

Building Better Communities



Kansas PRIDE Review

July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006





August, 2006

Dear PRIDE Members and Friends:

Serving as PRIDE Board Chairperson this past year has been a rewarding experience. Not only have I been able to meet and work with many dedicated individuals that serve on the PRIDE board or are active in local PRIDE organizations, but I have also been able to visit many PRIDE towns, and I have seen the work that these communities have done. In a period of shrinking rural populations, it is refreshing to see the “pride” that these PRIDE communities take in their towns, and all the hard work that they expend to make their communities a better place to live.

In the 2005 PRIDE Program Year, the Kansas PRIDE staff worked with more than 60 enrolled communities across the state. These communities were involved in a community improvement process that identifies priority community betterment projects; generates collaborative partnerships to address local needs; and encourages citizen involvement in addressing the identified projects. In 2005 the PRIDE communities reported completing over 600 projects ranging from community welcome programs to building swimming pools and community centers. Collectively, PRIDE groups reported collaborative efforts with nearly 300 other organizations including 4-H, RC&D, civic groups, scouts, church groups, and local government. Through their efforts, they were able to invest over 87,000 hours of volunteer labor and re-invest over \$338,000 in local funds to make Kansas communities more healthy, economically viable, and fun places to live.

I would like to think that 2006 was a “transitional” year for the PRIDE board, as we moved to increase the budget and solicit new corporate sponsors. If the board can be half as successful as the dedicated communities that we have sworn to serve we know we will be able to reward more deserving communities in the future.

On behalf of all the PRIDE corporate sponsors, 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 "James Bartling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping underline that loops back under the name.

James W. Bartling
2006 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 in identifying 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 2006 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 2006 board members:

James Bartling, Chairperson

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Suzanne Coin, Treasurer

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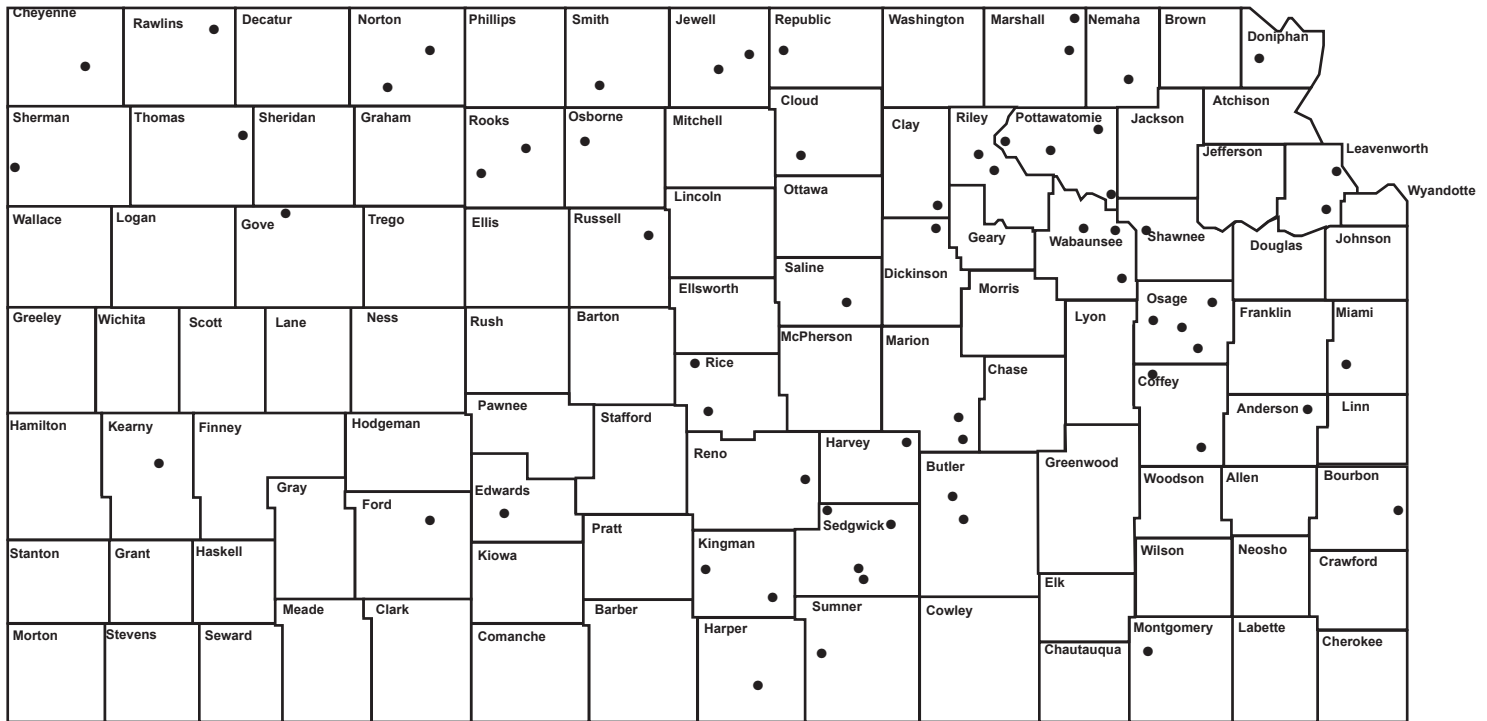
Jeanne Stinson

