From redoing downtown benches to helping with Christmas lights, Jena was there to provide leadership to many community project.

PRIDE Spotlight Community — Mount Hope

MOUNT HOPE – An award-winning PRIDE community, Mount Hope has been a part of Kansas PRIDE since re-entering the program in 2002. The park building renovation and cleanup was one of the first projects in which volunteers came together to work on an established community need.

From the park project, the Tree Kids group was formed. This group is made up of 5th thru 8th grade students that work together to raise funds to purchase trees. To date, 14 trees have been planted in the community through the efforts of the Tree Kids.

Mount Hope PRIDE is a nonprofit entity, a criteria that has been helpful in applying for grants. The first grant received was a Community Recreation Program grant. This launched a recreation program

that allowed classes to be offered on a number of topics, including macramé, woodworking, painting, quilting, and personal finances.

Mount Hope has a number of on-going programs that are celebrated on a regular basis. These activities include the 4th of July celebration, grant writing to help with community projects, Kansas Adopt a highway, Heartland Shares, and Red Cross blood drives.

The latest success story is a soccer league started by Mount Hope PRIDE. More than 40 Mount Hope children signed up and play every

Saturday as a part of YMCA league in Hutchinson. Mount Hope is proof that communities that work together to meet needs and goals are great places to live and do business.



Mount Hope soccer league

Keeping Youth Engaged

One of the primary concerns for rural Kansas communities is population loss. The question is often asked, "How do we keep our youth, engaged in the community, and give them opportunities for a future?" It is a difficult and complex question, but one part of the answer lies in what we can be doing today. Allowing young persons opportunities for active engagement and leadership in the community is an important and smart first step. This is true with youth in high school, but it does not need to end when they leave town. I recently worked with Amanda Hendrickson, a young woman from Courtland who was studying leadership through the Leadership Studies and Programs department (www.k-state.edu/leadership) at K-State. She was engaged in studying leadership here, and engaged in practicing it through the PRIDE program at home.

In the 21st century, every student at K-State has e-mail, and nearly every student has a cell phone! Students are as easy to contact as your neighbor a mile away. What is to prevent them from coming back for meetings periodically, or being active through technology? Keeping people engaged in community improvement is something PRIDE does well. As you work in your PRIDE community, I challenge you to take the initiative to stay connected with students away at college. Do opportunities exist to serve on the school board? city council? community committees? Maintaining that connection with your community youth strengthens your program and community, it also helps students learn, grow, and apply skills and information they have gained at school.

Providing Leadership

The reaction to the recent hurricanes in the South is a reminder of the importance of local leadership. Persons taking leadership planned, organized, and took action to reach out and care for others. Certainly the elected leadership was central to these efforts, but leadership was needed at all levels to address the situation. People stepping forward to guide and aid others is the kind of caring leadership action that holds a community together, and gives us all hope for the future.

It is important to remember that, while a crisis situation does require leadership, leadership does not require a crisis situation. Taking the initiative to step forward and identify ways to improve the community, organize local efforts, and engage others to take action, are all leadership actions vital to community sustainability and growth.

Taking positive action today is a benchmark of PRIDE. Make sure your PRIDE group takes the time to invite others to help plan community work and invites them to be active with community improvement. It is your leadership and caring action that holds your community together and gives everyone hope for a brighter future.

The more open our public dialogue, the larger the number of Americans who join our deliberations, the greater our chance to build a better county and a better world. — Bill Bradley

PRIDE Spotlight Community — Olsburg

OLSBURG – From the completion of a community swimming pool to the community gardens, Olsburg PRIDE finishes what it starts. Two homes have benefited from the house painting parties. Each home now has a new coat of paint. Meals are prepared each Monday at the American Legion in an effort to raise money for community projects. The menu is advertised in the monthly newsletter, also a PRIDE project.



This community has been described as a community of helping hands eager to contribute to needed community improvements. Current Olsburg PRIDE projects include business signs for Main Street and a wall mural of the U.S. flag. Individuals have a great time working together to help the community come together.

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Kansas Main Street And Kansas Pride Joint Conference

The annual Kansas Main Street and Kansas PRIDE conference will be October 19 – 21 at the W. L. White Auditorium, 111 E. 6th Avenue, Emporia. Among the highlights of the conference is the 2005 PRIDE Awards luncheon celebrating PRIDE communities who were selected as a Community of Excellence and those communities being recognized for an outstanding project with a STAR award. The luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m.

Leaders and volunteers from communities throughout the state will attend the conference, which opens on October 19 at 10:00am. This year's conference theme is "Wild about Excellence." Topics include: determining community readiness for heritage tourism development; using the World Wide Web to connect with community members, shop-

pers and visitors; and a panel of experts that can help communities connect with needed resources. Other topics will be a session on volunteer development, "It Takes a Village: Recruiting and Keeping Great Volunteers" and a session on fund-raising for local programs.

If you are considering attending the annual conference, please register now. There will be NO walk-ins or registrations accepted after October 12. Download a conference brochure from the main page at the Kansas PRIDE Web site: www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu. For details about registration or the event, please contact Ruth Smerchek at the Kansas Department of Commerce by phone at 785-296-3034 or send an e-mail to her at rsmerchek@kansascommerce.com.