



Kansas PRIDE Newsletter

Spring 2006

Stinson Assigned to Work with PRIDE Communities

It is said that the only things that are certain in this life are taxes and death, but it seems that change in the PRIDE program is also a certainty! While change can be difficult to accept and move through, it is also the goal of the PRIDE program to affect incremental change in a community that results in long-term sustainability and viability, while increasing the quality of life of its citizens.

With that in mind, the Department of Commerce has temporarily assigned Jeanne Stinson to work on a daily basis with K-State Research and Extension in program management and in serving PRIDE communities. Together, Dan Kahl, Connie Hoch, and Jeanne Stinson will be reassessing the program and the way services are provided, with a final goal of sustaining and increasing community capacity in each local PRIDE program.

Jeanne will be working with the following communities: Axtell, Beattie, Florence, Ft. Scott, Glasco, Haven, Hutchinson, Lucas, Olsburg, Overbrook, Paxico, Potwin and Towanda. Representatives of these communities may contact Jeanne at 785-296-3485 or reach her by email at jstinson@kansascommerce.com. "I am really looking forward to getting more directly involved with PRIDE communities. I have been part of the PRIDE management team for several years, but this will give me a greater insight into the needs of the community and therefore help provide a stronger PRIDE overtime," said Stinson. In addition to working with local communities, Stinson will also be serving as the interim secretary of the Kansas PRIDE Inc. Board of Directors.

Dan and Connie will be providing services to all the other PRIDE communities.

Setting Cross-Community Goals, Part One

While we are familiar with cross country track, cross-community may be a new concept. What are cross-community goals?

Experience has shown that if a small group of people are involved in the identification and setting of community improvement goals, several negative results can occur. First, the goals set may not reflect the true goals of the community – but only of those sitting around the table. Second, the goals identified will need to be communicated and "sold" to the community to get them enthused, involved, and active. This takes time and energy. The third negative result is that there are only a few people to do the work, which results in good people getting "burned out" on community improvement quickly. The good news is that if you follow a good community development process, you can avoid these troubles.

Start with a Survey — A local survey is a great way to get the investment of the entire community and to gather ideas of what is important to the people that live there. It is important that everyone in the community is given a chance to say what is

important to them. If community improvement goals are based on the feedback of the people that live in the community, you won't need to convince anyone of their value, and volunteer recruitment will be easier too!

Host a public meeting — The results of the survey can be shared at a public meeting, and (if the survey didn't) the community can be asked to prioritize what they see as the most urgent or important projects to work on. Getting people together to talk about what they think is important leads to the logical next step of asking them to get involved in projects they are passionate about. Don't miss the opportunity at the meeting to involve people in project teams.

Just as good cross-community goal setting is inclusive and based on broad citizen involvement; cross-community goals also span areas of community investment. Tune in to the next PRIDE newsletter for more on setting cross-community goals.

— Dan Kahl, PRIDE Coordinator

Melvern PRIDE Develops Creative Fund-Raiser

Raising funds for community projects is always a challenge. It is vital to the continuation of community projects.

The Melvern Community PRIDE will sponsor a unique fund-raiser late this spring. They are having a consignment auction on May 6 at the Melvern Community Center.

Consignors will maintain 80 percent of the item's selling price with 20 percent going to Melvern PRIDE. If anyone would like to consign items, please contact Linda Russell at 785-549-3435 or e-mail tctraders@earthlink.net or Kay Salisbury 785-549-0116 or e-mail barn40@earthlink.net

If your community has noteworthy fund-raising activities, please share them with Dan or Connie for future newsletters.

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week is "the" time to thank one of America's most valuable assets—volunteers—and call the public's attention to all that they do to improve our communities. This year's National Volunteer Week is April 23rd to 29th.

Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing the Week as an annual celebration of volunteering. Every President since has signed a proclamation promoting National Volunteer Week.

This year's theme, "Inspire by Example," truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help, as well as, to inspire other to serve. Take this opportunity to remember PRIDE volunteers with a special thank you.



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

April 23-29, 2006

Homer E. Smuck Cultural Award Winner

Wilda Carswell, a charter member of the Alton PRIDE, received the Homer E. Smuck Cultural Award this year. The award is given to a person who, over a period of time, has accomplished outstanding achievements in cultural activities as well as significant cultural contribution via educational activities, community work, and other means in Osborne County. By receiving this award, Carswell was inducted into the Osborne County Hall of Fame.

Carswell currently serves as Alton PRIDE president and has held that office for the past 10 years. During her presidency the Alton PRIDE has been awarded the Community of Excellence for six consecutive years and the Star award five times. The Alton PRIDE sponsors the Alton Jubilee and celebrated *Twenty Years with PRIDE* in August of 2005.

Wilda has and continues to give her time, talents, and service to the Alton Community and Osborne County. She is very deserving of the Homer E. Smuck Cultural award for 2006. Congratulations!

Davis Joins PRIDE

Sherry Davis has joined the Kansas PRIDE program as a grant-project coordinator. Davis will be assisting three pilot PRIDE communities with projects that incorporate improvement and/or protection of natural resources with community enhancement projects. Melvern, Greeley, and Rossville will be participating in this assessment process. Grant funds from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Bureau of Water, will support the assessment process.

