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PRIDE

Annual Review 2008

*Building Better
Communities*



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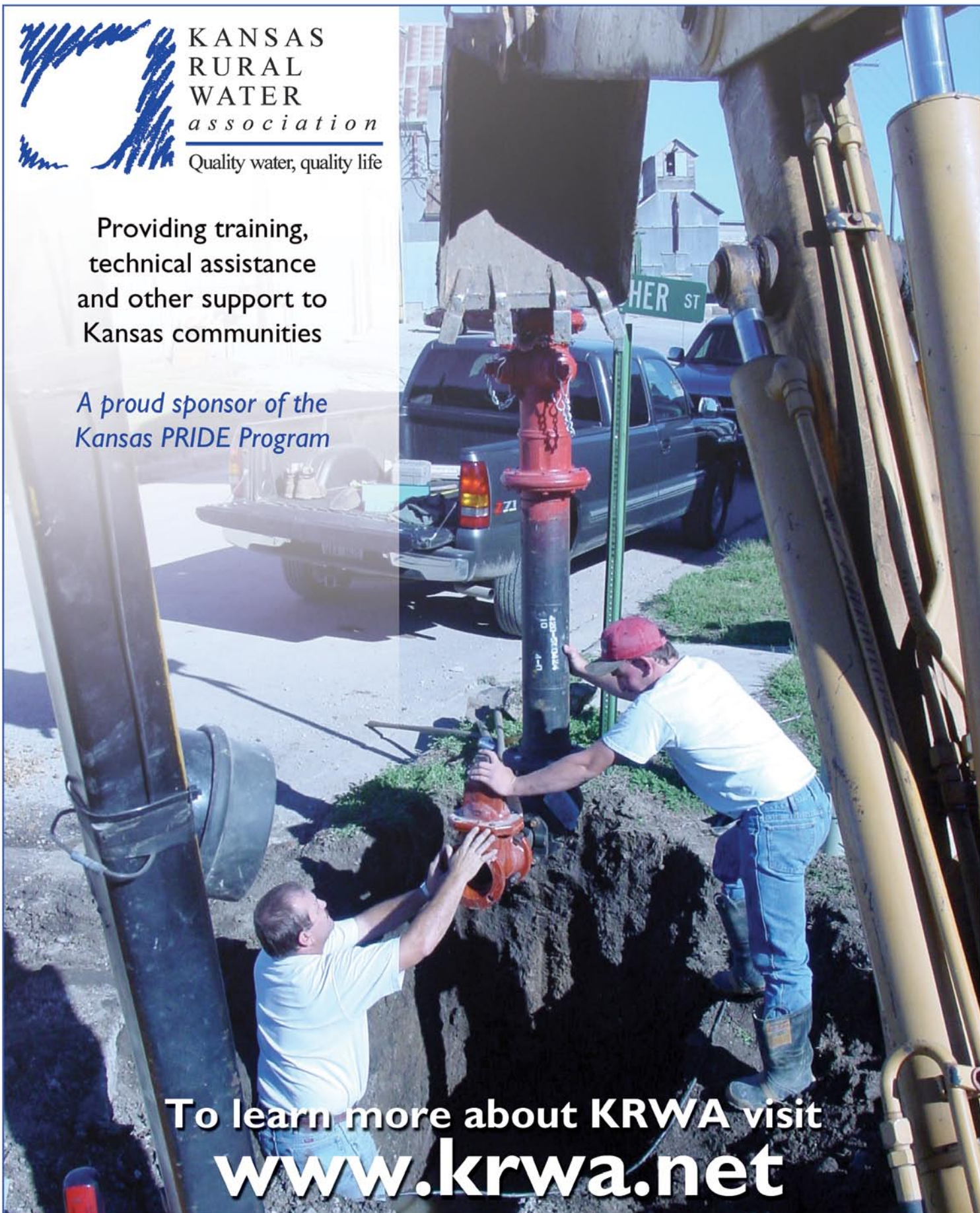
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to enhance the public health and to sustain Kansas communities.*





September 2008

Dear PRIDE Members, Sponsors and Friends;

I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as your PRIDE Board Chairperson this past year. I'm confident that Kansas PRIDE, Inc. is building "new" momentum and I'm honored to have the opportunity to work with many dedicated individuals who serve on the PRIDE board or who are active in local PRIDE organizations. I clearly see the work that PRIDE communities are doing and I have great respect for the local leaders that drive the mission and purpose of Kansas PRIDE. In a time of shrinking rural populations, it is refreshing to see the "pride" these PRIDE communities take in their towns and the hard work that they expend to make their communities a better place to live.

In the 2007-2008 PRIDE program year, the Kansas PRIDE staff worked with more than 65 enrolled communities across the state. These communities were involved in a community improvement process that identified priority community betterment projects; generates collaborative partnerships to address local needs; and encourages citizen involvement in addressing the identified projects. In 2008, the PRIDE communities reported completing more than 800 projects focused on community health, cultural enhancement, leadership, and economic growth. Collectively, PRIDE groups reported collaborative efforts with nearly 696 other organizations including 4-H, RC&D, civic groups, scouts, church groups, and local government. Through their efforts, they were able to invest more than 75,600 hours into their communities, which translates roughly into more than one and a half million dollars worth of volunteer labor (according to the Independent Sector for Kansas). PRIDE Communities also re-invest more than one-quarter of a million dollars in local funds to make Kansas communities more healthy, economically viable, and fun places to live.

On behalf of all the PRIDE's Board of Directors, thank you for the dedication and commitment that you have given. I look forward to working with many of you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Wareham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug Wareham
2008 Board Chairperson
Kansas PRIDE, Inc.

Kansas PRIDE Program

The Kansas PRIDE program is a citizen-based approach to improve the quality of life in Kansas communities. Founded on the belief that the best solutions for community improvement must come from the community itself, Kansas PRIDE encourages citizens to work together to identify community improvement projects. The PRIDE program offers a network of ideas along with the tools and resources needed to assist a community in developing plans and achieving its goals. Kansas PRIDE also recognizes successful community improvement with statewide publicity and celebration events.

The program is co-administered through the Kansas Department of Commerce and K-State Research and Extension. Kansas PRIDE, Inc., a nonprofit organization is the third collaborative partner in the PRIDE program. Kansas PRIDE, Inc. engages private-sector companies and associations that provide financial support for community evaluation and recognition.