[Kansas Department of Commerce](#)

PRIDE Impacts Communities

In the 2005-2006 PRIDE 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.

2006 PRIDE Communities



(Populations shown in parenthesis)

Alden (159) RC	El Pueblo-Wichita	Lakin (2,343) KE	Potwin (439) BU
Almena (460) NT	Elk City (300) MG	Lansing (10,032) LV	Randolph (174) RL
Alton (111) OB	Eskridge (572) WB	Lenora (300) NT	Rexford (155) TH
Anthony (2,308) HP	Florence (667) MN	Leonardville (439) RL	Rossville (1,001) SN
Argonia (509) SU	Formoso (116) JW	LeRoy (586) CF	Spearville (843) FO
Assaria (446) SA	Fort Scott (8,065) BB	Lucas (416) RS	Stafford (1,097) SF
Axtell (443) MS	Glasco (509) CD	Melvorn (426) OS	Stockton (1,477) RO
Basehor (2,715) LV	Goff (178) NM	Mount Hope (843) SG	Towanda (1,338) BU
Beattie (271) MS	Greeley (333) AN	Norwich (535) KM	Valley Community* (347) SM
Bird City (444) CN	Grinnell (314) GO	Olsburg (186) PT	Wakefield (854) CY
Burns (278) MN	Haven (1,170) RN	Onaga (687) PT	Westmoreland (637) PT
Bushton (298) RC	Haysville (9,545) SG	Osage City (2,954) OS	
Chapman (1,252) DK	Herndon (143) RA	Osawatomie (4,595) MI	* Gaylord, Cedar, and Harlan.
Clearwater (2,202) SG	Highland (966) DP	Overbrook (960) OS	
Courtland (302) RP	Hutchinson- Lincoln School	Park City (6,877) SG	
Cunningham (490) KM	Kanorado (230) SH	Paxico (213) WB	
	Kinsley (1,551) ED		

Youth Recognition Awards

Youth PRIDE Community Service Award

Developing an appreciation for the value of community service is one way to sustain youth investment in their community. The Youth Community Service Award provides an opportunity for young people to be recognized for their volunteer service. This award is presented to youth nominated by their community PRIDE group. PRIDE, through the support of Westar Energy, would like to recognize the following youth for their outstanding community service.

Kendra Gumm (Glasco) Kendra has volunteered well over 100 hours to community service in Glasco. She volunteered in the daycare facility, at the community summer program of Arts and Recreation in City Park, at the youth volleyball camp, and at the Community Fun Day. Kendra volunteered to provide swimming instruction for children who would not have been able to attend lessons. Where children are in need of encouragement, supervision, and instruction you can find Kendra sharing her enthusiasm, skills and compassion. As Kendra prepares to go to college, her future goals have been tempered by her experiences with youth. She is planning to pursue a career in social work. Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize Kendra Gumm for her outstanding service.

Eric Goetz (Grinnell) Eric helped with several community projects and activities as well as church and school events. One of the main projects the city of Grinnell is working on is a new fire station. Eric donated his time helping with concrete, interior walls, and installation of doors. He helped with the city-wide clean up; helped remove old trees from the park, and assisted with the Youth PRIDE Easter Egg hunt. Eric's contribution to community has made a huge contribution to Grinnell's well-being. Through his concern for the community, Eric Goetz has earned the Kansas PRIDE community service recognition award.

Lacey Pool (Lucas) Lacey is active in the Lucas community with her many volunteer services. She is involved in Lucas PRIDE, her high school and church groups, sports, Scholar's bowl, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), is vice president of her class, and much more. As a youth representative for the Lucas PRIDE committee Lacey has helped serve at community activities such as the Lucas Area Community Theater performances and the Adam's Apple Festival. Lacey's involvement in community service projects in Lucas has prompted other youth to become involved in their community so that they can live in a town with PRIDE.