Davis comes to the PRIDE program from K-State's Pollution Prevention Institute where she assisted small businesses and communities with waste reduction to help them improve their economic viability and local environments. Davis has a B.S. in Environmental Health from Colorado State University and has lived in Kansas for 10 years.

***Community building
is not a spectator
sport.***

— Bruce Adams

Westar Energy Dedicated to Kansas Communities

"Kansas PRIDE communities are made up of citizens who have the 'can-do' spirit to work together in identifying community involvement projects ... and then getting them done," said Suzanne Coin, Westar Energy Community Support Representative and Kansas PRIDE board member. "Our employees live and work in many of the Kansas PRIDE communities and we are pleased to support such a worthwhile program."

Westar Energy believes in giving back to the communities they serve. They start with the creativity, compassion, and can-do spirit their employees bring to their jobs and apply those qualities to improving the lives of people throughout Kansas. Westar Energy community relations initiatives address real needs at the local level and reinforce their commitment to serving Kansans.

Community Involvement

By partnering with Kansas communities, Westar Energy is an outstanding model of civic leadership and environmental stewardship. They believe that working together with communities will make Kansas a better place to live. Westar Energy actively promotes and supports several company programs:

- Community Partners recognizes current and retired employees and their spouses for volunteering. Through Community Partners, 450 volunteers donated 85,193 hours to Kansas communities.
- The Matching Gift Program matches donations to Kansas universities and colleges from Westar Energy employees, directors, and spouses.
- The Westar Energy Foundation provides financial support to Kansas nonprofit organizations that prepare youths, from kindergarten through college, to successfully participate in our society and improve the communities in which they live.
- Project DESERVE helps the elderly, severely disabled, or low-income customers with emergency energy assistance.

- Westar Energy Retirees' Club provides their retirees with an organized program for volunteering and giving back to the community, as well as staying connected to the company.
- Through School Connections, Westar Energy employees volunteer their time and talents to tutor and mentor students, provide career and safety demonstrations, and participate in the company's C.O.P.E. (Consider Opportunities in a Professional Environment) program, featuring minority speakers on careers, integrity, and staying in school.
- Westar Energy supports 19 United Way organizations in our service territory. By combining employee and company donations, the agency received more than \$440,000.



Environmental Involvement

- Preserving the environment is a responsibility Westar Energy takes very seriously. That's why we:
- Help our customers use energy wisely.
 - Comply with the federal and state environmental regulations and standards.
 - Increasingly use environmentally friendly ethanol alternative-fueled vehicles.
 - Respond to industrial problems with technological solutions that are kind to the environment.

Westar Energy Green Team preserves and enhances Kansas' natural resources and helps to educate Kansans about them. The Green Team is an employee-directed group that partners with scout troops, students, individuals, conservation agencies, and private groups to preserve and enhance the Kansas environment. The Green Team has helped schools develop outdoor classrooms, planted tens of thousands of trees, restored prairies, created and restored wetlands, and built trails, bridges, boat ramps, and wildlife viewing features. The Green Team also helps sensitive plant and animal species in Kansas. Green Team volunteers complete more than 50 projects each year.

News from PRIDE Communities

Eskridge

The Gateway to the Flint Hills Coalition PRIDE Boosters have had a busy first part of the year as they gear up for improvements to the Eskridge area for 2006. While this group consistently has a number of projects in the works, a few of this year's upcoming projects are especially noteworthy.

For one, the Coalition will be hosting a farmer's market on Saturdays on a private lot on Main Street owned by PRIDE member Sandy Williams. Williams is donating spaces on the concrete slab free of charge for local farmers to bring in merchandise to encourage this enjoyable gathering each week throughout the summer. The farmer's market location also corresponds well with last year's designation of the state's newest scenic byway, the Native Stone Scenic Byway, which runs through Wabaunsee and Shawnee counties, including down Main Street in Eskridge – right past the farmer's market location.

A second major project in the works is one called "Our Community through the Eyes of Our Children," in which local youth have been given dis-

posable cameras. They have been instructed to take half the film of things around the area they like and the other half of things they don't like and would like to see improved.

In the next few weeks, the pictures will be developed and the youth will meet with the Coalition to discuss the photos and what can be done to make the community more appealing "through the eyes of our children."

The Coalition also has planned a clean-up day in the city park during late April, where a tree-planting was sponsored about the same time last year.

On Memorial Day weekend, the Coalition will be assisting with refreshments for a Veterans' walk taking three routes across the state with one passing by the Lake Wabaunsee and Eskridge communities.

While the group has a number of activities, projects and other services planned throughout 2006, the culminating highlight of the year generally is the Veterans' Day festivities, this year falling on a Saturday, in which veterans from all branches of services are remembered and honored with a parade, ceremonies at the city park, songs, speakers, a meal and often other activities. In conjunction with the community's focus on veterans, the Coalition also is doing a Veterans' Walk project in which inscribed bricks will be placed in a walkway in honor of both local veterans and those from outside whose family members choose to honor them with the purchase of a brick.