Kansas PRIDE recognizes that developing livable communities involves looking at several aspects of community life. Enrolled communities are asked to examine the local social, economic, and physical environment by completing a Community Assessment Tool. This process helps the community to become involved in discussions about the current community status and to consider areas of improvement. Next, PRIDE encourages the community to discuss the ideal vision for the future of the community. Energy grows when the community begins to look forward and plan together, and to cooperate on project goals. PRIDE staff is available to assist with planning and resource identification, and Kansas PRIDE helps to recognize those communities that are successful in creating better Kansas communities.

Benefits of Participating in PRIDE

- ◆ Assessment of needs and opportunities
- ◆ Development of community partnerships
- ◆ Increased citizen involvement
- ◆ Expanded leadership opportunities
- ◆ Recognition for community improvement efforts
- ◆ Sustainable community development
- ◆ Creation of a shared community vision
- ◆ Identification and utilization of resources
- ◆ Elevated community spirit
- ◆ Networking with other communities
- ◆ Increased community capacity

Kansas PRIDE Inc. Board of Directors

Members of the 2007-2008 Kansas PRIDE, Inc., Board of Directors include representatives of sponsoring corporations and organizations, PRIDE Community of Excellence representatives, and representatives of the two administering organizations of the PRIDE program: K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Department of Commerce. The Kansas PRIDE, Inc. Board of Directors provides guidance and raises funds for the recognition of outstanding community achievement through the Kansas PRIDE program. It is with gratitude that we recognize the following board members:

Doug Wareham

Kansas Bankers Association

Suzanne Coin

Westar Energy

Larissa Long

Black Hills Energy

Jack Meyers

First National Bank of Cunningham

Sarah Meyer

Kansas Association of Counties

Ken Harsha

Lakin PRIDE

Becky Dunlap

Beattie PRIDE

Jim Irely

Melvorn PRIDE

Lois Loucks

Onaga PRIDE

Sandy Williams

Eskridge PRIDE

Scott Lewis

Park City PRIDE

Dr. Daryl Buchholz

K-State Research and Extension

Carole Jordan

Kansas Department of Commerce

Staff

Dan Kahl

K-State Research and Extension

Connie Hoch

K-State Research and Extension

Jeanne Stinson

Kansas Department of Commerce

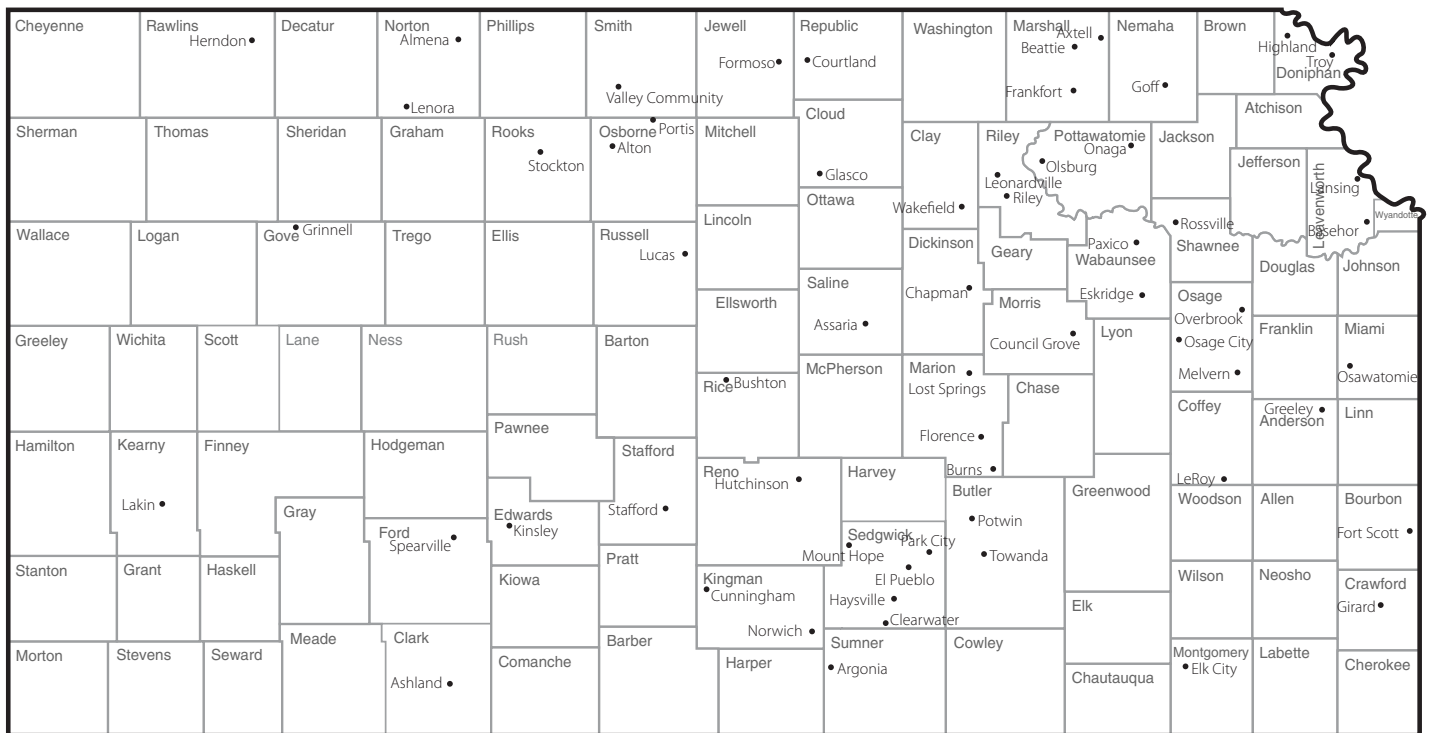
Josh Burton

Kansas Department of Commerce

PRIDE Impacts Communities

In the 2007-2008 PRIDE program year, 60 Kansas communities enrolled in the PRIDE program. These communities have taken action to identify and address projects to improve local health, economy, social needs, and the environment. PRIDE groups across Kansas are stepping up and taking positive steps to address local issues and improve the community where they live. These communities recognize that *community development* involves social development and improving the physical community as well as encouraging economic growth. PRIDE communities involve business owners, youth, community organizations, and volunteers of all kinds to create positive change. Through this process, PRIDE groups are developing leadership capacity and utilizing available resources to steer their communities successfully to the future.