Janna Wendelburg (Stafford) Janna has been active in the Stafford community for several years. Her assistance at the Leisure Homestead Nursing Home is an example of her dedication. She decorates the bulletin board, entertains the residents, having "adopted" a resident for 3 years. She also works with younger students through the Peer Adolescent Leaders of Stafford (PALS). She has served as tutor and has worked at the Cornerstone Day Care Center. Her efforts have helped to improve the downtown area and various residences through PRIDE projects. Stafford is most grateful for everything Janna does for the community.

Jacob Morgan (Stockton) The principle project undertaken by the Stockton PRIDE Committee during the last year was to landscape the newly built neighborhood park. The plans called for a sign above the sidewalk leading to the gazebo. Jacob had been featured in an issue of the local paper for his achievements in welding and metal fabrication. The PRIDE committee asked Jacob if he would consider undertaking the sign as a community service effort. He accepted readily and designed and built the sign using much of his spare time in the summer to put the final touch on the PRIDE park project. His willingness to give his time and talents to his community has earned Jacob Morgan the PRIDE Youth Community Service Award.



Sponsor of the 2006 Youth Recognition Awards

Youth who volunteer are
three times more likely
to volunteer as adults.

(Independent Sector/Gallup, 1996)



Stockton

Honorable Mention

Colton Lowry (Almena) Colton, a 7th grader at Northern Valley School has been a willing volunteer for the PRIDE pancake suppers. He set tables and did an outstanding job waiting on community members. He serves as parliamentarian for the Cedar Ridge 4-H club and also helps with their community service projects. His willingness to accept responsibility as well as his help on community activities is very commendable. He is sure to be an active community volunteer for many years to come.

Nikole Orth (Bushton) Nikole has been a valuable Bushton PRIDE volunteer the past couple of years. Nikole has attended and helped with every event the PRIDE committee has been involved with. She helped with the Quivira Trading Post by overseeing the children's games and running the cotton candy machine to help raise funds for the organization. She even volunteered to spend time in the dunk tank! Nikole has given the PRIDE organization valuable advice at park planning meetings, and she rolls up her sleeves to help raise funds to ensure the park will be an enjoyable place for "kids" for years to come.

Megan Smith (Lansing) Megan has volunteered more than 200 hours at the local hospital and has helped with several Habitat for Humanity projects. Younger children view her as a positive role model. Megan has faced difficulties in her young life that could have made her bitter and sad. Instead of focusing on the hard times, she uses service to others as a way to share her talents. She has helped with Halloween parties for children, raised money to help others go on a school trip, helps with parent/teacher conferences and Drug Awareness Week. She is mature beyond her years. "No" and "I can't" are not words in her vocabulary. One can't help but feel motivated and positive after working with Megan!

Katie Reece (Melvern) Just 15 years old, Katie has already made an impact on her community. As president of the Youth PRIDE, she has proven to be a real leader; she has helped lead the city cleanup and helped raise money by working at the community Valentine Dinner and free Thanksgiving dinner. Under Katie's leadership Youth PRIDE has adopted "Grandparents" that are given special recognition, handmade treats, and gifts on holidays. These seniors now have a much closer relationship with the youth. Katie demonstrates community pride to its fullest – ready to please, eager to learn, and always willing to serve her community to make it a better place for everyone.

Emily Reichenberger (Mount Hope) Emily is an exceptional 8th grader, demonstrated by her continued service to community. Emily has cleaned the highway shoulder to make the area more beautiful. She has become active in the Tree Kids Tree Board, helped with the annual bike clinic, taught an embroidery class to 20 children at the PRIDE's Spring Break recreation program, she baby-sits, and pet-sits. Emily is a great helper to Mount Hope PRIDE, always looking to see if there is just one more thing she can help with – like programming the sign at the town square, hanging posters, or getting together information for various projects. Mount Hope community is very impressed with Emily and her contribution to community.

Teenagers
volunteer 2.4
billion hours
annually. (*Independent
Sector/Gallup, 1996*)

PRIDE Youth Leadership Award

The Youth Leadership Award recognizes young people 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 2006 PRIDE Youth Leadership Award.

