

Kansas

GOVERNMENT JOURNAL

VOLUME 98-NUMBER 11

NOVEMBER 2012

Inside:

LKM Elects New Leaders

Arkansas City Newest Certified Local Government

Kansas in Question, Shaping Kansas for the Future

SAVE THE DATE

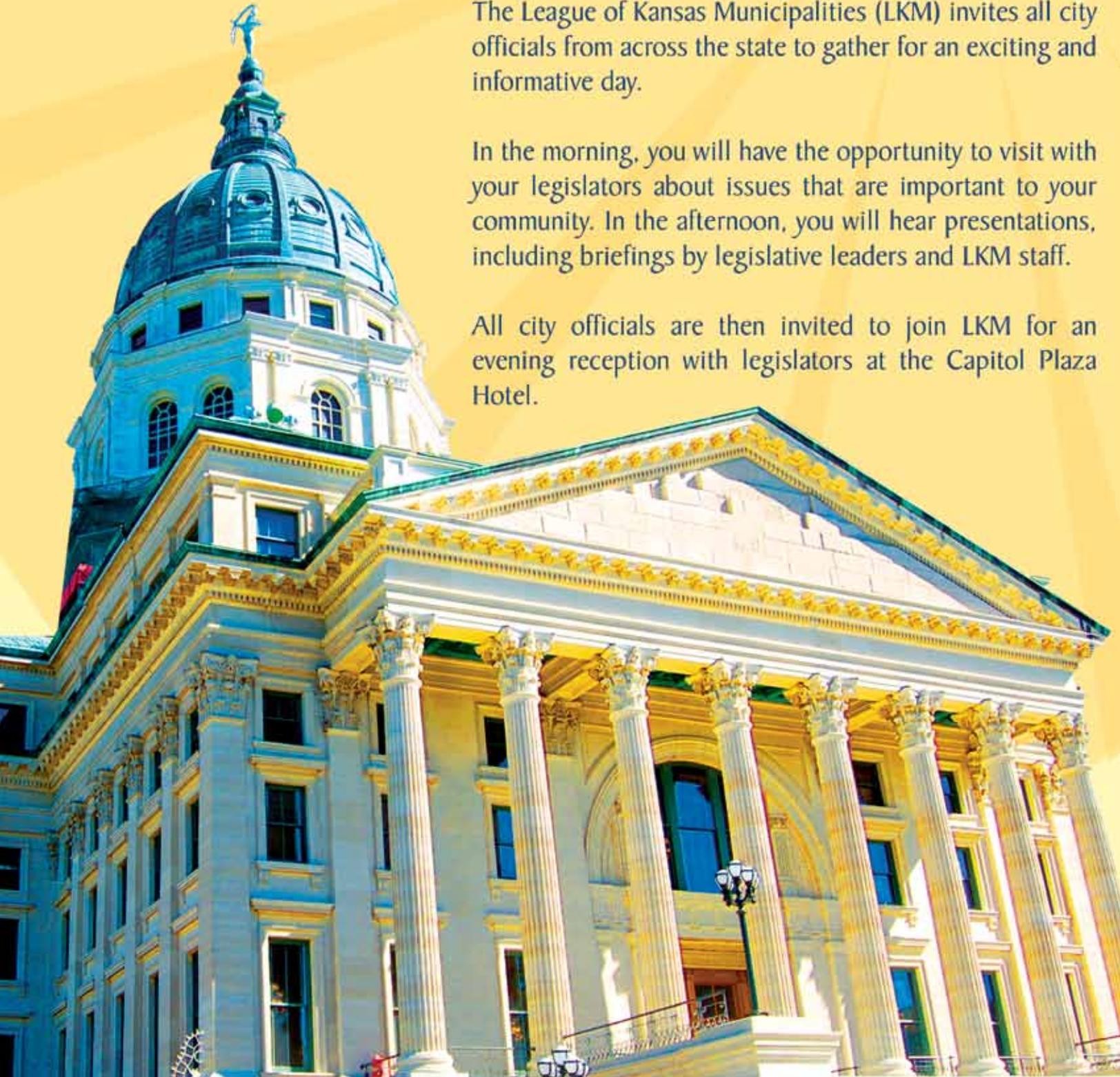
CITY HALL DAY

FEBRUARY 6, 2013

The League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) invites all city officials from across the state to gather for an exciting and informative day.

In the morning, you will have the opportunity to visit with your legislators about issues that are important to your community. In the afternoon, you will hear presentations, including briefings by legislative leaders and LKM staff.

All city officials are then invited to join LKM for an evening reception with legislators at the Capitol Plaza Hotel.





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About the Cover:
 Fall trees align the downtown area in Peabody. See article about the future of the State of Kansas, beginning on page 344.
Photo by Jay Bachman.



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The mission of the League shall be to unify, strengthen, and advocate for the interests of Kansas municipalities to advance the general welfare and promote the quality of life of the people who live within our cities.

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December

14 - LKM Governing Body Meeting, Topeka

21 - KMIT Board of Trustee Meeting, El Dorado

24 - Christmas Eve

25 - Christmas Day

January

1 - New Year's Day

14 - Legislature Reconvenes

21 - Martin Luther King Jr., Birthday

February

6 - City Hall Day, Topeka

8 - MLA: Ethics, Hugoton

9 - MLA: Ethics, Hesston

14 - Valentine's Day

18 - President's Day

28 - MLA: Ethics, Baxter Springs

Obituaries

Judge Steven Patrick Deiter, 57, died October 21, 2012. In 1987, Steve opened Deiter Law Office, and his appointment as Nemaha County Attorney soon followed. He also served as Sabetha City Attorney during this time. After living in Texas for a short while, he returned to Sabetha and went into practice with Martin Mishler, forming Mishler and Deiter Law Offices. In 1995, the duo expanded their partnership, purchasing Nemaha County Abstract and Title Company. They also served as Sabetha city attorneys. In 2008, Steve was appointed District Magistrate Judge and then elected to the same position in 2010. He served in this position until June of 2012.

Keith D. Hoffman, 62, died August 11, 2012, at his home. Hoffman served as Dickinson County Attorney for 15 years and spent 14 years in private practice. He was named to the Chapman Sports Hall of Fame and later coached the Solomon High School women's basketball team. Hoffman was a member of the Kansas Bar Association and the American Legion.

Robert "Bob" S. Homolka, 73, died October 31, 2012, in Salina. He was co-owner of Homolka Grain & Supply in Ellsworth, a farmer and stockman, and a U.S. Navy veteran. Bob served as Mayor of Ellsworth for 27 years (1983-2009). He was a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church, life member of American Legion Post 174, and member of the Chamber of Commerce. He was also a member of the Kansas Motor Carrier Association and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Stanley Paul Krysztof, 74, died September 21, 2012, at his home. Krysztof was elected to serve as a Baldwin City Councilmember from 1995-1997 and then Mayor from 1997-2001. He was active in youth sports while coaching his children's softball and baseball teams and also serving as President of their respective leagues.



Cities Receive Humanities Grant

The McPherson Convention and Visitors Bureau has been awarded \$8,101 by The Kansas Humanities Council for a short documentary film on the history of McPherson County's All Schools Day, the county's largest and longest-running celebration.

The grant to McPherson County was 1 of 5 totaling \$35,903 recently awarded by the humanities council.

The other grant recipients were:

• Arts in Prison, Overland Park, \$10,000 for a documentary film on the East Hill Singers of Lansing Prison.

- Delaware Tribe of Indians Historic Preservation Office, Emporia, \$9,980 for a full-length documentary film on "Heart of the Drum: The Story of the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Kansas."
- Halstead Historical Society, Halstead, \$1,895 for the Edwin Buller Photograph Preservation Project, which will scan, document, digitize, and archive photos of Halstead dating back to the 1870s.
- International Fiber Collective, Topeka, \$5,927 for "100 Years of Agriculture: Past, Present, and Future," with exhibitions and public programs in Greensburg, Hutchinson, Kansas City, Kingman, and Salina.

Ottawa Named in Top 25 List

CNNMoney Magazine recently named Ottawa as one of the top 25 best small towns to retire to for 2012. Ottawa was chosen for its relatively low income tax rate, activity variety, and location.

"A slice of Americana" is how Ottawa Mayor Blake Jorgenson describes the city. The honor of being named one of the top places to retire is well deserved, he said.

"I think it's a great thing," Jorgenson said. "I feel Ottawa is a great place to live and being recognized by a major organization like *CNNMoney* is kind of like icing on the cake."

With a population of about 13,000, Ottawa joins other small cities like Danville, Kentucky; Prescott, Arizona; and Fort Payne, Alabama, on the *CNNMoney* list. Citing Ottawa's architecturally rich buildings and more than 200 miles of nearby converted rail trails, *CNNMoney's* article emphasizes the various means of visual and physical stimulation retirees can find in the city.

The recognition comes not long after Ottawa was named as a finalist in the American Paint Institute's Prettiest Places in America contest, the results of which will be announced soon. National recognition like this helps give Ottawa good publicity, said Kristi Lee, President of the Franklin County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The bureau already is making plans to add the *CNNMoney* recognition to its visitors pamphlets and website.

"The whole location here I think is pretty phenomenal, so I think that means a lot to the retirement aspect of it," she said.

In addition, with a low tax base and low cost of living, coupled with the community itself, Ottawa is a good place for retirees, Lee said. The various festivals, like the Power of the Past antique tractor show, and Ol' Marais River Run car show also offer retired people the opportunity to get out and stay active without having to fight big-city crowds, she said.

Baldwin City Battlefield Receives Designation

A Civil War battlefield in northeast Kansas has been designated as a National Historic Landmark.

The National Park Service on announced the designation for the Black Jack Battlefield just east of Baldwin City.

Abolitionist John Brown fought pro-slavery forces of Henry Clay Pate in the battle on June 2, 1856. Several historians have suggested it was the first battle of the Civil War.

Kerry Altenbernd, Vice President of the Black Jack Battlefield Trust, said the designation gives national significance to the 40-acre site along U.S. Highway 56 about 3 miles east of Baldwin City.