2008 PRIDE Communities *(enrolled as of 7/1/07)*



Almena (469) NT	El Pueblo - Wichita	Kinsley (1,658) ED	Park City (5,814) SG
Alton (117) OB	Eskridge (589) WB	Lakin (2,316) KE	Paxico (211) WB
Argonia (534) SU	Florence (671) MN	Lansing (9,199) LV	Portis (123) OB
Ashland (975) CA	Formoso (129) JW	Lenora (306) NT	Potwin (457) BU
Assaria (438) SA	Fort Scott (8,297) BB	Leonardville (398) RL	Riley (886) RL
Axtell (445) MC	Girard (2,773) CR	LeRoy (593) CF	Rossville (1,014) SN
Basehor (2,238) LV	Glasco (536) CD	Lost Springs (201) MN	Spearville (813) FO
Beattie (227) MS	Goff (181) NM	Lucas (436) RS	Stafford (1,161) SF
Burns (268) MN	Greeley (327) AN	Melvorn (429) OS	Stockton (1,558) RO
Bushon (314) RC	Grinnell (329) GO	Mount Hope (830) SG	Towanda (1,338) BU
Chapman (1,241) DK	Haysville (8,502) SG	Norwich (551) KM	Troy (1,054) DP
Clearwater (2,178) SG	Herndon (149) RA	Olsburg (192) PT	Wakefield (838) CY
Council Grove (2,321) MR	Highland (976) DP	Onaga (704) PT	Valley Community* (346) SM
Courtland (334) RP	Hutchinson – Lincoln	Osage City (3,034) OS	*Gaylord, Cedar and Harlan
Cunningham (514) KM	School	Osawatomie (4,645) MI	
Elk City (305) MG		Overbrook (947) OS	

Youth Recognition Awards

Youth PRIDE Community Service Award

Helping youth develop an appreciation for community service is one way to help youth understand the value of investing in their own communities. While this strategy is a way to help sustain youth involvement, it is also training for a lifetime of service to community. The Youth Community Service Award provides an opportunity for young people to be recognized for their volunteer services. This award is presented to youth nominated by their community PRIDE group. Kansas PRIDE, Inc. would like to recognize the following young people for their outstanding community service.

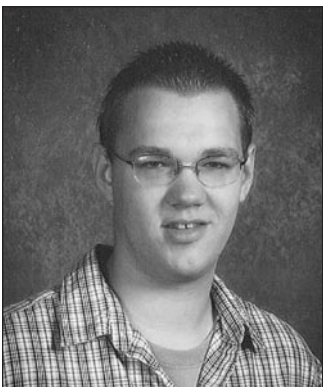
Samantha Schneider (Lucas) Samantha has been involved with many community projects with the Lucas PRIDE committee, Lucas Chamber of Commerce, the Arts and Humanities Council, Lucas Youth Group, Girl Scouts, and the Lucas Area Community Theater. She has assisted with a wide variety of community service activities, including cleaning up, planting, and watering flowers in downtown; making tourist packets; assisting with community dinners; collecting food for the food bank; helping with festivals; and assisting at special events. Samantha is looked up to by other youth of the community as she instructs, encourages, and works with them to help plan and implement community projects.

Erica Meyer (Stafford) Erica has selflessly given of her time and talents in service to her community, school and church for more than 7 years. Much of her volunteer time has involved work with younger children. She has taught children music and crafts in association with vacation Bible school and has also been involved with her church worship team for Sunday morning services. Erica has also worked through the church youth groups to help start a nursing home ministry. In each visit, they sing to residents, give a short Bible lesson, and spend about 45 minutes visiting with the individuals. Erica has also worked with the local food drive challenge, helped with the FFA fruit tree project, and has assisted with community cleanup efforts twice a year for the past 7 years. Erica is a role model to many younger residents of Stafford.



Erica Meyer

Addison Swain (Bushton) Addison has been a great volunteer for the PRIDE Park improvement project. He has been active nearly every work day. Early this spring he took the lead in cleaning up branches and debris left in the park by a winter ice storm. Addison saw to it that the area was clean, safe, and ready for the children's Easter egg hunt. He also helped with the installation of new picnic tables at PRIDE Park. He then participated in refurbishing and painting the old picnic tables from the park that will be used at the local convenience store and baseball and football games. Addison is also artistic and designed a thunderbird to be painted on the well house at the park. He is a "take-charge" kind of guy who does all his volunteer work with great enthusiasm! He takes great pride in his work and the look of the finished product.



Samuel Fishburn

Samuel Fishburn (Haven) Samuel has demonstrated his commitment to the community in various ways, especially through his work with the Haven Food Bank. Samuel volunteers throughout the year and sees it as a way he can help improve the lives of people in Haven. This year he helped plan, prepare, and serve meals at the Community Gospel Gathering. Samuel is involved with the children's ministry program and other service programs at his church. In addition, he has served on the Haven High School Student Council, FFA, and 4-H community service projects. Samuel believes everyone should be involved with community and this is evident in many of his speech topics. This year he is giving a persuasive call to action speech for his forensics class. Samuel is a leader and has served as a role model for younger community residents, encouraging them to get involved and teach leadership skills they can use the rest of their lives.

Honorable Mention

Tyler Montgomery (Almena) Tyler has an interest in history and a love of machinery, new and old. He has been a longtime active member of Almena's Sunflower Pioneer Power Association. Since the association moved their annual Pioneer Days to Almena, Tyler has worked continually at the grounds with machinery and maintenance. The Pioneer Days bring a lot of people to Almena in June and Tyler is always working to make sure people have a good time. He helped organize the pedal tractor contest for kids, helped build a hay rack that is used by the community for hay rack rides, pulled a kiddy train around the grounds, and worked at the sorghum mill and the food stand. Tyler is also active in 4-H having earned grand champion for his crops in Norton County.



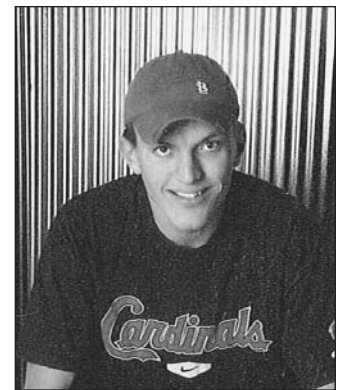
Tyler Montgomery



Ashley Adams

Ashley Adams (Argonia) Ashley is committed to her community. She is active in most school activities and still finds the time for church activities and community involvement. She is dependable and takes pride in her work. Ashley teaches Bible school for children ages 4 to fourth grade. She helps type the church bulletins every week and she also volunteers to deliver Meals on Wheels to Argonia senior citizens. She delivers meals two times a week even using her lunch hours during the school years. She has really developed great relationships with the seniors she serves. Ashley also spends several hours each month working with the recycling project in Argonia. She is cheerful, sincere, and is respected by her peers and adults as well.