Jena Jessup (Almena) Jena has been active in many community and school activities. She actively demonstrates her leadership as President of several important organizations: Cedar Ridge 4-H Club, Junior Class and Student Council at Northern Valley School, and Junior PRIDE. She has done everything from picking up trash, baking cookies and distributing them to shut-ins, organizing the community homecoming parade, serving as a Big Sister, writing By-Laws for Junior PRIDE, to conducting fund raisers. Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize Jena's outstanding leadership abilities.

PRIDE communities:

- assess the situation,
 - identify their vision,
 - prioritize their goals,
 - involve the community, and
 - celebrate success!
-

Eric Simmons (Highland) Members of Highland PRIDE voted unanimously to nominate Eric for this leadership award. For the past several years he has been a supportive, dependable, and willing worker helping to enhance the PRIDE program. Eric works well with PRIDE members many years his senior. His fresh perspectives offered in a respectful, intelligent manner have earned him the trust of the community. In addition to his work with PRIDE, Eric is president of his class, vice president of the Art and Drama Club, a member of STUCO, and active in his church. To further develop his skills, he participated in a leadership conference. Eric is known for his ready smile and serves as an inspiration to many. Through his leadership, Eric has earned the Kansas PRIDE Youth Leadership award.

Melissa Lisenbee (Lansing) Melissa is a self-starter with a flawless academic record. She has researched and took the lead for the Venture Crew in their establishment of their community service project. Her efforts resulted in a well-run, efficient program that benefit the community and have brought recognition to the organization. In addition she serves as the captain of the women's golf team, Vice President of Model United Nations, and Vice President of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). In Melissa's words: "For community service to be truly effective, competent and creative leadership is essential. Organization and motivation are a leaders' most important jobs and are the keys to having a successful club or community service project."

Honorable Mention

Sharayah Sitt (Argonia) Throughout her high school years Sharayah has been involved in a number of organizations. Her scholastic achievement has always placed her on the A Honor Roll. She has completed the Kansas State Curriculum Completer Award and is a KU Honors Scholar. She has served on the Student Council and held class offices. She is a member of the yearbook committee, high school band, and vocal groups. Sharayah is a member of 4-H and is active in the KAY Club where she is known for doing a number of activities for the betterment of the school and the community. She is a well-rounded person who always shows her enthusiasm for life.

Haley Amaya (Greeley) Leadership can be shown in many kinds of service. Haley used her leadership abilities, her concern for another human being, and her persistence to save the life of little Briannah Lickteig. Haley was Briannah's baby sitter and noticed that the child couldn't seem to get over a case of the "flu." As she began thinking about the little girl she recognized what could be symptoms of diabetes. Haley relayed her suspicions to Briannah's parents who rushed her to the local hospital; later she was medevaced to Children's Mercy in Kansas City. The little one's grateful parents are very thankful for Haley and her quick thinking.

Organization and motivation are
a leaders' most important jobs and
are the keys to having a successful
club or community service project.

— *Melissa Lisenbee*

Bethany Ellis (Lucas) In school Bethany participates as a team member and leader in the Scholar's Bowl, League Choral Choir, League Band Clinic, Forensics, and serves as an officer for Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) among many other school activities. She is also active in the Lucas Area Community Theater as a concession volunteer, the Wolf Creek Valley 4-H Club, and her church activities. Bethany and her family supports community events that allow families to enjoy the rural community life. Bethany's volunteer actions reflect a positive image and representation of the Lucas community. Bethany encourages other youth to step up and help create a sense of PRIDE in Lucas.

Brent Fritzemeier (Stafford) Brent's leadership stretches all across the community from 4-H to church and community activities, but one of the biggest differences he has made in the Stafford community is by being a tremendous role model for the younger students. He understands that many children are watching him because of his successful school activities, especially as the football team center. Through the school sponsored PALS program he tutors two young boys. Brent has held every possible leadership position in 4-H during the 11 years that he's been involved. Brent is a true leader, he knows how to get the work done, is able to take charge in a quiet unassuming manner that assures things work smoothly.

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 nine PRIDE communities received the STAR Award in 2006.