Altenbernd says the listing may help secure grants to maintain the property and improve maintenance and amenities for visitors. Currently, it is maintained only by volunteers.

Great Bend Disability Committee Receives State Award

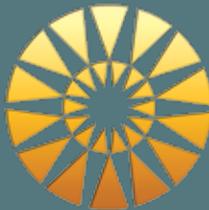
The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns presented the Michael Lechner Advocacy Award to Jennifer Welsch, the Coordinator of the Great Bend Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) Committee, along with the entire DMD committee, for their work on coordinating activities for Disability Mentoring Day.

Commission Executive Director Martha Gabehart presented the award Wednesday, October 10, 2012 at the DMD activities. The annual award recognizes a Kansan with a disability or a group who effectively advocated for changes to improve the lives of people with disabilities living in his or her community.

"It is with great pleasure that we present the Great Bend DMD Committee with this award," Gabehart said. "Their committee is making an impact in the Great Bend community to reduce barriers to employment for people with disabilities."

The Great Bend DMD committee was nominated by Kerrie Bacon, State DMD Coordinator, for their continuous work during the last nine years to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities and businesses. DMD gives businesses an opportunity to learn more about unemployed people with disabilities in the community. It also offers people with disabilities an opportunity to see what employment opportunities area businesses provide and to learn more about those careers.

The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns is a catalyst for change in state government for people with disabilities. It promotes a higher quality of life by recommending changes to laws, regulations, and government programs so that Kansans with disabilities can be active citizens. It also provides technical assistance services, information, and referrals to appropriate entities.



LKM Elects New Leaders



Brenda Chance, President
Phillipsburg



John Deardoff, Vice President
Hutchinson

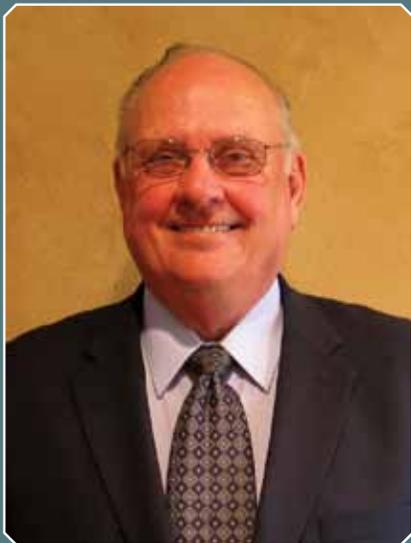
On Monday, October 8, 2012, the Convention of Voting Delegates for the League of Kansas Municipalities selected new officers and directors for the Governing Body. The group convened in Topeka, Kansas and elected Phillipsburg City Clerk, Brenda Chance, as President. The Convention also elected Hutchinson City Manager, John Deardoff, as the League Vice-President.

Brenda Chance began her public service career in 1981 with the City of Phillipsburg working as a Wastewater Treatment Facility Operator. By 1987, Chance worked her way up to be appointed City Clerk, a position that includes implementing policies set by the Phillipsburg City Council. In addition to her service in local government, Chance has also served as an officer, director, and President in 2005 for the City Clerks/Municipal Finance Officers Association (CCMFOA). In 2008, Chance received the honor of being named Clerk of the Year by the CCMFOA. She has served on the LKM Governing Body since 2005 and her election to President of the League will be the first time that a city clerk has served as LKM President since a 1937 term that

lasted until 1946. In addition, she is the 8th woman to serve as LKM President since the organization's founding in 1910.

John Deardoff has been Hutchinson's City Manager since 2005. He is responsible for implementing the policy direction of the City Council and administers and oversees City operations. John has spent his entire career serving cities in Kansas, previously in Dodge City and Sterling. In addition to his dedication to local government, Deardoff has been active in the Kansas Association of City Managers organization for the past 15 years, serving on a variety of committees, Board of Directors, and as President in 2002.

At the annual conference, the Convention of Voting Delegates also selected three Governing Body members to continue in their current positions: Herb Bath, Mayor, Altamont; Daron Hall, City Manager, Pittsburg; and John "Tiny" McTaggart, Mayor, Edwardsville. In addition, Lori Christensen, Mayor of Leoti, was selected to serve as a Director. And finally, Kim Thomas, Mayor of Stockton was appointed in June to fill an unexpired term on the governing body. LKM is proud to welcome these city officials to the 2012-2013 Governing Body.



Herb Bath
Altamont



Lori Christensen
Leoti



Daron Hall
Pittsburg



John "Tiny" McTaggart
Edwardsville



Kim Thomas
Stockton

2012-2013 GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

PRESIDENT

Brenda Chance, City Clerk, Phillipsburg

VICE PRESIDENT

John Deardoff, City Manager, Hutchinson

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Jim Sherer, Commissioner, Dodge City

PAST PRESIDENTS

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Carl Brewer, Mayor, Wichita

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Terry Somers, Mayor, Mount Hope

Kim Thomas, Mayor, Stockton



Governor Forms School Efficiency Task Force

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback has formed a School Efficiency Task Force to examine education spending and to develop guidelines on how to get more funding into classrooms where teachers teach and students learn. Currently only 15 of the 286 school districts in Kansas adhere to the state law that requires at least 65% of funds provided by the State to school districts are to be spent in the classroom or for instruction.

More than half of total state spending is directed towards K-12 education. Since 2000, Kansas has increased K-12 education spending by nearly \$1 billion while the number of K-12 students has remained almost the same.

A Kansas State Board of Education member since 2003, Ken Willard of Hutchinson will chair the task force. Willard served on the USD 309 Nickerson School Board from 1997-2002 and retired last year after a 38-year career in the insurance industry.

In Governor Brownback's Road Map for Kansas, two of his five goals are directly impacted by quality of our education system:

- Increase the percentage of high school graduates who are career or college ready.
- Increase the percentage of 4th graders who can read at grade level.

Names Added to Kansas Walk of Honor

Three distinctly different careers—a famous aviator, a former vice president, and a Nobel Prize-winning inventor—were enshrined on the Statehouse grounds in the Kansas Walk of Honor for their significant contributions to the state, nation, and world.

Aviator Amelia Earhart, Vice President Charles Curtis, and microchip inventor Jack Kilby joined U.S. Senator Bob Dole as the only four Kansans to have garnered the honor.

Bronze plaques honoring the new inductees were unveiled by Governor Sam Brownback and the Kansas Historical Society on October 10, 2012.

The plaques are installed along concrete sidewalks that run diagonally to and from the Statehouse on the south side of the grounds.

Jennie Chinn, the Kansas Historical Society's Executive Director, said the idea of the walk of honor is to fill the sidewalks over time with plaques of notable Kansans so visitors at the Capitol will have a glimpse into the important contributions made from residents of the state to the nation and world.

Community Service Tax Credit Recipients Announced

The Kansas Department of Commerce has awarded \$4.13 million in Community Service Tax Credits to 27 nonprofit organizations around the state.

These future Kansas income tax credits are a major fundraising tool for community organizations engaged in services for children and families, healthcare, and crime prevention. Businesses and individuals who contribute to the awarded organizations are eligible for a 70% tax credit in rural areas or a 50% tax credit in urban areas.

For example, qualified donors who give \$1,000 to an approved project in a non-rural area would receive a 50% (or \$500) tax credit against their Kansas income tax liability. In addition, the donors would receive federal tax benefits if they itemize, which would again decrease their tax liability.

The Community Service Tax Credit Program is a way for charitable organizations and public health care entities to improve their ability to undertake major capital fundraising drives for projects involving children and family services, non-governmental crime prevention, and healthcare. Each year, non-profit community service organizations submit proposals to the Department. If the organization is awarded tax credits, it is then authorized to offer tax credits to donors making contributions to the approved fundraising project.

For a complete list of recipients who received the tax credit, visit <http://www.kansascommerce.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?aid=745>.

Kansas Issues New Driver's Licenses

Kansas officials unveiled a new driver's license featuring ultraviolet images, multicolored holograms, and raised-letter numbers on October 16, 2012.

The first update to the State's license technology since 2004 was developed to advance the ongoing campaign against fraudulent conduct. Kansans renewing licenses will immediately begin receiving this new license.

Driver's licenses and identification cards using the old design will remain valid, and Kansans won't be forced to acquire a new ID until their current one expires. A person who secured a new six-

year license last month wouldn't cycle through the system to the modified version until 2018.

The \$26 fee charged to most people to renew a license will be unaltered by the reform. The fee for a first-time license will stay at \$29. The contract cost for the Kansas Department of Revenue to produce each license will escalate from the current \$2.69 to a rate of \$4.30.

"It is important to protect the integrity of our identification cards for all Kansans," said Governor Sam Brownback, who was issued one of the redesigned licenses at a Topeka news conference.



2014 E.A. Mosher Excellence in Local Government Award

Mayor Kenneth Bernard • City of Lansing



On Monday, October 8, 2012, the League of Kansas Municipalities presented Lansing Mayor Kenneth Bernard with the 2012 E.A. Mosher Excellence in Local Government Award. Mayor Bernard received the award during the League of Kansas Municipalities 2012 Annual Conference in Topeka. The League established the E.A. Mosher Excellence in Local

Government Award in 2001 to recognize the accomplishments of distinguished leaders in the local-government community.

Mayor Bernard has dedicated a tremendous amount of time serving his community. He has been an elected official since 1979, first serving as a councilmember from 1979 to 1983, and then serving as Mayor from 1983 to 1990 and again from 1993 through the present day. Over the past 33 years, Mayor Kenneth Bernard has served the citizens of Lansing with distinction. During his time as Mayor, Kenneth Bernard has led his city through a time of tremendous growth and many municipal enhancement projects. He is an active member of numerous civic organizations including: Mid America Regional Council Total Transportation Policy Committee, Leavenworth County Port Authority, Leavenworth/Lansing Chamber of Commerce, Lansing Lions Club, Lansing VFW Post 12003, Lansing Community Library Board, Kansas Mayors Association, the League of Kansas Municipalities Tax and Finance Committee, and a steering committee for the National League of Cities.