Devin Baalman (Grinnell) Devin participates in many community activities, whether it was through Youth PRIDE, the school, 4-H, or his church. He particularly loves to volunteer to be the announcer at any large community function. He has been active with the annual PRIDE clean-up days, and helps to maintain and mow around the Grinnell welcome sign and the local cemetery. Devin also helps at community celebrations including the annual Easter egg hunt, with making and delivering May Day baskets to elderly citizens, and participating in the Angel Tree activity through his church. Devin not only helped at his hometown, but also went with his high school to help Greensburg with its post-tornado cleanup. Devin is also working to generate interest to bring a T-ball league for younger children this summer. Devin believes that the best way to influence others to participate in community service is to set an example by simply showing up and working!



Devin Baalman

PRIDE Youth Leadership Award

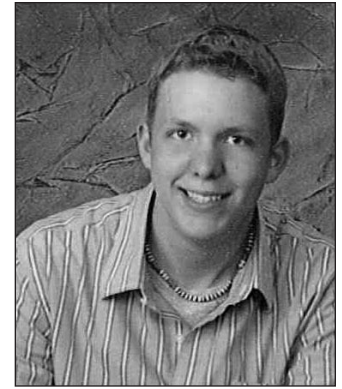
The Youth Leadership Award recognizes community focused youth who have demonstrated leadership skills through: addressing a community issue; proposing a new idea and organizing teams or efforts to implement the idea; helping to resolve a community issues; or inspiring others to community service. The following individuals have demonstrated these leadership characteristics and were selected for the PRIDE Youth Leadership Award.



Sarah Botcher

Sarah Botcher (Stafford) Under Sarah's leadership, the FFA chapter really stepped forward in the Stafford community to find food donations for the food bank at a time when it was critically low. Since a majority of the community members are considered low-income or qualify for free or reduced school meals, the contribution of 400 pounds of food was broadly appreciated. In addition, working on the fruit tree project that plants and maintains fruit trees across the community helps beautify the community and also will provide a healthy subsistence in future years for the residents of the community. Sarah works well with adults in the community and served as a communication bridge between the youth and adults on several projects. Sarah is organized, works hard, and inspires others to assist with community projects.

Brian Swenson (Basehor) Brian has been active in Youth PRIDE for 6 years and has served as president the past 2 years. One of the main projects Brian has worked on with Youth PRIDE and his family is coordinating the Basehor recycling center for 3 months. This included tasks such as unloading and sorting material to be recycled. In addition he helped build and maintain the flower bed around the PRIDE sign as part of the city entrance beautification efforts. He has recruited members of Youth PRIDE to assist with setting up the tent and selling fireworks the week of July 4th. This is a major fund-raiser for Basehor PRIDE bringing in \$500 to \$900 of funding each year that is reinvested in community improvement projects.



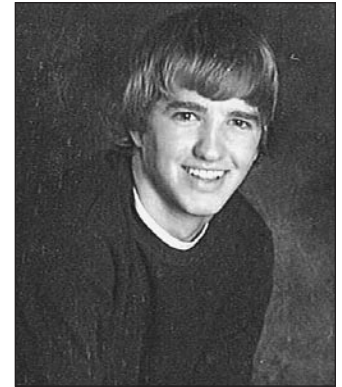
Brian Swenson

Amy Shearer (Almena) Amy has probably been the most active president the Almena Junior PRIDE organization has ever had. She has worked constantly on planning and implementing projects that impact the Almena community. She has worked to paint and install highway billboard signs for display on the east and west side entrances to Almena on Highway 383. She has volunteered at the historic jail located in Bantam Park and helped with the donation of hoodies for the post prom party. Amy has organized Junior PRIDE members to support many of the pancake suppers that are put on by the Senior PRIDE organization. Amy has never asked anyone to do a task that she would not do herself. She takes her role as Junior PRIDE president seriously. Amy claims she does the work in honor and memory of her brother who was a proud member of Junior PRIDE and who inspired her to continue his work. Amy is both a leader and a volunteer, stepping up and modeling her leadership through action.



Amy Shearer

Steven Mense (Grinnell) Steven has demonstrated his leadership qualities by his involvement in many community projects. One of the biggest projects was the scraping, patching, priming, and painting the local community-owned grocery store. Steven saw the importance of this project and mobilized others from his 4-H group to tackle the project. The change in appearance to the store was tremendous. Steven has also been involved in the Grinnell City Park Improvement Project. Steven motivates others by being a fun guy to work with! Steven and his co-workers have a good time working together. Steven motivates others by setting a good example. His willingness to do a job and do it well is encouraging to others.



Steven Mense

Honorable Mention

Ashton Archer (Lucas) Ashton moved to Lucas after her junior year of high school. She was eager to become involved in projects in the Lucas community as she began making friends. Ashton quickly proved to be a leader, and was elected as vice president of her class. She helped in planning and implementing fund-raisers for school projects. Ashton also became a steady and dedicated volunteer at the Lucas Area Community Theater, a community-owned cinema and community room. She has helped with school service projects including collecting cans of food for the county food bank and stuffed bears for the children in the hospitals. She has encouraged other students to participate in these projects. Ashton has been a key volunteer in this community and younger students have learned from her leadership.

Volunteers provided more than 75,676 volunteer hours of service to community improvement projects through PRIDE in the 2007-2008 program year. That is roughly the equivalent of 36 years of full-time employment.

STAR Award Recipients

Each year the PRIDE program recognizes outstanding projects that address a community need, a high level of citizen involvement, and that enhance the quality of life in Kansas. To receive the STAR Award, a community must nominate an outstanding project they completed within the current PRIDE year. Award winning nominations are selected based on review by a panel of evaluators. The following 11 PRIDE communities received the STAR Award in 2008.

Ashland – The Ashland PRIDE team recognized the importance of improving the appeal of their downtown. After building a new \$640,000 community center with the support of the Kansas Department of Commerce Tax Credit Program, landscaping of the new building was left to the volunteers of Ashland PRIDE. Plans for the landscaping included installation of an underground sprinkler system, ornamental plantings, and sod placement. The PRIDE group approached local businesses and individuals to generate financial and physical support for the project. It did not take them long to reach their goal: more than \$8,000 was raised from local donors and businesses, and the investment of 120 hours of labor made sure that the sprinkler system was properly assembled and installed! The beautification of the downtown did not stop there. Barrel planters full of flowers were placed in front of the Main Street businesses; signs depicting local attractions were created and placed around the town; and a small park was renovated next to the local grocery store. With the investment of citizens and businesses, Ashland Main Street is now a place that truly reflects community pride!