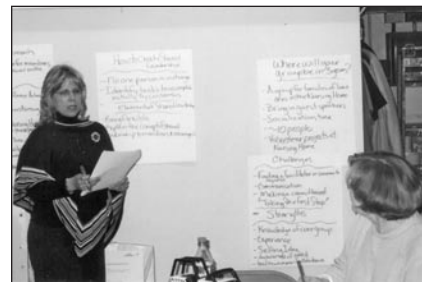
Alton - “FUN for ALL — ALL for FUN” – “FUN for ALL — ALL for FUN” was the 2006 award winning STAR Project submitted by the Alton PRIDE. This project offered three featured social events for the small rural community of Alton. The PRIDE year began with a “bang” with a sponsored Independence Celebration, on the second Sunday of July. A free BBQ in the park lead off the day’s activities, followed by ball games for all ages, music, and a fireworks display. In February, PRIDE sponsored a Sweetheart Supper. Twenty five couples enjoyed a candlelight dinner, special music and lots of great prizes. The third event was a daring, one-of-a-kind style show for “Ladies Night Out.” Seventy ladies enjoyed an evening of fun and laughter as they showed off their one-of-a-kind outfits. Alton PRIDE has stepped forward to keep life in Alton entertaining and fun, and is enhancing the quality of life in this northwest Kansas Community. Remember the proverb: “It takes a village to raise a child?” In Alton it takes community PRIDE to raise fun social events.

Beattie - Public Rest room – Excitement was in the air the day that Beattie’s first, and only, public rest room facility arrived. The facility measured approximately 10 feet by 17 feet and weighs in at whopping 45,800 pounds. Rest rooms were a priority for the park to be used as a gathering place for family reunions, picnics, children’s play area and for walkers using the trail. Beattie PRIDE called on many volunteers to help make this project a reality. From needs assessment, to fund raising, to preparing a gravel bed for the rest room, whatever was asked of the community someone stepped forward to see that the job was done. The rest room is one more step toward the completion of the total redesign of the park. Certainly Beattie PRIDE can say that good things happen when communities plan and work together.



Beattie

Glasco - Free University – The building on the corner in the center of main street of Glasco is buzzing with activity. Responding to citizen requests at community meetings for the need to bring people together and the desire for educational opportunities, Glasco received grant support through the Community Resource Act to design a Free University program. Named “GIFTS,” an acronym for “Glasco Inspires Free Talent Sharing,” the first semester offered 19 classes, all taught by volunteers. The classes addressed literacy, arts, health, recreation culture, and community and personal well being. Enrollees range in age from 3 to 80 plus years. The GIFTS Program is a gift that will continue to enhance community involvement and sharing into the future.



Glasco

Grinnell—Toddler Swing Project – Grinnell PRIDE has dedicated their energy to help the City of Grinnell implement a 5-year plan of improving the city park. The project involved the entire community of Grinnell where everyone is a member of PRIDE. PRIDE youth designed and proposed a model for a toddler swing. PRIDE youth were also involved in the construction and placement of the frame at the city park. PRIDE seniors were involved in making pies for the soup supper, and many PRIDE members volunteered time and service for the fund-raiser. Pride coordinated securing donations, painting, and hanging the bucket seats to finalize the toddler swing project. This project impacted the community by increasing the livability of the Grinnell community by improving the park area. It will be a recreational addition for youngsters in and those visiting the community to enjoy. PRIDE will continue to help with the implementation of the park long range plan.

Lakin - Covered Picnic Areas – What’s a park without picnic tables and a shelter to put them under? Lakin PRIDE had developed Ad McVey Park with a walking path, and skate board and playground equipment. In a survey of the Lakin community, the desire for more picnic tables and a shelter surfaced as a priority. The survey showed that Osborn Park was also in need of picnic tables, a shelter, and playground equipment. To fund the project, the committee submitted a grant proposal to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Local Government Outdoor Recreation Grant Program. They were awarded a 50/50 matching grant, which meant that the PRIDE committee needed to raise \$25,000. Through memorial money, donations, and fund raisers, PRIDE was to attain the money required. With the completion of the picnic areas in both McVey and Osborn Parks, the residents of Lakin now have not only one, but two places with beautiful, covered, picnic facilities to use for a variety of purposes. Since the shelter’s completion, there has been a noticeable increase in the use of the picnic facilities at both locations, and the comments from the community have been overwhelmingly positive.



Lakin

Lenora - Veteran Database – Lenora PRIDE has been putting a veteran's flags at each veteran's grave on Memorial Day for several years. During this time it was found that maps were old, difficult to read, and often incomplete. Individuals volunteered to walk the cemetery to make new maps. In the process of recreating the maps of the veteran's graves, the group decided that using photos of the headstones would make placement of flags easier. So a team not only worked on new maps, but also took pictures of all the veteran's headstones. Next, a group was formed to create a computer database housing all this new information along with the ability to print the maps used by the Memorial Day flag placement volunteers. As the project continued to grow it was decided to create a veteran's database so that the public could have access to it at the Lenora Public Library. What started out to be a simple redoing of Memorial Day volunteer flag placement maps became a computerized information database on all the veterans, containing names, dates of birth, dates of death, location, pictures of headstones, and obituaries. The program is capable of printing all the information for public use and provides a history of veterans buried in the Lenora Cemetery.