Mayor Kenneth Bernard is the twelfth recipient of the E.A. Mosher Excellence in Local Government Award. The Award was established to recognize the accomplishments of distinguished



leaders in the local government community and is named for former League Executive Director E.A. Mosher who served the organization from 1960-1991.

Excellence in Local Government Award Past Recipients

2001 • Mayor Bob Knight • Wichita

2002 • Mayor Carol Marinovich • Kansas City

2003 • Mayor Warren Hixson • Colby

2004 • Mayor Ed Eilert • Overland Park

2005 • Commissioner John Zutavern • Abilene

2006 • Commissioner Richard Jackson • Ottawa

2007 • Commissioner Pat Pettey • Kansas City

2008 • Mayor Don DeHaven • Sedgwick

2009 • Councilmember Diane Linver • Lenexa

2010 • Mayor Bruce Snead • Manhattan

2011 • Mayor Clausie Smith • Bonner Springs

LKM HOSTS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BY AMANDA SCHUSTER

City officials from across the state came together in Topeka for the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) 104th Annual Conference, *Growing Strong Cities*. The annual event took place October 6-8, 2012 in the capital city. Participants included local government officials, sponsors, speakers, and exhibitors.

On Saturday, October 6, attendees had the opportunity to network and learn about government-related products from numerous vendors, some of which exhibited at the trade show for the first time.

In the afternoon, the LKM Municipal Leadership Academy (MLA) provided a number of training opportunities. Attendees had the opportunity to choose from 3 different classes, Kansas Open Meetings Act KOMA/KORA, Municipal Finance, and The Power of Leadership. Nearly 100 attendees participated in the MLAs.

Saturday's evening event focused on all that the Capital City has to offer. Held in conjunction with the trade show fair in exhibition hall, attendees played an engaging Topeka trivia/blackout BINGO game for several chances to win great prizes. While all the fun was happening, attendees heard music from local entertainer Kyler Carpenter and the energetic Topeka High Drumline.

On Sunday, October 7, the opening general session welcomed keynote speaker, Carey Lohrenz. Lohrenz inspired attendees with her experience, being the first female F-14 Tomcat Fighter Pilot in the U.S. Navy. Her presentation, "Lessons in Leadership from the Flight Deck," was motivating and well received by attendees. Prior to Lohrenz's presentation, U.S. Senator Pat Roberts gave a brief address to attendees.

A full schedule of concurrent workshop and roundtable sessions were attended throughout Sunday. In the evening, attendees were entertained at the LKM Social event. Back by popular demand, the *Capitol Steps* performed their hilarious comical skits that were a perfect fit for city officials and all attendees alike.

On Monday, October 8, attendees heard from keynote speaker, David Horsager. His presentation on *The Trust Edge: Gain Faster Results, Deeper Relationships & a Stronger Bottom Line* demonstrated that everything from government and financial systems to relationships is built on trust.

Both keynote speakers received positive feedback from attendees. The post conference survey revealed that they were two of the highest ranked keynote speakers in LKM conference history.

Following Monday's Keynote Address was the Annual Public Service Awards Luncheon. Numerous city employees were recognized for their faithful continuous service within a municipality. Governor Sam Brownback addressed attendees at the luncheon and assisted with recognizing 40, 45, & 50 year service award recipients.

After lunch, the LKM 104th Annual Conference concluded with the Convention of Voting Delegates. Dodge City Commissioner and LKM President, Jim Sherer handed over the gavel to Phillipsburg City Clerk, Brenda Chance for her new term as LKM President. John Deardoff, Hutchinson City Manager was elected as the LKM Vice-President.

 Amanda Schuster is the Communications Specialist for the League of Kansas Municipalities. She can be reached at aschuster@lkm.org or (785) 354-9565.

Phillipsburg City Clerk and LKM Vice President Brenda Chance honors Dodge City Commissioner and LKM President Jim Sherer for his year of service to LKM with the official gavel and plaque.

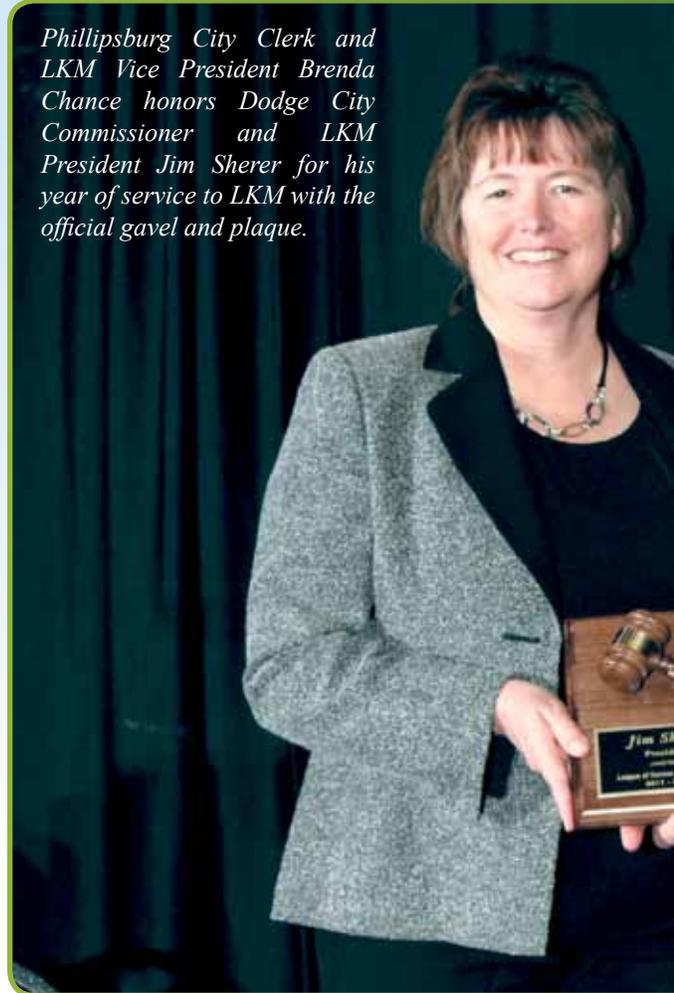


Photo top right: U.S. Navy Fighter pilot, Carey Lohrenz delivered the Opening General Session keynote address on Sunday.

Photo bottom right: International author and business strategist, David Horsager delivered his presentation on trust for the General Session on Monday.

Photo right: Dodge City Commissioner and League of Kansas Municipalities President Jim Sherer along with Governor Sam Brownback presented annual public service awards to the following recipients: Onaga Volunteer firefighter/secretary-treasurer Verne Ratcliff (50 years); Lyons Utility Superintendent David Kendrick (40 years); Ottawa Crew Chief, Utilities/Electric Distribution Chester Ferguson (40 years); and Larned Fire Chief Donald Clapham (40 years). All photos by Jay Bachman.



GROWING STRONG CITIES
2012 Annual Conference • Topeka, KS • October 6-8





Background Checks

The League of Kansas Municipalities and many cities in Kansas perform background checks on prospective employees, looking for relevant information such as arrest and conviction records, educational background, and credit information. In April, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued an enforcement guidance entitled *Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. (http://www1.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm?renderforprint=1). The EEOC is the federal agency that enforces the prohibition on discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This lengthy and well-supported opinion provides fairly clear guidance regarding the use of arrest and criminal conviction records. Cities should evaluate their practices in light of this document.

The first mistake cities could make is violating Title VII by treating criminal history information differently for different applicants based on one of the protected categories. An example of this type of treatment would be having two different candidates for a job who were equally qualified, but one was African-American and one was Caucasian. They both have convictions for possessing marijuana as college students. The violation would occur if the Caucasian applicant was hired or received more favorable treatment in the interview process than the African-American based upon the criminal history information. This is an example of disparate treatment based upon race. The same scenario could occur with regard to national origin. It is certainly permissible to treat the candidates differently for other non-discriminatory reasons, just not based upon conviction information that the city deems okay for one candidate, but not for another.

Another common situation, which is a bit trickier, is that of disparate impact discrimination. In this type of violation, an employer's neutral policy of excluding applicants based on criminal history, may disproportionately impact applicants in a protected category if the policy does not have a job-related purpose and is not consistent with business necessity. Even though an employer may not mean to discriminate, its policies may prevent members of a protected class from obtaining employment. The reason given for this by the EEOC is that numerous national studies and law enforcement reports of arrest and conviction statistics have shown that strict criminal record exclusions may have a disparate impact on race and national origin. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation statistics show that 28% of all arrests were of African Americans, although, according to the 2010 Census, African Americans make up only 14% of the general population. As a result of these studies and various court cases, the enforcement guidance document cited above quotes a 1991 amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 codifying this type of disparate impact discrimination: "An unlawful employment practice based on disparate impact is established... if a complaining party demonstrates that an employer uses a particular employment practice that causes a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin and the respondent fails

to demonstrate that the challenged practice is job related for the position in question and consistent with business necessity. . . ." 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(k)(1)(A)(i) So the lesson here is that cities should not have blanket exclusionary policies for applicants that have criminal history records, unless it is for a particular type of crime that can be definitely linked to the employment in question. For example, someone with a history of workplace violence might legitimately be eliminated out of concern for employees. Further analysis to determine whether the practice is job related and consistent with business necessity will need to be undertaken to use criminal history records to eliminate candidates from consideration on a blanket basis.

The question then is how to analyze whether eliminating a candidate for a criminal conviction is job related and furthers a legitimate business purpose. Basically, the courts have stated that there are several factors that go into such a decision. The nature of the job for which the candidate is applying is one factor. For example, a conviction for driving under the influence would be relevant if the individual must drive as a part of the position. The second would be the time that has passed since the conviction or completion of the sentence. Using the example above, if the individual is middle-aged and had one conviction for DUI when he or she was a teenager, the relevance to the job is likely reduced. Finally, the nature and gravity of the offense or conduct should be evaluated. Ultimately, the courts have concluded that employers have an interest in managing the risk associated with hiring someone with a criminal conviction. If the individual had been convicted of battery on a co-worker, eliminating this person as a candidate could legitimately be of concern to the employer.