Ashland

Bushton – In 2007, Bushton PRIDE implemented a community survey to learn of the priorities of residents. One of the pressing areas for community improvement was the park. The park was in disrepair and, for safety reasons, some of the older equipment needed to be replaced. The park improvement committee chairperson organized volunteers, coordinated work days, and supervised the ordering of equipment and materials. The day the equipment was to be installed more than 70 volunteers convened at the park. Because there were more people than projects, the extra volunteers broke up into teams of cleanup groups that set about making sure that the park was clean and free of the debris of equipment packaging. Others took time to make cinnamon rolls, cakes, cookies, and other refreshments for the workers. Railroad ties were placed to contain the wood chips that would arrive a few days later. A concrete path was poured through the park, new picnic tables built, and repairs were made to the picnic shelter. The old picnic tables were then given to the high school FFA for repair and use elsewhere in town. The newly renovated park is a great place for children to play and for families to walk and relax. Bushton PRIDE was able to involve volunteers from the entire community in a project that will impact community members of all ages for many years!



Bushton

Kansas communities enrolled in the PRIDE program completed 819 community improvement projects in the 2007-2008 program year. Projects included investments in community health, cultural enhancement, leadership development, infrastructure improvements, and economic development.

Frankfort – On November 9, 2005, the Frankfort steering committee, community organization representatives, and interested community members met to discuss the priority of playground repair. A design day was held in May of 2006 at the Frankfort school where children were allowed to design the playground for themselves. Soon a budget was developed and Frankfort PRIDE began fund-raising. The PRIDE group understood that fund-raising was as much about community building as it was about the playground. So they initiated a variety of opportunities for people to have fun, socialize, and contribute to their community. Fund-raisers included a 50/50 drawing; a pancake man event; BBQ and ice cream socials; a ball tournament; a quilt raffle; a casino night; and garage and bake sales. These events provided social opportunities while raising funds for the project. Chances were also sold on a playhouse and sandbox that had been built and donated by community members. Components for the park were offered for “sale.” Donations from the Frankfort and area communities totaled more than \$127,000 for the project. Because the funds exceeded the original budget of \$85,000, a Playsafer® rubber ground cover was purchased with the remaining funds. From May 30 to June 3, 2007, 735 volunteers joined in building the park. Meals and childcare were donated by volunteers during the build. The dedication ceremony took place on June 17, 2007 to honor all of the donors and volunteers that made the park possible. The playground, which was designed through the imagination of Frankfort school children, was named “Wildcat Wilderness,” and is proof of what can be accomplished through the shared investment of a community!



Frankfort

Glasco – Glasco PRIDE is determined to create a way to provide local access to food for their community. Working with local gardeners, PRIDE members developed a plan to create a weekly farmers market. The historical grocery store was selected as the site on the corner of Main Street. Eggs, bierocks, and baked goods soon followed the fresh fruits and vegetables provided at the market. The market is now a thriving, year-round farmers market! The market also led to other food celebration events – the first ever Rhubarb Festival and Tea the first Friday in June. What a great example of how Glasco PRIDE is able to take a sour situation and make something really sweet out of it!



Glasco

Grinnell – In the summer of 2007, a group of citizens from Grinnell, Angelus, and the communities of Campus, Orange, and Orion in Gove and Sheridan counties decided to collaborate to preserve the history of the local area. Though a shared effort, a heritage center was planned for preservation of local history and to serve as an educational resource for the schools. The mission of the Heritage Center is: to gather artifacts and documents that pertain to the participating communities; to catalog and classify the appropriate artifacts and documents; and to provide a site where people can access and enjoy these unique items from the target area. The board of directors of the Heritage Center approached the Grinnell Township Board and asked



Grinnell

permission to use the historic 1922 Grinnell Township Hall to house the Heritage Center. The Township Board granted the use of the building, and even agreed to provide paint, supplies, and circulating fans if the center's board provided the labor. Grinnell PRIDE helped coordinate the support for the center from the Grinnell City Council, the board of education of USD 291, as well as individuals who volunteered their time for the renovation and the collection of artifacts. The memories of veterans, miners, and senior citizens are now preserved on film and tape for the future generations. The center has been used for a 1930s film festival, the Youth PRIDE Fall Pumpkin Fest, and the summer of 2008 will host an honorarium for the veterans that have served from the communities. Grinnell PRIDE is helping preserve the past for its future!

Herndon – The Fourth of July Community Celebration was chosen as new project at the Herndon PRIDE committee meeting in January 2007. The city council was approached for approval to set off fireworks. Since Herndon did not have an organized celebration for the Fourth of July, and because this would provide an opportunity to build community relationships, the PRIDE group began their planning work. The goal was to provide a safe environment for people to enjoy neighbors and friends while dining, playing games, and of course, watching fireworks. PRIDE members and community



Herndon

volunteers set to work pulling weeds, cleaning the park, and received funds from the county to purchase a new tennis net just before to the celebration. The effort involved the city council, the fire department, and local businesses in planning the event. Community members were invited to the event through advertising in the local paper and posters in local businesses. Personal invitations encouraged those who came to bring food for the potluck to share for the celebration. The celebration helped keep people in the community for the Fourth of July, as in prior years many people would leave town and travel more than 20 miles away to celebrate. It also helped welcome new residents as well as make use of the park facilities that PRIDE helps maintain. Because of its great success, Herndon PRIDE plans to make the Fourth of July celebration an annual event in the town of Herndon!

Highland – In 2007, Highland celebrated its sesquicentennial. The entire community came together for 5 days of festivities. Before to the celebration, the PRIDE group met to get Highland ready for the hundreds of visitors that were expected to participate in the day's activities. May 24 kicked off the celebration at the Native American Heritage Museum. May 25 had everyone participating in a Civil War recruitment reenactment. On May 26, Highland's Main Street played host to a hamburger and hot dog dinner, and a number of fun contests. May 27 featured a past to present wedding gown fashion show, a Victorian tea party, a 1950s birthday party, and a one-room school house school day reenactment. May 27 religious services were held early 1900s style, with an old-time gospel sermon and song fest with dinner to follow. May 28, Memorial Day, had everyone enjoying a tour of the historic cemetery, and ended with a special birthday celebration for Highland with a special birthday cake, ice cream and band concert, followed with a fireworks display. The Highland Sesquicentennial Celebration was financially successful for the community, and the Highland PRIDE organization established a scholarship for a Doniphan West High School senior to attend Highland Community College. The months of research and preparation made for a fantastic historic journey and community celebration!