— Sarah Gooding, Eskridge



Visiting Eskridge



Eric Berg

News from PRIDE Communities

Kinsley

Kinsley, population 1,300, is located midway between Great Bend and Dodge City, and serves as the county seat for Edwards County. In 1975 Kinsley PRIDE was formed and joined the statewide PRIDE effort under the guidance of KSU/Extension Service and the Kansas Department of Commerce.

As a way to raise funds, the Kinsley PRIDE Committee opened the Twice-Is-Nice Thrift Store in July of 1992.

Open 5 days a week, the money from the store is put back into the community with the direction of the PRIDE Committee. Thirty-five volunteers staff the thrift store.

With a countywide population of 3,000 persons, volunteers are amazed at the never-ending flow of donations. Excess clothing is donated to charities in the area, nationwide, and abroad.

The biggest benefactor of the thrift store is the community. In 13 years of operation, the Twice-Is-Nice store has returned more than \$115,000 in rent, taxes, and donations to Kinsley. The rent is paid to the Carnival Heritage Foundation, owner of the building. Prior to opening Twice-Is-Nice, the PRIDE Committee donated labor to clean and rebuild the first floor of the museum building to house four businesses. All businesses pay rent to the foundation.

A favorite yearly event is the PRIDE Appreciation Dinner that honors the volunteers who staff the Twice-Is-Nice store. Along with the volunteers the invitees include teachers, EMT's, firemen, and law enforcement. Through the dedication of these volunteers, Kinsley PRIDE returned \$10,093 to their community in 2005.

The beneficiaries included Arrowhead West, Christmas parade sponsorship, 4-H Story Awards, movie sponsorship, Edwards County Fair, Kinsley Public Library Summer Program, retirement dinner for their fire chief of 50 years, Teen Center, trees for the Midway Park, Sampler Festival sponsorship, and the Senior Center. A major donation last year was the purchase of welcome banners for downtown Kinsley light poles costing \$3,400.

Ongoing projects include the operation of Twice-Is-Nice and beautification of downtown Kinsley, including an effort to enhance the second floor windows on mainstreet.

Kinsley PRIDE continues to add to the quality of life in a small Kansas town.

— Rex Woods, Kinsley

Bushton

The early settlers who first came to Bushton built sod houses and named the town for the large growth of bushes where Main Street is now located. One hundred twenty-five years later, the small community in Rice County is still a quiet, easygoing place to live and raise a family.

Bushton joined PRIDE in 2004 and took on the task of organizing events that would provide community activities for people of all ages. The annual community garage sale was renamed "Quivira Trading Post" and the day's activities grew to include "The Coronado Craft Show," "City of Gold Kids Games," and the "Thunderbird Dance" under the stars. In October, PRIDE helps the Bushton Fire Department with the "Spooktacular Fire Truck Rides!" Kids get to meet the firemen, policemen, and play on the PRIDE bouncer while waiting for their turn to ride on the Fire



Bushton - Getting a tattoo at the Quivira Trading Post

Truck. In December, PRIDE hosts the annual "Santa's Bazaar" where kids meet Santa, and adults get the opportunity to win the "Best Soup in Bushton" Award. Crafters sell their goods and a raffle raises funds for PRIDE activities.

Eighteen months ago, a PRIDE survey showed many residents favored making improvements to the city park. Last fall, Bushton PRIDE was awarded a \$60,000 grant from the Stumps Foundation to rebuild the city park. New play equipment was delivered in January, and work is ready to begin. A large tree has been removed and painting and digging dates have been set for April. The park upgrade will be a 3-year project with volunteers of all ages pitching in. Members of the Kay Club and the Art Class at Quivira Heights High School have committed to help. This is the first major project since joining PRIDE and the whole town seems to be anxious to see the kids enjoying the new park.

PRIDE gives our community a means to improve recreational and social opportunities. It provides a vehicle to improve facilities, do beautification projects, and train future leaders. It's the kind of program that fosters pride in your accomplishments.

— Nancy Swain, Bushton

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Important PRIDE Dates 2006

April 15	Deadline for 2006-2007 Kansas PRIDE Program Official Entry Form, Government Resolution and 3 rd quarterly report Deadline for requesting a year-End, on-site evaluation for the "Community of Excellence" award Designation "STAR" Award materials due in PRIDE office Youth Leadership/Youth Community Service Award Nominations due in PRIDE office	June 11-14	Year-end, on-site community Evaluations
		June 23	Board of Directors meeting
		July 1	Kickoff for new PRIDE program Year
		July 15	Deadline for 4 th quarterly report
		July 18	Shared Community Leadership Workshop
		September 30	PRIDE Day
		October 6	Board of Directors meeting (Ellsworth)
		December 1	Board of Directors meeting, Salina
April 26-27	Community Economic Development Conference, Wamego		



All educational programs and materials are available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability.

The Kansas Department of Commerce, K-State Research and Extension, and private-sector companies and associations partner together to make the PRIDE program successful. For assistance contact the PRIDE staff: Jeanne Stinson at (785) 296-3485; Dan Kahl or Connie Hoch at (785) 532-5840