Finally, using arrest records without convictions to eliminate candidates is problematic. The fact of an arrest does not prove that criminal conduct has occurred, and many defendants are either found not guilty or the charges are dismissed. Arrests are simply not the final disposition of case. If, however, the underlying conduct leading to the arrest actually occurred and makes an individual unfit for the position in which he or she is a candidate, an arrest record may be used. Again, however, an individualized assessment must be done to prove that the conduct is job related and consistent with business necessity.

The clear message from the EEOC, which investigates complaints of discrimination, is that employers need to be cautious in using arrest and criminal conviction records as a basis for eliminating candidates for employment. While it is permissible to obtain the information and utilize it in hiring decisions, usually an individualized approach to applying the information to particular candidates will be required. Cities should talk to their city attorneys about any policy that utilizes information as a screening tool to make sure it complies with Title VII.

 Sandy Jacquot is the Director of Law/General Counsel for the League of Kansas Municipalities. She can be reached at sjacquot@lkm.org or (785) 354-9565.

LKM Strategic Planning Underway

LEAGUE OF KANSAS MUNICIPALITIES



SERVING CITIES SINCE 1910

At the LKM Annual Conference in October, plans for a strategic planning process were unveiled to the membership. Over the summer, the League Governing Body decided that it was time to undertake this process to engage the membership in planning the future of this organization.

The first step was to conduct an RFP process to select a facilitator for the project. Bernard Consulting was selected to serve in this capacity. Then-President Jim Sherer appointed a Strategic Planning Committee made up of city officials from around the state to develop recommendations for consideration by the LKM Governing Body.

After a presentation by Bernard Consulting at the Annual Conference, an online survey was conducted to get a feel for some baseline questions and satisfaction of the membership in general. The results of the survey were presented to the Committee at its November meeting.

Up next, the Committee will be scheduling regional meetings and focus groups in order to have more detailed discussions concerning future goals for the League. Look for those meetings in early Spring. We encourage all city officials to participate in these meetings in order to make sure that the voices of as many Kansas cities as possible are heard. This is your organization and your participation is necessary in order to make sure that the League continues to serve city officials with distinction for another century.

We have also established a link on the front page of our website (www.lkm.org) for updates on the Strategic Planning process. More information will be posted there and included in our electronic communications as this process continues to move forward.

The Committee plans to wrap up its work and make recommendations for consideration by the League Governing Body next summer. The final product will be discussed at the LKM Annual Conference in Overland Park, October 12-14, 2013.

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee:

Chair: Brenda Chance
City Clerk, Phillipsburg

Herb Bath
Mayor, Altamont

Carl Brewer
Mayor, Wichita

John Deardoff
City Manager, Hutchinson

Allen Dinkel
LKM Past President, Neodesha

Jim Sherer
Commissioner, Dodge City

Neil Shortlidge
City Attorney, Roeland Park and Mission Hills

Terry Somers
Mayor, Mount Hope

Kim Thomas
Mayor, Stockton

Mary Volk
City Clerk, Goodland

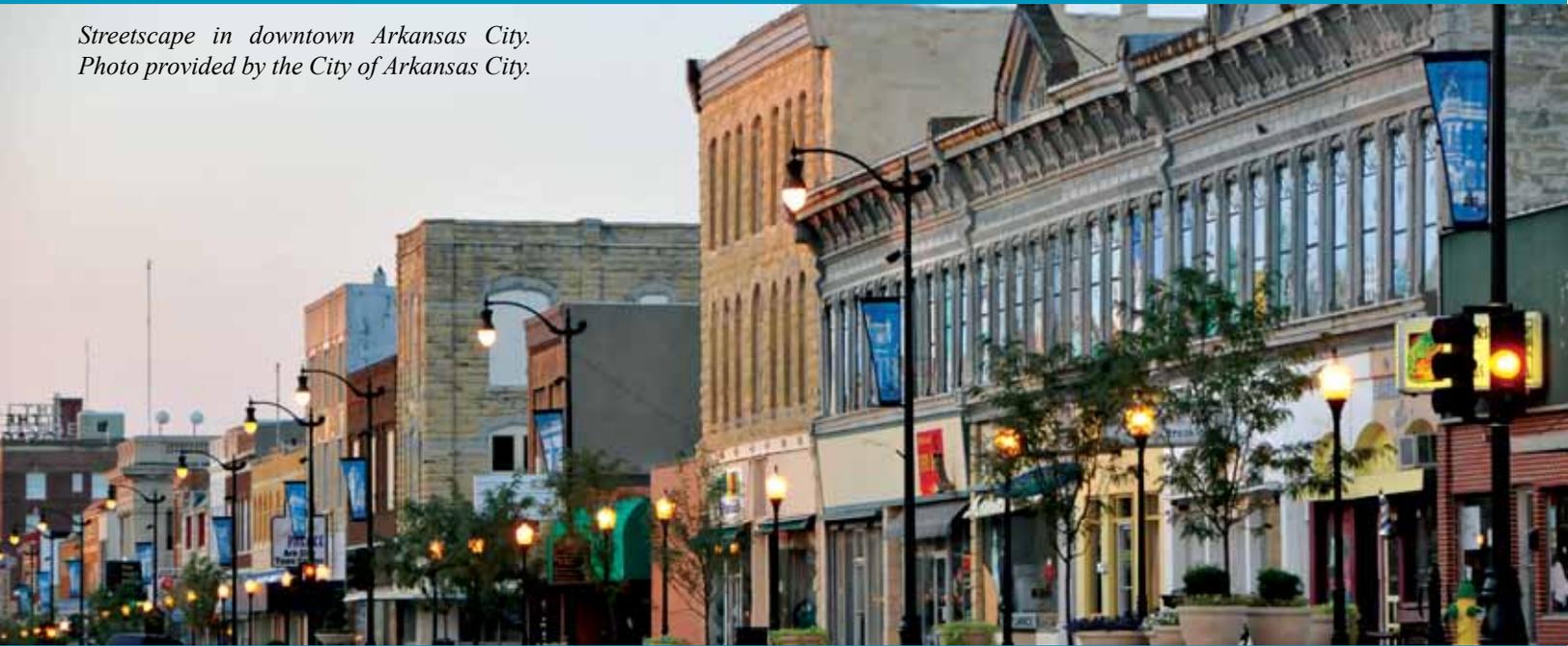
Eric Wade
City Administrator, Lenexa

John Zutavern
LKM Past President, Abilene

Arkansas City Newest Kansas Certified Local Government

-by Katrina Ringler-

*Streetscape in downtown Arkansas City.
Photo provided by the City of Arkansas City.*



The National Park Service (NPS) approved a new Certified Local Government (CLG) for Kansas on March 22, 2012. Arkansas City became the 16th CLG within the state and the City is already benefitting from that designation. CLGs are local units of government that are certified by the NPS after making a commitment to preservation. They demonstrate that commitment by adopting a local preservation ordinance that establishes a preservation commission and a local landmark program. Some CLG ordinances allow their preservation commissions to review proposed projects on local landmark properties or task them with providing educational opportunities for the public to learn more about historic preservation.

The benefits of CLG status for local communities are important. By designating significant historic resources to a local landmark program, communities take responsibility for protecting their own heritage. Creation of local designation and project review processes is one of the strongest ways to protect cultural resources in a community.

CLGs also benefit from support by state-and national-level partners in the form of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS). Both government agencies provide valuable technical support to local preservation commissioners and staff. They also facilitate various educational training opportunities for those individuals. For example, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) hosted its biannual forum July 18-22, 2012, in Norfolk, Virginia. The NPS sponsored the event, but it also offered scholarships to local and state preservation professionals to attend. The NPS also provided funding this year to the Kansas State Historic

Preservation Office to host a three-day workshop focusing on the connection between sustainability and preservation, which was targeted directly toward CLGs. Staff and commissioners from 11 of the Kansas CLGs, including Arkansas City, attended that workshop at the end of July. Eight individuals from those CLGs received travel and lodging assistance from the SHPO and NPS.

Funding for local preservation-related activities such as surveying historic resources, developing a preservation plan, or creating design review guidelines for historic districts is available to CLGs through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant program. Each year the NPS allocates funds from the HPF to the SHPOs to support state-wide preservation programs. Each SHPO must pass through a minimum 10% of its allocation to CLGs in the state. The Kansas SHPO typically passes through more than required to assist CLGs with projects such as hosting educational workshops, designating historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places, and producing heritage tourism materials. Information about the HPF grant program in Kansas is available online at kshs.org/p/historicpreservationfund/14615.

Find more information about the CLG program through the National Park Service's website at nps.gov/history/hps/clg/. For more information about CLGs in Kansas, visit kshs.org/p/certified-local-government-program/14607.

 Katrina Ringler is the CLG coordinator for the Kansas Historical Society. She can be reached at kringler@kshs.org or (785) 272-8681, ext. 215. This article was reprinted with permission from Kansas Preservation Magazine, Volume 34, Number 3.



Creating an Ethical Environment

Doing what's right isn't always intuitive. We have laws, policies, moral codes, and social norms, but even with all of these guides, it's impossible to know how to act ethically when you're facing a complicated situation. Because municipal employees endure especially difficult ethical dilemmas, they serve their community rather than a specific interest or person, and must put the public interest above other considerations.