Highland

Lakin – Osborne Park had not had much attention in the past, but the Lakin PRIDE Group decided that it was time to turn their efforts to making it a safer and more frequented community hub. It was decided that a new playground needed to be constructed, trees planted, and a lighting system installed. PRIDE received a grant to install the equipment. The light standards, canopies and other accessories were purchased at a Finney County Fair Board auction. The lighting once graced the grandstand at the fairgrounds in Garden City. It was repainted a vivid red and installed in Osborne Park. Sidewalks were poured to make the playground handicapped accessible. PRIDE members and Lakin citizens came together to assemble the playground equipment. Sod and dirt removal was completed by the city, groups organized through PRIDE, and the Mennonite church. The park's new lighting system does a great job of illuminating the hard work of PRIDE and other community volunteers!



Lakin

Lucas – Lucas PRIDE and community members of Lucas decided in 2007 that the Lucas Cemetery was in need of beautification and organization. Documentation of genealogy information as well as monument location was a main concern during this project. It was decided that an information kiosk could be erected so that location of family monuments within the cemetery would be less confusing. Community volunteers formed several groups to plan and implement the project. One group perused the cemetery collecting genealogy information, while another group set to work entering the information into a computer registry program that could provide a genealogy registry that could be available on the city Web site. Finally, a third group set up an attractive kiosk for the cemetery registry and new block post markers to beautify the cemetery. Now Lucas residents, past residents, and relatives will have an easier time locating their relatives as well as learning about their past!



Lucas

Onaga – Declining population is a concern of many PRIDE communities. Like many other PRIDE communities, Onaga PRIDE decided that positive assets and new attractions must be created to keep their community vital. Residents decided to make use of the abandoned landing strip northwest of the city of Onaga. Many ideas, including turning the strip into a soccer field were proposed, but after more research, the phenomenon of airparks was discovered. Airparks allow for the planned slower paced living, where families can enjoy relaxed, safe, country living in a beautiful setting while living only minutes away from major city employment. With this new information, the PRIDE committee realized the value of the old airport and an undeveloped area that could become a new subdivision. Since the discovery, Onaga PRIDE has involved the community to accomplish the physical work fixing up and maintaining the airport, researching how to get more use out of their airport hangers, getting developers/construction companies interested purchasing the undeveloped land for a new subdivision, and watching for funding opportunities. Onaga PRIDE is doing a great job committing time to recharging their community and population.



Onaga

Stafford – Stafford PRIDE had tried starting a youth program for several years. They wanted their youth to be able to serve the community with a project of their choosing during the summer. At a PRIDE workshop, Stafford PRIDE learned of a program named The Summer of Service sponsored by AmeriCorps at K-State. The project seemed like a perfect fit. The project linked the PRIDE group with a college student seeking a service opportunity. It was agreed that the college student could organize a play that would involve the Stafford area junior and senior high school students. Although Stafford PRIDE was unsure if the cost of the project could be covered, the PRIDE committee was pleased to find that many community businesses and individuals were enthusiastic about having a play put on after so many years. Food was donated from businesses and individuals for a fund-raiser supper. The local paper gave space at no charge for articles and updates. Many volunteers donated snacks, made costumes, and loaned props for the play. The show, which included 11 students from age 11 to 16, was a great success. Survey cards that had been provided at the play were returned with encouraging comments such as: “awesome,” “talent lives in Stafford,” and “thank you for the enjoyable evening and so close to home!” Because of the success of this play, another play was put on in May of 2008 which also included high school students. It looks like the success of this summer project may become a regular event in Stafford!



Stafford

Community of Excellence Award Recipients

The Community of Excellence Award is given to communities that follow a community improvement process that is inclusive, planned, and proven successful. Communities interested in participating in an evaluation process for the Community of Excellence recognition must request evaluation through the state PRIDE office. Kansas PRIDE then assembles and coordinates teams of community development professionals to visit and evaluate the communities. While every Kansas PRIDE community identifies their own projects, priorities, and work; community development practitioners will agree that community development process must build on the following structural elements to achieve successful, sustainable results.

- Effective organizational structure
- Assessment of the local situation and visions for the community
- Creative use of local and external resources
- Shared leadership and shared recognition for success
- An open, participatory approach and broad citizen involvement
- Developed plans for community improvement
- Established partnerships and collaborative efforts
- Successful completion of projects

The following communities were visited and evaluated in the spring of 2008 and have been selected by the evaluation teams to receive the Community of Excellence Award to recognize their success.

Almena – Almena is a community that is proud of its history and excited about its future. The Almena PRIDE volunteers run the Almena Senior Center, acting as hosts, performing maintenance, and delivering meals to the homebound. Since the community no longer has a public restaurant, the center recently began serving meals to the public and providing a meeting place for other organizations. Evaluators were impressed with the volunteer efforts that have done so much to provide important social services to the community. In an effort to increase the diversity and sustainability of the PRIDE group, the Almena PRIDE senior group has also encouraged and facilitated the development of a youth PRIDE effort. While both groups work together, some autonomy is encouraged to allow the two groups to focus on individual projects, including park improvement, community clean-up days, an ice cream social, and pancake suppers to raise money for PRIDE activities. Working together, the PRIDE volunteers are making an important investment in the quality of life in and around Almena!



Almena



Alton

Alton – Alton is a community that has had PRIDE for 23 years! This year marks the ninth consecutive year to be named a community of excellence. This success is a reflection of the quality of the inclusive process that Alton PRIDE uses. The PRIDE group plans a variety of economic, social, cultural, and physical community improvement projects, yet is responsive to community needs as they arise. They raised \$4,000 to aid in the rebuilding of the hardware store after a fire. There is no question that Alton PRIDE makes a difference in the quality of life for all ages and works to help sustain the community for the future.

Argonia – Argonia is a progressive community with many accomplishments that truly enhance the livability of the community. The community PRIDE is not afraid to tackle significant long-term community goals. This year, the Argonia PRIDE group continued to support work around increasing the city population and improving the overall physical attractiveness of the community. A new housing addition has been started and four new houses

Argonia, continued from page 11.

are occupied with others under construction. This new housing provided a successful way to encourage population growth in the community and to enhance the enrollment at the elementary school. To improve the look of the community, citizens were encouraged to beautify their yards. PRIDE thanked those who participated with thank-you door hangers provided through the “Our Communities a more Colorful Place!” project of K-State’s Department of Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources. This was just a quiet way of thanking residents for the effort they made and the impact it has on the community. Other goals for this year included a community cleanup and the improvement of the mural that depicts part of the community’s history.