Lenora

Olsburg - Community Swimming Pool – Several years ago, members of the Olsburg community began looking for a way to occupy the children's leisure time in a safe and healthy way during the summer months. It was decided that a swimming pool was just what the community needed. A \$50,000 private donation started off the fund raising and from there Olsburg citizens got busy planning and working to raise the additional \$33,000 in funds needed to complete the project. It was a total community effort from the very beginning. Community members put in hundreds of hours of volunteer work on the pool house, the pool, the concrete work, and the landscaping. The people of Olsburg also opened their pocketbooks and gave from their hearts to make the pool a reality. With the pool construction completed, PRIDE has helped to offer swimming lessons, as well as water aerobics. People who attend water aerobics enjoy the health benefits as well as the shared experience. Children now have recreation and exercise in a safe, supervised environment for the summer months. The pool also provides summer jobs for adults and teens alike. The pool has proven to be a real asset to the community.



Olsburg

Potwin - Potwin Arts and Community Education (PACE) – Movie Night — The city of Potwin received a Community Block Development Grant (CDBG) to refurbish the Community House several years ago, but it hasn't been used as much the community would like. The stage and seating area, in particular, had been used very little. Interest was expressed in showing movies once a month, since the city doesn't have a movie theater. The Potwin PRIDE Inc. steering committee worked to activate the non-functioning Potwin Arts and Community Education Group that had some funds for community activities. A new P.A.C.E. committee was organized and made a presentation to the Potwin City Council to use the facility once a month to show movies or have other entertainment. The city council approved the proposal. P.A.C.E has sponsored movie night and other activities at the Community House once a month for the last 16 months.

576 people have attended the movies and 60 or more people were in attendance at each of the December Christmas activity nights which have included Christmas caroling, a visit from Santa Claus, a movie, and free hot chocolate and cookies. More than 60 people attended the talent show in July that included many youth from the community as well as adults. Many organizations helped provide homemade ice cream to sell between the talent show and movie. Movie night is a great way to use a facility and bring people of Potwin together.

More than 87,435 hours
of volunteer activity was
invested in community
improvement through
Kansas PRIDE in this
program year.

Stockton - Neighborhood Park – The Stockton PRIDE provided the manpower and expertise to landscape a newly constructed neighborhood park. Recruiting the needed skills and willing workers, PRIDE invested numerous workdays and many hours of planning over the course of the 15 months that was required to convert the barren lots to a well landscaped park. The construction of fences, a large fully accessible gazebo, and walkways were all part of the project. The new park, located near the senior care facility, offers an attractive, relaxing environment for manor residents, their families, and neighborhood residents alike. The finished product was a welcome addition to the city of Stockton's park system.



Stockton

2006 Community of Excellence Award Recipients

The Community of Excellence Award is awarded to communities that are following 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 wishes of the community
- Creative use of local and external resources
- Successful completion of projects
- Shared leadership and shared recognition for success
- Open meetings and broad citizen involvement
- Developed plans for community improvement
- Established partnerships and collaborative efforts

The following communities were visited and evaluated in the spring of 2005 and have been selected by the evaluation teams to receive the Community of Excellence Award to recognize their success.

Alton – The people of Alton are not new to the idea of being designated as a “Community of Excellence.” This will be their 7th evaluation year that they have earned bragging rights to the title! Alton PRIDE truly has the community needs at heart. A good example of their commitment to community was the PRIDE bake sale. Not only did the PRIDE members help organize and oversee the bake sale, Alton PRIDE then matched the funds raised through the sale and donated all the proceeds to the local EMT’s! Community garage sales, clean-up projects, fundraisers, celebrations, reading tutoring, and community promotion are only a few examples of the 29 projects that Alton PRIDE tackled in the 2006 program year. Alton PRIDE continues to show the incredible impact that a community volunteer program can have on a community!