To reduce ethical conflicts, cities should take certain steps to guide employees toward ethical decisions, like adopting a code of ethics or forming an ethics commission that educates about and enforces ethics rules. Cities can also send their employees to ethics trainings, where they'll likely learn about open government, conflict of interest laws, and civility. And although these basic initiatives are an important start, they only establish a culture of compliance. Without any ethical influence other than this culture, it can be difficult to hold organizations accountable for actions that fall outside the scope of explicit rules. It also leaves little room for individual conscience and doesn't encourage staff to deal with the range of issues that confront government employees. Local governments can create a more ethical culture and autonomous, principled workers by building a workplace environment that encourages and rewards ethical behavior. The following are a few tips for creating such an ethical environment:

Show gratitude. Experiments have shown that people who feel grateful to someone are more likely to help that person and others. Creating an environment of cooperation makes employees feel accountable to each other, increasing their sense obligation to the organization and its rules. Small gestures like a smile, compliment, or speaking in favor of one's idea are easy ways to show gratitude.¹

Be civil. Being a rude or unpleasant person scares people away, creating an environment that discourages interaction. This will cause individuals or groups to become adversarial rather than cooperative, and the ethical resolution of conflicts will become subordinate to avoidance or competition.²

Don't be entitled. If individuals see themselves as powerful, they're more likely to condemn the conduct of others while engaging in unethical conduct themselves. Also, a feeling of entitlement reduces sensitivity to social disapproval, an important check on misconduct. Possessing a little humility can go a long way toward avoiding ethical missteps by reminding that person that they're subject to the same policies as everyone else.³

Be open within your organization. A good way to encourage an ethical problem is to signal to employees that they can't discuss potential conflicts. Promoting open discussion can keep a bad situation from becoming worse, and allowing employees to disagree with their superiors over how to handle conflicts creates a feeling of ethical responsibility in those individuals. Transparency also leads to fewer mistakes, because others know what is happening and can point them out.⁴

Be open with the public. Studies show that people behave better when they feel like they're being watched. Employees are more likely to be careful and to seek professional advice when they are concerned they might make a mistake that will lead to criticism.⁵

Encourage growth in your employees. When individuals view their present and future prospects as stagnant, they tend to care less how their conduct affects others. Supervisors should discuss advancement opportunities with employees, and cities should give employees the opportunity to attend trainings so that they can enhance their knowledge and skills.⁶

If you're a supervisor, lead by example and embrace criticism. As a role model, supervisors set the tone for what conduct is permissible for an organization's employees. If that individual has an ethical failing and isn't held accountable, that sends a message to the entire staff that such conduct is acceptable. Supervisors need to follow the same rules as everyone else and not divvy out punishment to employees that question their response to conflicts. Empowered subordinates make it harder for higher-ups to deal irresponsibly with their own conflicts.

Debate the rules. Opening a rule up to discussion helps everyone consider the rationale behind it and its ethical implications. This forces employees to think about the justifications for ethics rules, and enhances their ability to identify conflicts that aren't explicitly addressed.⁷

Don't strictly interpret the rules. In Seattle, Washington, the City requires that the ethics code be "liberally construed" for the public's benefit. This prevents supervisors and employees from trying to get around ethics laws, and encourages them to deal responsibly with all conflicts and build a personal code that can be applied to unaddressed situations.⁸

Forgive. When ethics violations occur, it's difficult to not give in to public demands for retribution. But, if you let the formal processes of the ethics program determine the appropriate punishment, employees are more likely to respect the system and follow the rules.⁹

 *Michael Koss is the Member Services Manager for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at mkoss@lkm.org or (785) 354-9565.*

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⁸Wechsler.

⁹Wechsler.

KANSAS IN QUESTION



SHAPING KANSAS FOR THE FUTURE: GOING FORWARD, BOLDLY BUT WISELY



BY CHRIS GREEN

*Autumn setting in on a hilltop
on the edge of the City of La
Cygne. Photo by Deb Wilson.*

THE TOUGHEST QUESTIONS THAT WE FACE AS A STATE HAVE NO DEFINITE ANSWERS. There are no experts who can point to a path forward that is sure to lead to success. There is no single action that we can take to secure a prosperous future.

The issues, circumstances, and challenges that we face are too diverse and too complex for quick and easy solutions. Despite often appearing stable and wary of change, Kansas is presently a place in transition as it experiences significant changes in its economy and demographic make-up.

While our rich history has helped us forge a set of closely held collective values, we often fiercely debate how to prioritize and actualize them. Our future is, in many ways, open, but we have yet to truly choose, together, how we might define it.

In the middle of our state's 151st year of existence, many of us still thirst for the answers that will better shape Kansas and its place in the world for the next 150 years. We struggle to outline those answers each and every day, it seems, through our actions, large and small.

Under the Capitol building dome, difficult and often heated debates have unfolded about issues that could help define the state's direction. Kansans of all political stripes are weighing in on changes they support or oppose at state and local levels. Elections that will decide the composition of all 165 seats in the Kansas Legislature happened last month, and the reverberations from their outcomes will be felt for years to come.

In the whirl of daily life, though, it is often difficult to take into consideration all of the trends, perspectives, and possibilities that exist in our state at the moment and think more carefully about them. It often takes an external force, such as a convening, to

prompt us to consciously ask ourselves tougher questions about the future of our state and what role we should play in answering them.

About 6 months ago, more than 325 Kansans gathered in Wichita for "Kansas in Question," a statewide symposium focused on considering

the future of Kansas beyond its first 150 years. The unique group included individuals from state and local government, business, the nonprofit sector, health, education, statewide organizations, and college students, among others. The group was convened by *The Wichita Eagle*, Kansas Leadership Center, Wichita State University, and the Kansas Health Foundation.

It was certainly a rare occurrence to have so many different people from so many different professions and perspectives on hand to focus exclusively on discussing the future of Kansas.

Those assembled heard from Governor Sam Brownback, pondered lessons from the history of Kansas, and considered the economic and demographic trends currently affecting the state. They engaged in deeper discussions about employment, health, rural communities, education, urban cities, and the environment. Participants reported taking something of value from the event. But many also left longing to dig into many of the issues that came to the surface and with a desire to see those discussions lead to meaningful action. The organizers hoped this convening would

stir our curiosity but knew it couldn't quite quench our thirst. A convening can inspire and catalyze action, but individuals determine whether significant progress is made by what they do with these ideas and information.

"Kansas in Question" was designed to raise the difficult questions that need answers. The purpose of this piece is to share the story of "Kansas in Question" with more citizens, to inspire more questions, and to hopefully serve as an artifact of sorts for where our state is today and what daunting challenges must be addressed to move forward. Concerned citizens, whether young or old, in positions of authority or not, should familiarize themselves with these ideas. Our future depends on it.

Now we must decide: How much further are we willing to go? Will we let the future largely shape Kansas? Or will we seize the moment to more effectively shape that future ourselves?

THE TRENDS INFLUENCING THE FUTURE OF KANSAS: OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. Kansas has always seemed to lie somewhat close to equilibrium. We're not often considered particularly trendy. Our economy usually trails the highest flyers, but we also tend to avoid the crashes that bring them low.

Kansas has often seemed a steady, discerning place, committed to core values such as providing quality education and being fiscally responsible. It has also been suspicious of changes that can't be justified as fundamentally necessary.

But that stability is tenuous. Kansas has been changing, in many significant ways, and these developments mean that we can't stand still ourselves. The ground is moving beneath our feet, and our situation will change, even if we do nothing differently.

During "Kansas in Question," a presentation by the president of a strategy and research firm, Wichita native James Chung of Reach Advisors, put the economic and demographic forces influencing the state into perspective. His findings are summarized below, as are several insights he provided in a recent interview. (You also can view the slides from his presentation at www.kansasinquestion.com.)

There is no single trend or development that stands out for Kansas. The issues that the state must focus on vary, as Chung says, depending on what organization or entity you are involved with or what role you play in the state's civic life.

But the long-term trends and challenges that we face don't seem to be going away—they certainly have changed little since "Kansas in Question"—and someone, somewhere in Kansas, will need to confront them at some point.

Based on the data, Kansas could be viewed as an "oasis," a place with relatively high family incomes, low unemployment rates, and affordable home prices.

But the state's slower-than-average population growth and the long-term population declines being seen in rural areas of the state could be viewed as troubling. The gravity pulling down manufacturing jobs is a national trend with major implications for Kansas, a state with about 160,000 people employed in manufacturing. Comparable plains states surrounding us have been growing much faster and over the past decade have mostly surpassed us in terms of economic output per person.



Kansas
In Question
BEYOND 150: DECIDING WHO WE'LL BECOME.

The question facing Kansans is whether our state represents “an oasis of stability” or we are “looking at significant stagnation.”

Even as we attempt to control our own destiny and determine what we’re “known for” in the future, international and demographic trends will no doubt heavily influence us. The rest of the world, particularly developing and emerging nations, is catching up to the United States.

Such developments could produce opportunities for Kansas in areas such as agriculture, where Kansans could help meet the growing demand for food, fiber, and fuel. But there are worrisome trends, too, such as the fact that our nation as a whole is far behind other industrialized nations in terms of producing the highest percentages of adults with two and four-year post-secondary degrees.

It should not be surprising that a state famous for its exports of aircraft, wheat, corn, and beef competes not just with surrounding states, but in a global marketplace. But, are we having enough conversations about what it will take for our state to be truly more competitive? These days, growing domestically often means tapping more effectively into global growth. If Kansas had a more robust discussion about how to better perform on the global playing field in which it competes, it might help the state make better strategic investments for the future.

Kansas is also likely to be affected by demographic changes affecting the whole United States. More young women are graduating with college degrees and earning more than young men. The nation’s population is growing, but much of the increase will come from minority populations.

The face of Kansas, particularly among the young, is changing, too. While the state’s elderly population remains largely white, a third of the children entering kindergarten are minorities. Minorities already make up a majority of the population in four counties. Hispanics could generate close to \$1 billion more for the state’s economy over the next 15 years.

Furthermore, married couples with children are no longer the dominant household structure, accounting for just 1 in 5 households in 2010.

The state’s population of people over age 65 is expected to increase by 28% to 480,000 by 2020. In a handful of rural Kansas counties, those age 65 and older already account for more than a quarter of the population. Substantial issues related to providing the public services necessary for an aging population will likely accompany that growth. In terms of education, the state’s rural schools appear to be delivering results. But 42% of all Hispanics have less than a high school diploma, compared with the 11% in the population as a whole. Only 11% of Hispanics here have a bachelor’s degree compared with 30% in the population at large.

Those numbers could change as children of immigrants move up to high school and college ages. Increasing that level of educational attainment could be a way to make Kansas more competitive in the future.