Argonia



Basehor

Basehor – Basehor PRIDE is acting in the present while looking to the future. Goals for the community PRIDE group support youth, community sustainability, and physical community improvements. The Basehor PRIDE organization has played an important role in the sustainability of the community since 1994. In an average year, the Basehor PRIDE group organizes the annual Dairy Days festival and the Independence Day festival, which are used as fund-raisers to provide \$500 scholarships to local high school seniors. PRIDE is in charge of continued park improvement projects, supports a yard-of-the-month activity to encourage citizens to make physical improvements to the community, and supports the Basehor Elementary School Environmental Club. Their commitment to a “green” community does not stop there – PRIDE also coordinates a monthly recycling project to help to keep the community clean and safe. PRIDE coordinates Earth Day events and supports a citywide cleanup. Basehor is certainly a caring community that is not afraid to work hard and show off its pride!

Goff – Several events in Goff during the year contribute to its spirit of community. Many of the activities are specifically designed to bring the community together to work and celebrate the lifestyle the citizens enjoy. At the heart of the Goff PRIDE group effort is the consideration of the health and well-being of others. This is evident in several important on-going projects that include a food pantry, an after-school tutoring program, support of library renovations, a community events sign to keep folks informed, and the oversight of an exercise center. The volunteers of PRIDE also find time to host events from spaghetti dinners to sandwich lunches; and from fireworks to flowerpots. All of these activities directly contribute to the well-being and quality of life for its citizens.

Grinnell – Grinnell PRIDE is proud to accomplish their community improvement goals. These goals are designed to enhance the health and quality of life for citizens and to help sustain the community for future generations. To enhance the health of citizens, PRIDE coordinated summer swimming lessons and had 39 youngsters participate. PRIDE volunteers also helped with the successful application for a Sunflower Foundation Healthy Living grant to create walking trail fitness stations. This



Grinnell

was connected to the “Get It Do It” activities designed in conjunction with the county extension office. PRIDE has also put a great deal of effort into preserving the history of the area by working to support the county Heritage Center. The mission of the Heritage Center is to gather artifacts and documents, to catalog and classify them, and to provide a site where people can access and enjoy the unique items that reflect the heritage of the area. In October, members hosted a “Night at the Theatre” where everyone enjoyed old movies, community memorabilia, and popcorn. Youth PRIDE sponsored a pumpkin decorating contest for a penny-a-vote. Proceeds of the event went to help the center. Working to improve the health, culture, and quality of life in Grinnell, this PRIDE group is demonstrating excellence in their long-range goals, inclusive methods, and shared leadership!

Highland – Highland, has consistently been a PRIDE Community of Excellence. This is due to their focus on a process that is inclusive, based on community input, and remarkably wide-ranging. This year's activities included a benefit dinner for the food pantry, the annual city-wide cleanup activities, and the all-city garage sale. Other activities include the annual Memorial Day service, sponsoring a team for Walk Kansas, securing volunteers for Meals on Wheels, and establishing the Highland Historic Preservation Committee. Currently, the community is focusing on the construction and completion of a much needed fire station and community building. Highland was awarded a Kan-Step Grant from the Department of Commerce and is leveraging the grant dollars with community commitment and activism to get the job done. Highland also works hard to cultivate and reward their member and citizen volunteers who participate in planning and implementing community betterment projects. The Community of Excellence evaluators were impressed with the high level of investment, involvement, and success of Highland.



Highland

Lakin – Receiving its 12th consecutive Community of Excellence Award this year, Lakin has worked hard to perform community improvement processes in successful, sustainable ways. They have an effective organizational structure, do an exceptional job of creatively using local and external resources, and are very successful in the completion of projects. Recently, the PRIDE group focused volunteer efforts on Osborne Park, with the idea of transforming an ignored park into a safer and more frequented community hub. Efforts involved creating a new playground, improving lighting and landscaping for the project, and installing additional memorial benches. Lighting in the Ad McVey Park was also improved. PRIDE volunteers also coordinated the planting of flowers for the downtown district and planting redbud trees at the entrance to town. In addition to community beautification, Lakin PRIDE supports economic development through supporting the farmers market and citywide garage sale. The support of the community is reflected by the donations given to this organization to fulfill its mission – more than \$13,000 in private funds were donated this year. Lakin PRIDE continues to improve the community in many ways!



Lakin

Lenora – A rural community in northwest Kansas, Lenora citizens work hard to keep their community thriving. A PRIDE community for 18 years, Lenora demonstrates successful project completion, strong collaboration, and an inclusive approach to engaging the entire community in improvement projects. One of the ways they keep everyone informed is through their volunteer weekly newspaper, the Lenora Meridian, which is an important communication tool for the community. Lenora PRIDE helps to coordinate quality of life projects like programs on nutrition and the pet health clinic. With no veterinarian services in the community, the pet health clinic allows residents to bring in their pets to receive annual shots and to check out other concerns families may have about their pets. PRIDE volunteers also participate in the PATH Intergenerational Program, which matches youth and adults to further the educational benefits to the community. Volunteers at the library work to promote summer reading and to keep youngsters reading skills in place over the summer. Lenora PRIDE also plays an active role in the planning, coordination, and staffing of community celebrations, including Veterans Day, Easter, and the Lenora Jubilee.



Lenora

Melvorn – The Melvorn PRIDE organization, works tirelessly within this community to do magnificent things. Through their ability to link individuals and efforts with both local and external resources, Melvorn PRIDE is an engaged catalyst for community change. To invest in the health of the citizens, the PRIDE group maintains the community fitness center and hosts community dinners. To expand the cultural opportunities of the community, coordinate an annual Autumn Fest and

Melvern, continued from page 13.

craft festival that included an outdoor Country Music Jubilee in 2007, a haunted house, and the lighting of the community Christmas tree. A long-range goal is to establish a railroad park. They recognize the importance of inclusion and opportunity, and have incorporated a youth PRIDE group that works many projects including drug and alcohol prevention projects. In addition to all of this, a second committee continues to work on the Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities grant, which has resulted in multiple grants, broader involvement of community members, and new goals for the community.

Potwin – For a “bedroom” community, Potwin has a mighty vision statement: “to look beyond the horizon for the innovative ideas that will meet the ever changing needs ... and sustain and enrich the quality of life in our community for all people.” To that end, Potwin PRIDE has 49 projects on this year’s work plan, and has completed more than 63 community improvement projects within the 2007-2008 program year. Of those, the Ken Whittington Memorial Plant-a-row for the Hungry Garden provides not only fresh foods for local and area food banks, but also an opportunity for intergenerational opportunity as folks of all ages work together on the garden. Community celebration activities like the Watermelon Festival helps give the community a sense of place – a sense of home! Other activities included a community appreciation dinner, the yard-of-the-week, holiday activities, and lots more! Potwin PRIDE has demonstrated exceptional assessment, goal setting, shared leadership, and success in carrying out inclusive, meaningful community engagement!