Almena – Operating a newspaper is full-time work. Yet, somehow, Almena PRIDE not only finds ways to keep the Prairie Dog Press running, they are often also the instigators of the news they print! This year Almena PRIDE expanded by creating a “Junior PRIDE” program. Through a series of community pancake suppers, the “senior” PRIDE group was able to work with the junior PRIDE members to raise funds to support the junior PRIDE’s trail creation and park improvement projects. Other projects this year for Almena PRIDE included volunteering with the senior center, library, and the community center. Almena PRIDE provides an example of unselfish, collaborative work that not only improves the physical place, but also strengthens community and invests in people. With the support of the Norton County Extension office, Almena PRIDE continues to look to the future and work to create a better community.

Beattie – The city park reflects the pride of citizens of Beattie. Through a phased, planned approach, the PRIDE group of Beattie has transformed the park with rest rooms, trails, play equipment, and landscaping. Making the park safe and handicap accessible was an important way the PRIDE group could invest in the people of Beattie. While the park is a visible symbol of their work, much of what Beattie PRIDE does is less visible. The group has implemented surveys, worked with the city library, collaborated on improvement projects with the museum, worked with the FFA, and supported the Beattie Alumni Association. In this program year, the Beattie PRIDE group was involved in the information gathering and public discussions that surrounded the sale of the city-owned school building to an organization that will use the building as a private school for students with special needs. Due in part to the open way it was addressed, the community is looking forward to the new use of the building and the jobs, housing, and energy the new venture will bring to Beattie.

Burns – Many rural Kansas communities are struggling with empty buildings on their main street. Burns wishes they had some more. Empty building space in Burns is looked upon as an opportunity. In addition to the relatively recent café expansion, the furniture store, the Prairie Arts building, and the Soda Pop Hair Shop – the latest use of empty storefront on the main street was the creation of new city offices and relocation of the city library. Working with local funds and USDA Rural Development funds, the city of Burns was able to move their library into a larger space, and provide much needed space for the city offices. The main street is linked together with the PRIDE brick walkway, and the new limestone benches and windmill in the corner park reflect that Burns knows how to create PRIDE!



Burns

Cunningham – Cunningham PRIDE is organized for success. PRIDE committee membership represents the school, the bank, the city, youth, and local business. Adopting the projects identified through surveys, and using the network of organizational resources represented in their core group, the Cunningham PRIDE program is an effective team for community improvement! Working like “social glue,” the PRIDE group delivers welcome baskets to newcomers; provides recognition to the Yard of the Week; helps with celebrations and fund raisers; and serves as a community promotion team. Purchasing a highway message center was one of the ways that the community could keep informed about upcoming events. Cunningham PRIDE works diligently to boost pride in all aspects of living in Cunningham!

Kansas PRIDE communities worked collaboratively with 297 agencies and organizations for community betterment.

Greeley – Saying “Thank you” to volunteers helps members of the community recognize who is really pitching in to help improve the town. Saying “thank you” also helps retain and recruit more volunteers and helps to celebrate the progress that has been made in community improvement. But when Greeley PRIDE hosts a “thank you” banquet, it is really because they sincerely just want to say THANK YOU! Greeley PRIDE hosts annual appreciation and recognition events and realizes that service can take many forms. The PRIDE group thanks project volunteers, sponsoring organizations, supporters, advertisers, other community groups, community volunteers like the EMTs and fire department; elected officials; and those in service to our country! This PRIDE group understands that people and relationships are the heart of what make community. Greeley PRIDE works to build community by identifying public priorities and inviting others in to work on projects.

Grinnell – What can a group of community volunteers do to help community businesses thrive? The answer was pretty obvious in Grinnell this year as they presented the Home Town Grocery store with a check in the amount of \$2,000 from the community raffle. After working with the grocery to identify ways to improve the store and service, the PRIDE group went to work to help support the identified improvements. The money will help with the purchase of an awning and storefront updating. This was one of 25 projects the Grinnell PRIDE group tackled in 2006. Another significant project for Grinnell was a collaborative effort with the city and school to add toddler swings to the city park. Add to this the community celebrations, Christmas caroling, youth events, and fund raisers for ongoing support, and it is clear that the Grinnell PRIDE group continues to create a community of excellence!



Grinnell

Highland – Highland PRIDE sets their goals categorically. Under “Organizational Development” they detail goals for fund raising, recognition of volunteers and services, and organizational improvement. They also have a list of project goals for the category of “Community and Economic Development,” and goals for “Community Enrichment.” Highland PRIDE’s comprehensive approach to community improvement leaves evaluators amazed. How can a volunteer group accomplish this list of more than 50 community project goals? Their answer is “shared leadership.” Through partnering with the city, the historical society, the museum, the community college, the schools, and other community groups, Highland PRIDE serves as a catalyst and spark for community improvement. Highland PRIDE shares this wisdom: “Looking ahead is a great way to keep from falling behind!” Highland PRIDE continues to prove that excellence in the community can be achieved through planning and involvement!