The state already sees strong performance at the graduate level, ranking number 2 in the country in terms of science and engineering graduate students as a percentage of the workforce, well ahead of its comparable neighbors. But those grads often aren’t staying. Some cities and states similar to Kansas are finding ways to produce growth and advance community goals. Places such as Oklahoma City, Omaha, Des Moines, and North Dakota have made progress in such areas as keeping unemployment low, increasing educational attainment, wooing and keeping highly educated or younger workers, and cultivating high-paying professional jobs.

One common ground among those other areas is that they actively worked to make “strategic bets” on the future, an effort often facilitated by communities working more collaboratively on shared problems. In North Dakota, for instance, the state is not just riding an energy boom but also diversifying its economy and investing in its university system.

CHANGES UNDERWAY IN KANSAS

- Growing minority population among the young; elderly remain largely white.
- Married couples with children no longer the dominant household structure.
- Increasing elderly population.
- Hispanics less likely to have a high school diploma, bachelor’s degree at present.
- Keeping the most highly educated graduates is a challenge.

Shooting Star Wind Farm Project located in Kiowa County, near the Cities of Greensburg and Mullinville. Photo by Don Moler.



What are the strategic bets Kansans, as a collective, are willing to make? What type of leadership will it take to discern these smart risks and then mobilize Kansans around them?

HOW WILL WE SHAPE THE FUTURE OF KANSAS? PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS FOR THE COMING YEARS. The success of comparable communities is a signal that Kansas doesn't have to be shaped solely by the issues it faces. The state can also be shaped by the people who live here, who will determine the ways in which Kansas addresses its challenges and help it make the most of its opportunities.

As part of the symposium, those attending "Kansas in Question" participated in sessions on important statewide topics. The facilitated conversations prompted many discussions, ending with provocative questions and even some ideas for moving forward.

For instance, in the conversation that specifically related to employment, there was a sense that retaining and recruiting workers would continue to be an issue, including the need to keep the best and brightest young professionals. There were hopes of actively making Kansas a hotbed of entrepreneurship.

The group also saw the need for tough conversations on the topics of immigration and integrating immigrants into workforce, the role of government involvement in the economy and the risks that would come with pursuing "excellence not just fairness."

Another group looked at the "courageous conversations" that would need to happen in education, including discussions about reducing costs while increasing the system's value and efficiency. There was also talk about some of the state's educational traditions and structures, including teacher tenure, the number of districts or institutions statewide, and whether the school calendar should be year-round.

The environment proved to be a challenging topic—there's tremendous difficulty in weighing the long-term gains v. the short-term costs while implementing solutions. A discussion about health raised difficult questions about where the line should be drawn between individual liberties and the collective good. There was a question of when Kansas could reach a point where it would prioritize and engage the "winnable battles" that could address the underlying conditions that create health disparities, not just treating health outcomes.

For rural communities, there was an understanding of the need to have conversations about loss, since the next decade is likely to produce winners and losers among these towns. Increased tolerance for conflict and change may be needed to seize a future in which rural communities will be more culturally diverse and include more "out-of-towners."

A rural assembly agreed to conduct a more in-depth discussion in February 2012—which ended up as the "Big Rural Brainstorm" convened in Newton by the Kansas Sampler Foundation.

The discussion around urban Kansas proved wide-ranging, a dynamic owing perhaps to the diversity of urban experience in Kansas. Urban means different things to different people, participants noted—it's interesting to remember that at least 7 of the state's 20 largest cities in 2010 were suburbs of larger metropolitan areas. Urban areas can include pockets of both significant prosperity and poverty at once.

The importance of more effective leadership to address problems and improve the quality of life in these more densely populated areas of the state emerged as a recurring theme.



PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS LONGING FOR LEADERSHIP



EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS, AND THE ECONOMY

- How do we recruit and retain workers, particularly the young and talented?
- How do we more effectively diversify the state's economy?
- How does Kansas become a hotbed for entrepreneurship?
- How do we resolve the issue of immigration and integrate immigrants into the workforce?
- What role does government have in boosting the economy?

EDUCATION

- How do we increase both the value and efficiency of education?
- How do we more effectively ensure a quality education for all students?
- What long-held traditions or structures might we need to adjust to improve the system?

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

- Who will ensure our resources are protected?
- What is the role of government?
- How will we weigh out the long-term benefits v. the short-term losses?
- How do we change to become a more equitable culture of wellness?
- How will we choose to balance individual rights with the collective good?
- How far will we go to address the underlying conditions that create health disparities, not just health outcomes?

RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES

- How will we speak to the losses that communities may be experiencing?
- How will we increase our tolerance for conflict and change?
- How will rural communities embrace more cultural diversity and accept outsiders?
- How do we help rural, urban, and suburban communities begin to value one another for the good of all?
- How do we foster more leadership to tackle our toughest problems?

-- Adapted from "Kansas in Question" conversation notes, December 6, 2011.

WHAT'S YOUR ROLE IN DETERMINING THE FUTURE? As stimulating as the discussions could be at “Kansas in Question,” most participants seemed to leave, as designed, with far more questions on their mind than answers. Attempting to answer such questions in such a short time would be foolhardy. However, many participants also yearned to see tangible action emerge from those assembled at the symposium.

The issues and challenges facing Kansas are broad and complex. No single one of us could expect to be able to solve them alone. Yet, unless more of us are willing to step up and engage others on these issues, we will not make sufficient progress toward truly shaping our future.

One small but powerful thing that we can all do differently is push ourselves to think more intensely about the challenges facing the state and begin questioning our assumptions about the way things work. Our first instinct is often to plunge forward with solutions—which tend to be the policies and positions that often already lie close to our hearts.

If we favor cutting taxes, increasing education funding or consolidating local governments, it's all too easy to see those things as the obvious cures for what ails us. By no means should we give up the things we strongly believe in—but we have a responsibility as citizens of this state to authentically push ourselves to think about what is truly necessary to advance Kansas into the future. What we prefer and presently have strong loyalties to may not be exactly what we need to prosper.

Fostering difficult progress requires having a clear purpose to guide your actions. You have to know what you want to accomplish if you want to engage others in formulating solutions.

THE VALUES OF KANSAS: CHOOSING AMONG OUR OWN PRIORITIES.

We can zero in on our driving purpose by thinking carefully about what we value. As Kansans, we have a multitude of values that rank high with us. Sometimes they compete against one another. Although they may not have been consciously named, the discussions during “Kansas in Questions” suggested many of the values we collectively hold here.

The values of an entire state's diverse population are certainly worthy of debate. We also may not always live up to the values we

THINKING ABOUT YOUR OWN
VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF KANSAS

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE OF KANSAS,
WHAT CONCERNS YOU THE MOST?

WHAT ASPECTS OF KANSAS FEEL MOST IMPORTANT
TO YOU? WHAT VALUES DO THEY TOUCH?

THINK ABOUT KANSANS WHO HAVE VERY DIFFERENT
VIEWS ABOUT WHAT THE STATE NEEDS THAN YOU.
WHAT DO THEY VALUE THE MOST?

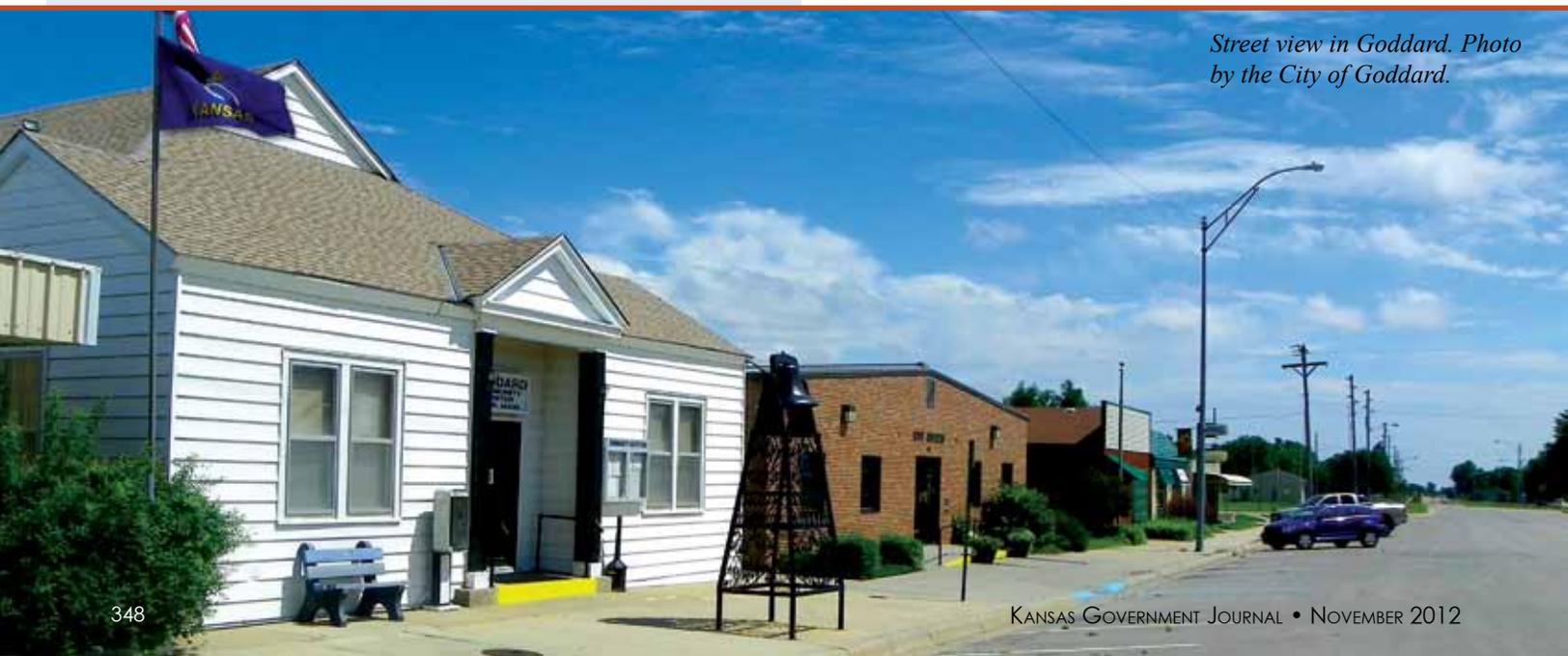
BASED ON THE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED
IN THIS STORY: HOW MIGHT PURSUING CHANGES BASED
ON YOUR MOST CLOSELY HELD VALUES IMPROVE KANSAS?