Potwin

Rossville – Rossville PRIDE has established meaningful partnerships in order to achieve success. The PRIDE volunteers also serve as the Tall Corn Festival planning committee, and work closely with the city, the school system, and local businesses and organizations to develop and execute project work. The annual Tall Corn Festival and Christmas festivals provide a chance for the community to celebrate the significant role agriculture and faith has played in sustaining this town. The PRIDE group works closely with the city to maintain and update the city Web site, which plays a key role in keeping the community informed and involved in activities. This year the community continued work on the Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities project coordinated through the PRIDE program and sponsored by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The community recognized an issue with storm water run-off by the school and city park and installed a community rain garden. This rain garden will serve to slow rain run-off and promote absorption of water to recharge local water supplies and decrease flooding. This is just one of the ways that the Rossville PRIDE group is recognizing that community sustainability needs investment in the physical community as well as the people of that place!

Spearville – Sustainable community improvement efforts are what the Community of Excellence recognition celebrates. Spearville understands long-term goals, planning, and action with an eye for sustainability! Embracing the area wind farm for renewable energy development is just one of the indicators of this forward-looking community. Their PRIDE recycling efforts and investment in youth and city park recreation facilities is also evidence of their forward thinking. This community also recognizes the value of supporting existing business for a strong and sustainable local economy. This past year has been challenging for the Spearville community with the loss of one of their largest employers. It was quickly realized what a negative economic experience this was for the community. Spearville PRIDE led the way in networking with the Ford County Economic Development Committee and formation of the Spearville Economic Development Committee. This group has had a visioning session and set goals to help rebuild the economy of Spearville. Spearville is a great example of a community thinking for the future, and acting today!



Stafford

Stafford – Stafford is an amazing community of 1,067 people, yet they have many amenities, such as a local hospital and nursing home, a restored theater that shows new release movies, a bowling alley, a full-service grocery store, viable retail outlets both downtown

and on the highway, a wonderful museum and genealogical library. Stafford schools are high quality, with state-of-the-art equipment to prepare youth for work or college. Well-known for its volunteerism, Stafford PRIDE worked on 43 individual projects, and had more than 3,700 hours of volunteer labor donated this year; from beautification efforts, to recycling, from community youth activities to the PRIDE Web site, Stafford PRIDE makes a difference. Two of their biggest and on-going projects are the Walk Kansas and Walk America projects. Stafford doesn't skimp on community celebrations such as Heritage Days or Oktoberfest, or in celebrating with hundreds of visitors the Quivira Wildlife Refuge. Stafford PRIDE works hard to promote volunteerism and a positive community attitude.

Valley Community – In the last 12 months alone, the Valley Community PRIDE completed 51 projects with more than 1,200 hours of volunteer time donated, and more than \$7,500 raised to support the activities that the PRIDE group provides. On Labor Day, the Watermelon Days celebration entertained nearly 2,000 people with activities for every one of all ages! Valley Community PRIDE is in the process of putting together a community cookbook and history of the last 85 years. They have worked on installing benches and concrete pads for the Gaylord community center, and will be working on painting the playground equipment. PRIDE also has a role in many of the activities that give a community a sense of family – sponsoring Santa and community holiday lighting projects, Easter egg hunts for community children and the turkey supper and bingo. Adding beauty to the area is also a top priority with flowers planted in large pots and at the roadside park. If you look at a map of Kansas, you won't find Valley Community, because this group is a collaborative venture between Harlan, Gaylord, and Cedar communities – one more indication of their shared, collaborative efforts to organize and invest in the people and place they call home!



Valley Community

PRIDE Partnerships

Success of rural communities in the 21st century will be, in large part, based on the willingness and ability to collaborate. Collaboration for rural America may mean participating and supporting regional health care, larger districts for schools, and looking at expanded markets for business. In the 2007-2008 program year, the PRIDE program was successful because of the investment of many partners. Thank you to these organizations and individuals that have made important contributions to a very successful year of community improvement.

Kansas Department of Commerce – Community Development Division and Business Development Division

Kansas State Research and Extension – Horticulture and Master Gardener Programs - *Our Communities More Colorful Places* project – and County, District, and Area Staff.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment – Bureau of Water, Watershed Management Section – *Healthy Ecosystems - Healthy Communities* Project

Kansas Campus Compact – *AmeriCorps Summer Intern* Project

Kansas PRIDE Inc. – Board of Directors

PRIDE Sponsors – Businesses contributing to the success and recognition of community improvement.

League of Kansas Municipalities – Publication support in the Kansas Government Journal and conference support.

USDA Rural Development and Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka – Community Development Academy

PRIDE Communities – Which mentor others, share resources, and work in multiple neighborhoods or communities to identify and tackle projects.

Volunteer Evaluators – for Community of Excellence, STAR, and Youth awards

And the many others that have stepped up to support, encourage, and recognize the great efforts of community improvement through PRIDE!

PRIDE Sponsors

The Kansas PRIDE Program gratefully acknowledges the contributions of our partners and sponsors in the 2007 - 2008 program year whose generosity supports the efforts to build better communities through the training and recognition opportunities of the PRIDE programs.

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In addition to the above sponsors, this year Kansas PRIDE, Inc. has expanded giving opportunities to include both corporate sponsorship and individual membership. We would like to thank the following for their support of the PRIDE program. (As of September 1, 2008).

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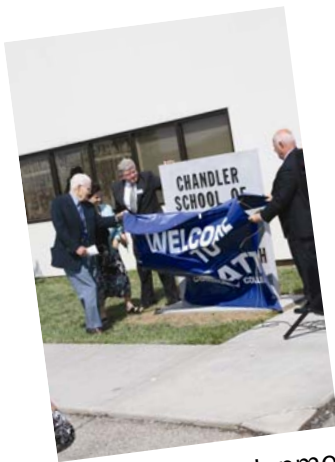
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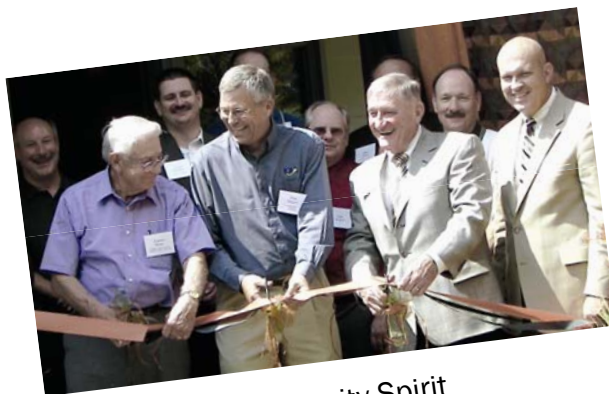
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