Highland

Lakin – When the Lakin PRIDE members walk out of their meetings in the Kearny County Extension Office, something is about to happen! In addition to the ongoing projects and maintenance, like keeping the trees watered on the highway, park maintenance and improvement, and Web site updating; the PRIDE group also is hosting new projects and events. This year the Santa Fe Trails Day was a new partnership between PRIDE and the Santa Fe Trail Committee. This event helped to recapture the history of the area while providing fun opportunities for families to socialize. Lakin PRIDE is not afraid to tackle bigger projects, as it demonstrated this year by taking on the creation of another community park. Lakin PRIDE is improving the physical community, investing in social and cultural events, and is supporting local business – all indications excellent work for a community improvement group!



Lakin

Melvern – Melvern PRIDE efforts reflect the investment they are making in the health and well-being of the community. This is demonstrated through the development and continuous improvement of the community fitness center, through “Meth” lab awareness event, and through the support of the Heartland Shares program. The PRIDE group invests in highlighting the history of the community through hosting Kansas Humanities speakers, and serving the Alumni Banquet. They invest in the social and cultural activities of the community through the annual 4-H fair, Fall Festival, and Sunflower Days. And the PRIDE group invests in the physical community itself through clean-up events, park projects, and community building improvements. Throughout the year, the Melvern PRIDE program provides social activities and services to improve the community.

Through local fund raisers, Kansas PRIDE communities raised more than \$269,000 to reinvest for the betterment of their communities in the 2006 Program Year.

Mount Hope – The Mount Hope PRIDE group provides a whirlwind of activity for the community. Blood drives, Heartland Share coordination, computer classes, community soccer coordination, youth recreation programs, and monthly youth meetings are only a part of the on-going schedule for this busy PRIDE group! Working with the Community Resource Program support, Mount Hope PRIDE is matching skilled people in the community with opportunities to teach, coach, and mentor others. Often working out of the community park shelter house (a previous PRIDE improvement effort), Mount Hope PRIDE is providing programs and outreach to serve youth and families living in the community!

Olsburg – Through the monthly newsletter, Olsburg PRIDE promotes new and existing business, links residents to service providers, offers news on community events, welcomes new members into the community (including birth announcements), shares historical events and perspectives, and celebrates and mourns the events of life of the people of the community. The Olsburg newsletter reflects the pulse of life in the community. But the newsletter is only one of the many projects Olsburg PRIDE is involved with. The fundraising, design, and building of the new city swimming pool was a big project for the community – and the effort sparked renewed involvement in town. Olsburg PRIDE is motivated, inclusive, broad-thinking, and invested in the community. Olsburg PRIDE is continually proving that it is truly a community of excellence!



Olsburg

Potwin – Having the mayor of the community linked closely with the PRIDE group is one way of ensuring things get done! Potwin PRIDE works closely with the city to adopt and implement projects that are important to the city. Following feedback from their survey, community goals are established. Then, working closely with the other groups, businesses, and organizations in the community, the group gets busy! Potwin PRIDE undertook 54 projects this year! The projects include: Plant a Row for the Hungry; a new fire truck for the volunteer fire department; Heartland Shares; Businessman's, Newcomer's and Volunteer's Banquet; Youth events; and community events like the Watermelon Days. Potwin has fun with their work, and this year has hosted community movie night in their newly remodeled community center. Potwin PRIDE continues to have a profound effect on the lives of the people of the community through their service, commitment to community, and outreach.

Valley Community – If you look on your Kansas map for Valley Community, you will not find it. The people of Gaylord, Cedar, and Harlan recognized that they all shared area services and were all a part of the area community. Now, working together, the Valley Community PRIDE group is pushing forward – and this year is recognized for their excellence in their community improvement work! The Valley Community PRIDE group is a wonderful collaborative effort that encourages and recognizes volunteerism, coordinates and promotes area celebrations, and works together to welcome newcomers to the area. Through their joint newsletter, the three communities share news and area events. Serving more than 160 people at their Turkey Dinner shows how this shared community effort can bring people together. The Valley Community PRIDE also works on area improvement by hosting highway pickups, park improvements, and community projects. Congratulations on being recognized as a community of excellence!



Valley Community

PRIDE Sponsors

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

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