BASED ON THE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED
IN THIS STORY: HOW MIGHT PURSUING WHAT
YOU MOST VALUE IMPEDE PROGRESS IN KANSAS?

BASED ON THE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED
IN THIS STORY: WHAT PERSONAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL
STEPS ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE TO ADVANCE
THE KANSAS VALUES YOU CARE MOST ABOUT?

HOW WILL YOU PRODUCTIVELY ENGAGE WHEN YOUR
OWN VALUES CONFLICT WITH THE VALUES OF OTHERS?

Street view in Goddard. Photo
by the City of Goddard.



aspire to embody. But in hopes of enhancing our ability to advance them over the next 150 years, this story describes our collective values below in the broadest and most inclusive terms possible.

We have long demonstrated that we value having access to quality education, one that prepares individuals to be productive citizens. There's a hunger for individual liberty, one that allows people to determine their own destiny based on their own personal talents and desires, which also seems precious to Kansans.

We also understand the importance of working together in a community to produce collective "civic good" and create a functioning society that is greater than the sum of its individual parts. We want not just places to live, but strong, prosperous communities in urban, rural, and suburban Kansas that add considerable value to the lives of their citizens.

In creating those communities, we often want to ensure the ability to keep intact what we have built. We value the existence of law and order in which there is proper respect for authority that contributes to a climate of public safety. We also seek to ensure that our past history, culture, and heritage are preserved and protected.

We want a safe environment, one that preserves the essence of Kansas, including its natural beauty. But we want people to succeed economically as well, valuing a strong business climate that fosters prosperity and effectively utilizes agriculture and our natural resources.

The Kansas of our dreams is a place where employment is plentiful, diverse, well-paying, and rewarding. But we also want healthy places to live where people can access and receive proper health care.

Finally, we value seeing a place where all of these positive aspects cohere together to create a high-quality place to live and

raise families that ourselves and others can cherish, now and in the future.

Future progress in Kansas may largely be determined by how we sort through those values and which ones we place the highest priority on. No single value should become an all-or-nothing proposition. There are balances to be struck. But it is also true that we cannot prioritize everything equally, in every situation. We have to choose among these values and decide what's truly most important to us.

What do we want to be truly known for? And how will we make all the other pieces fit together?

The economic and demographic dynamics influencing Kansas are real, and the challenges are not going away on their own. To make progress, we will have to confront them in more thoughtful, collaborative ways. We'll have to step beyond what we are comfortable doing and experiment by taking smart risks that could pave the way to a better future. And, all the while, we'll have to keep our focus on choosing to express the values that are truly most important to us as we advance onward into new frontiers.

Kansans should hope that as the years go by, we will make more conscious choices and make our own "smart bets"—as individuals, groups, organizations, communities and as a state—that will help shape our direction going forward. The future of Kansas is truly up to you to co-create.

 *Chris Green is a contributing writer for The Journal. This article was reprinted with permission from the Summer 2012 issue of The Journal published by the Kansas Leadership Center.*

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...Nearing the End of a Nice Run

Many of you know by now that I am retiring from the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) at the end of the year, after a nearly 12 year run (my first OTR column was in the early spring in 2001). Though I am “retiring,” more or less, I will continue to serve as administrator for the KMIT work comp pool, but, after the first of year, as a contracted agent for KMIT rather than an employee of the League. (LKM and KMIT will continue to have a relationship through an endorsement agreement.)

Of course, I will miss a lot of things I have had the privilege of doing while at LKM...some of them more than others...but, the best part of my job has always been to get to visit the cities of Kansas. Just in case it hasn't been obvious for this last decade-plus, that is the FUN part. I honestly feel very fortunate to have gotten to do that. Often, I felt like pinching myself as I drove down (or up) another amazing picturesque road (and there are THOUSANDS of such drives in Kansas), from one city to the next...” Do they really PAY me to do this?” (YES, fortunately, but you get the picture.)

Before I came to LKM (at age 53, going on 54), and having lived in Kansas every day of my life, I really thought I knew the state well. Boy, was I wrong! And, I thought I had been down every highway in the state. REALLY WRONG! Someday, I hope to have seen a majority of the miles along state's seemingly-endless highways and byways, but I am confident I am not there yet.

The best part of the best part has always been, and continues to be, how many wonderful public servants I have met and gotten to know. That has been really SO special. I have made more friends than I can count, and many of them have become some the best friends of my entire life. Cities are staffed and overseen by people who care. Nice people. Smart people. Honest people. Good people. Committed and dedicated people. Funny and fun people, too. The BEST people. And, those of you that know me best know I am telling it like it is with me.

But, I am not quite done just yet. At this writing, I will not retire for another 53 days (but, who's counting?), and there are a few more cities to visit and a few more miles to travel.

In October and November, my final fall at LKM, I have actually traveled even more miles than usual. So, let me tell you just a few more stories about the people and places...

A fall trip to Southeast Kansas took me to Chanute, Altamont, Columbus, Coffeyville, and Independence. At Chanute, I discussed some managerial/supervisors strategies with Finance Director Rebecca Wood. During the delightful conversation (Rebecca is a very bright and engaging person), I also learned that she is a native Kansan (McPherson?), and has worked in Liberal, at K-State and several other places before arriving in Chanute several years ago. So, she knows Kansas MUCH better than I did at her relatively young age. In Altamont, Mayor (and LKM Governing Body member) Herb Bath gave me a great (if too short) tour, which included a drive around the City lake, which is pretty cool (and is often crowded with nice campers of folks who have come to Kansas to work at the nearby Amazon.com facility near Coffeyville). Herb bought my lunch at the Burger Barn and then sent me home with a rack of his special short ribs (actually he DELIVERED them to me in a cooler that evening

in Coffeyville...did I mention that Herb is one of those very special, very nice people I have been fortunate enough to get to know?). My Columbus stop, to visit briefly with Mayor Marie Nepple, was a return trip (I was there in June), and mostly merely to say hi to someone I just enjoy being around. I had dinner that evening with the new Coffeyville City Manager Gary Bradley. Gary is from and went to school in Northwest Missouri, and brings to Coffeyville some vastly developed skills and lots of experience...and soon he hopes also to bring his family to Coffeyville (as I have mentioned here before, that is one thing that city managers have to do from time to time...leave their family behind for a while...one of the tough things). The next day, Independence City Manager Micky Webb and Assistant City Manger Kelly Passauer hosted a lunch for area city managers, and the group also included city managers Gary Bradley, J.D. Lester (Chanute), Carl Slaugh (Iola), and John Bullard (the new Cherryvale city administrator).

Now that the elections are over (and aren't we all very happy about that?...I know I am), it is time for our country as a whole and as a sum of its VERY diverse parts, to start getting serious about serious stuff, namely the aptly-named “Fiscal Cliff.” This is a real thing, and something I personally have been harping about for over six years now (my rants started in the spring of 2006, for those of you keeping score). Let's get together; stop whining about everything and fix this. And, let's first understand why we are in this mess, which did not start with the last election, and which won't by itself go away without a great deal of soul-searching (notice, I didn't say “posturing?”...frankly, we have more than enough of that), adult discussion (which will be a challenge in itself), and hard work and sacrifice. A good start on understanding part of what needs fixed would be to read the book I am recommending this month, *Bull By The Horns: Fighting To Save Main From Wall Street and Wall Street From Itself* by native Kansan Sheila Bair, who was appointed to be Chairman of the FDIC by then-President Bush in 2006 (and served there through 2008), and was also once a top advisor to Kansas Senator Bob Dole. She comes with the most solid of fiscally-conservative credentials, and the knowledge and direct experience to back up her views. Ms. Bair knows her stuff, and supports her conclusions with inescapable facts. She is widely recognized as one of the first people to identify and warn us about the subprime' mess, which is, itself, really just a symptom of layers of flaws in our financial system that simply MUST be fixed, or our country is in BIG trouble. Serious book. Serious subject. Time to stop posturing and get serious. Come on, now...

See you down the road, if not before...

PS...my personal email address (dosenbaugh@cox.net) and cell phone number (316-259-3847) will not change. Please shoot me an email or give me a call.

 *Don Osenbaugh is the Director of Finance and Field Services for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at dosenbaugh@lkm.org*



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Tel-Line: A Community Service for All

by Herb Bath

Since March 4, 1985 “Tel-Line” has been available to citizens of the City of Altamont. Made available by a group of local women, called “We Care,” Tel-Line is a service to people who live alone to provide them with an outside contact at least once every 24 hours. It gives assurance that someone is interested in them and will call or check on them if they don’t call in.

The call line came about through a request made to the “We Care” group and the response was tremendous. A phone was installed at the Altamont Senior Housing recreation room where each morning, between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m., clients call in. Volunteers are assigned to watch the phones and if the registered clients do not call in, miss a day, or fail to leave a message that they will be gone, then their listed contact (family or neighbor) is notified to check on them. The service is available to anyone who lives alone and is not restricted to any specific age group.

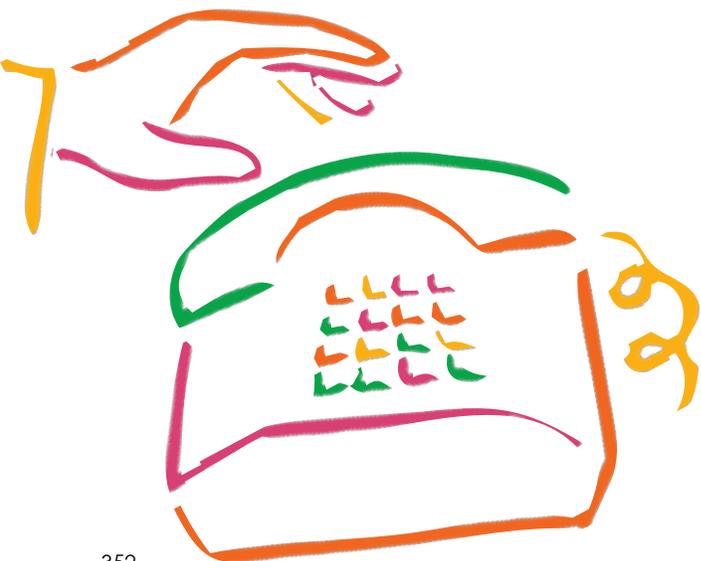
Since implementing the “Tel-Line” service, several lives have been helped. Some clients have fallen or been in a position where they could not get to the phone and as a result, were helped much faster than waiting for someone to find them.

“We feel this has been a rewarding service and the volunteers feel good about working the telephone,” said Altamont Mayor Herb Bath. “We are fortunate to have volunteers for this ministry.”

Until December of 2003, the service’s phone bills were paid by the “We Care” group. Since then, the phone has been transferred to the Senior Citizen building to eliminate any bills.

When an individual wants to sign up for the community service, a volunteer brings them a form to fill out their contact information, health information, and an emergency contact person in case the client does not call in or is unable to be reached. Each client also receives a fact sheet with specifics to how the service works (see sidebar).

 Herb Bath is the Mayor for the City of Altamont. He can be reached at hbathhome@gmail.com.



TEL-LINE FAQ’S

A community Service by the
“We Care” Group of Altamont, KS

WHAT IS TEL-LINE?

It is a service to people who live alone to provide them with an outside contact with someone at least once every 24 hours.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS SERVICE?

Anyone who might gain comfort from such a contact. It is not restricted to any specific age group and you must have a local telephone number.

HOW DOES ONE JOIN THE TEL-LINE PROGRAM?

Place a call to the TEL-LINE phone number, (620) 784-5445 any day between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. A volunteer will bring you the necessary forms and answer any questions you may have.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE NEEDED FROM ME WHEN I JOIN TEL-LINE?

We will need the name of a neighbor, a friend, and a relative on the contact form. If you fail to call in and we do not get an answer when we call you, it is important that we find out why you cannot be reached. Hopefully, one of the individuals on your contact form will know why you could not be reached. We will also ask for the name of your physician and any outstanding disabilities, such as blindness, confinement to a wheel chair, heart condition, etc., in case there is an emergency.

WHEN DO I CALL IN?

Call in hours are between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. each day of the year, including weekends and holidays.

IS THERE A COST FOR THIS SERVICE?

No. This is a community service sponsored by the “We Care” group and any volunteers who wish to help with this project.

WHO WILL COME TO MY HOUSE IF YOU THINK SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH ME?

Someone you know or the police if an emergency is suspected.

HOW WILL MY HOUSE BE ENTERED?

By signing the registration form, however, you have placed a certain responsibility on others for your welfare. Our concern is that you are well and not in need of help. The best way to handle entrance into your house would be to have one of the contacts listed on your registration form informed on how to enter your house in case of an emergency. Only the severest form of emergency would allow anyone to break into your house.

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Attorney

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City Clerk

Applications are being accepted until December 1st or until filled for the City Clerk position for the City of Plainville, population 2000. Applicant must have a strong accounting/bookkeeping background, excellent public relation skills, computer skills and grant proposal writing skills. Salary based on experience, experience preferred, excellent benefit package. Send resume to the City of Plainville, P.O. Box 266, Plainville, Kansas 67663, Fax 785-434-4727, Telephone 785-434-2841 or e-mail to jdryden@cityofplainville-ks.gov. EOE

City Manager

Russell, Kansas (pop. 4,497; \$20 million budget; 77 FT employees), located on I-70 near beautiful Wilson Lake in central Kansas, is a tight-knit community known for its high quality of life. Russell's strong economy is anchored by agricultural and manufacturing industries, and benefits from being situated within one of the state's leading oil producing regions. The City has many cultural and historical attractions, including Deines Cultural Center, Fossil Station Museum, and the recently-restored Dream Theatre. Russell is a full-service city with its own electric utility, and operates under a council-manager form of government. The City maintains a municipal airport, golf course, and over 160 acres of parks. For a full description of the community, visit <http://www.russellcity.org/>.

A Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration or a related field is preferred, along with at least 5 years of local government experience. The ideal candidate will have proven management and budgetary skills, while having demonstrated sound judgment and professionalism. Russell is seeking a responsible leader who will communicate openly with the council, city staff, and residents to set goals for city programs and develop ideas to improve the community.

Competitive benefits, Salary \$80,000-85,000 DOQ. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three work-related references to LEAPS-Russell@lkm.org or LEAPS-Russell, 300 SW 8th, Topeka, KS, 66603. If confidentiality is requested, please state in application materials. Position will remain open until filled. Resume review begins December 03, 2012. EOE.

Economic Development Director

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Please apply at the City Administrative Center, 301 N. 8th Street, Garden City, KS or online at www.garden-city.org. EOE. This position will remain open until filled.

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Work experience: up to three years of Mechanic experience, or at least six months of schooling on cars, trucks or equipment preferred. Must have valid Kansas Drivers License, and be at least 18 years of age or older. Applications may be picked up in the city clerks office, at City Hall, 217 East Ave. South or send Resume to:

Anita Johannsen
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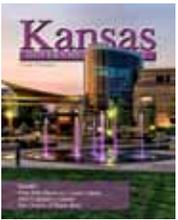
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Focus on the Forest



It is funny how small things can turn into bigger things without very much thought or consideration. This happened to me a couple of weeks ago and sort of led to my thinking on today's column.

It all began with a phone call from daughter-in-law Mary while we were at home one evening. I forget exactly the specific circumstance that had transpired to create

this particular situation, but the telephone call went something like this: Daughter-in-law Mary, "Well your grandchildren learned a new word today." My response was something like: "That's great. What word did they learn?" And she responded, "Idiot!" After a brief pause I asked Mary where she thought they might have learned a word such as that, and she responded that they had both agreed that they learned it from good old grandpa who had apparently used it at least once, if not multiple times, while transporting them around Topeka for their Saturday activities. I had two immediate thoughts. The first was simply being glad it wasn't a word that was any worse than that one. Secondly, I felt somewhat sheepish, and a little bit disturbed, about what I was teaching my grandchildren. Certainly the use of that word showed a certain lack of patience, if not intolerance, of certain behaviors.

Now in my defense, I don't utter that word very often, but when I do it is almost always involved in some sort of a driving escapade. It usually comes in the form of me being cut off by a driver who apparently doesn't realize there are other drivers on the road, and who apparently feel that the public rights-of-way are only intended for their driving pleasure. Or it comes after the folks who are simply clueless drivers (in my view) are the inevitable folks who are apparently more interested in sending or reading a text message than they are in keeping their vehicles on the roadway. Today's commentary is not about texting, but I really am getting tired of watching drivers all around me, on a daily basis, sending, receiving, or looking for texts on their hand held mobile devices. When I see such behavior I am apt to exclaim "Idiot!" But after a while you come to a conclusion that perhaps that isn't very useful, nor does it serve any constructive purpose.

As you are all aware, we live in a world where time has become compressed. We live in a time in which any kind of a bump in the road, no pun intended, or other sort of delay often elicits both frustration and aggravation. I see this at my office when our computers don't instantly feed back whatever we want them to. You see it in virtually all forms of entertainment, television, and everyday life. Back when I started at the League, the three basic forms of business communication were: face-to-face communication; the telephone; and a letter sent via the U.S. Postal Service. With a letter, there would inevitably be a span of days, perhaps up to a week of time involved between sending a letter out, and receiving a response back. When making a phone call, the communication could be instantaneous, but that was only if the

individual you were calling happened to be in at the time. Since that was in the days prior to the answering machine, if the person you were calling didn't happen to be available when the phone rang, not only did you not get to talk to them, but they didn't even know that you had called because there was no answering machine to preserve and relay your message. If they had a secretary to take a message, it was typically written on a little piece of paper and put in a pile with all the other messages they had received. As times have changed, life has become more compressed. First, with the fax machine, which is now seen as a dinosaur in the world of technology, then on to the Internet, email, the cell phone, and the various kinds of personal communication devices that allow for instantaneous communication whether you are tweeting, on Facebook, or using some variation of a chat room or instant messaging, we now have a time when people don't want to wait for anything. Everything has become immediate and things that used to be seen as a mere inconvenience are now seen as a great problem worthy of strong declaratory sentences.

I suspect that this is largely a sign of our times, but it occurred to me in thinking about this that the real issue is that we should not be so concerned with minor inconveniences that slow down the hectic pace of our days. I think that is one of the key elements of trying to remember how best to govern, regardless of the level of government. It is so easy to become mired in the small details and the instantaneous communication and need to stay in touch. It is so easy to become distracted by temporary inconveniences, or those things that are perceived as inconveniences but which weren't even known or considered just a few short years ago. I often wonder what would happen if the Internet would go down for a day or two—where people all over the world couldn't get on the Internet and communicate using its structure. I suspect it would be a sight to behold and create problems that we can't even imagine. That said, I think that we as local government officials need to remember that delays will occasionally occur, and we must realize that we cannot fix every small problem in the world, nor can we dwell on them as people charged with the governance of our communities. What we can, and should be, doing, is focusing on big picture issues and allowing the details to work themselves out as part of that process. It is easy to become enmeshed in looking at the small problems and getting frustrated by them. Unfortunately, much like the old description of the forest and the trees, if you allow yourself to be focused on a single tree, you will miss the entire forest. That is as true today as it was in the days before the communications revolution of the past 20 years or so. We must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the minutia of everyday life. We must be willing to back away from that, and not take it quite so seriously, so that we will have the ability to analyze the larger issues that confront us and meet them head on. It is so easy to become mired in the daily frustrations of modern life. We must work to minimize them and work to solve the important issues of the day which face all of our cities and citizens.

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