

KANSAS PRIDE

2009 ANNUAL REVIEW



**KANSAS
PRIDE ...
Builds
Community**

**Involves
Youth**

**Encourages
Participation**

**Celebrates
Uniqueness**

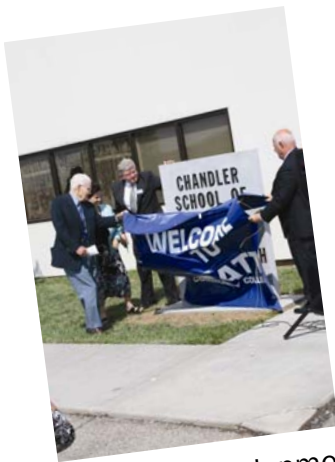
**Creates
Partnerships**

**Recognizes
Success**



***Building Better
Communities***

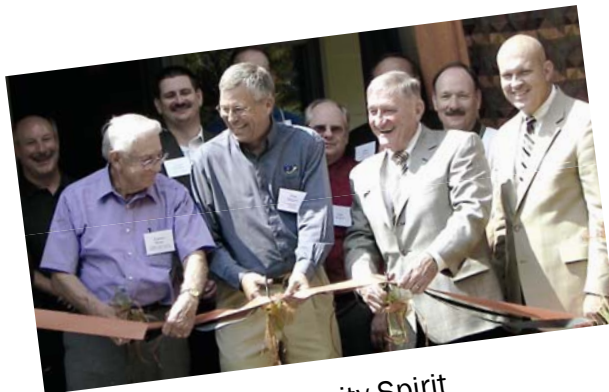
Kansas Bankers Association **Proud Supporters of the** **Kansas PRIDE Program**



Community Development



Community Leadership



Community Spirit



Community Involvement

Kansas PRIDE Program

The Kansas PRIDE program is a community-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 multiple aspects of community life. Enrolled communities are asked to examine the local social, economic, and physical environment by completing a community assessment. This process helps residents become involved in discussions about the current community status and to identify priority 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 recognize those communities that are successful in creating better Kansas communities.

Community PRIDE Groups are Encouraged to:

- ◆ Assess community needs and opportunities
- ◆ Develop community partnerships
- ◆ Provide opportunities for increased citizen involvement
- ◆ Expand leadership opportunities
- ◆ Identify plans for sustainable community development
- ◆ Recognize volunteers for their efforts
- ◆ Initiate the creation of a shared community vision
- ◆ Identify and utilize community assets
- ◆ Elevate community spirit
- ◆ Network with other communities
- ◆ Establish measurable goals
- ◆ Document community success

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



September 2009

Dear PRIDE Members, Sponsors and Friends;

During the past year, the number of communities enrolled in the Kansas PRIDE Program has grown to 70 and more than 1,200 projects focused on community health, cultural enhancement, leadership and economic growth were initiated. This past year, PRIDE groups collectively reported collaborative efforts with 644 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 85,000 volunteer hours into their communities, which translates into more than one and a half million dollars worth of volunteer labor (according to the Independent Sector for Kansas).

As a member of Kansas PRIDE's Board of Directors, I have developed a great sense of appreciation for the local leaders and volunteers who donate their time, energy and often their personal finances to improve the communities they call home. I continue to be awed by the strong sense of community exhibited by local PRIDE volunteers and I admire the high level of commitment among local PRIDE group leaders for preserving and developing the best aspects of their individual hometowns.

It has been an honor to serve as Chairperson of the Kansas PRIDE Board of Directors during the past two years and I am confident the momentum that has been built by PRIDE's Board of Directors will continue in the years that lie ahead. I can assure you that PRIDE's Board of Directors is committed to providing the funding resources needed to recognize the outstanding achievements that are a product of matching local PRIDE leadership with support from Kansas State University Extension and the Kansas Department of Commerce.

On behalf of PRIDE's Board of Directors, thank you for the dedication and commitment that you have given to the Kansas PRIDE program this past year, and I hope you will renew your commitment to Kansas PRIDE and to your community as we look to 2010.

Sincerely,

Doug Wareham
2009 Board Chairperson
Kansas PRIDE, Inc.

Kansas PRIDE Inc. Board of Directors

Members who served on the board during the 2008-2009 PRIDE year include representatives of sponsoring corporations and organizations, PRIDE community 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

Colin Hanson

Kansas Municipal Utilities, Inc.

Dan Morin

Kansas Medical Society

Pam Stone

Kansas Gas Service Company

James Wright

Midwest Energy

Kim Winn

League of Kansas Municipalities

Sarah Meyer

Kansas Association of Counties

Charles Wilderson

Basehor PRIDE

Jim Irey

Melvorn PRIDE

Sandy Williams

Eskridge PRIDE

Lois Loucks

Onaga PRIDE

Betty Lewis

Highland PRIDE

Scott Lewis

Park City PRIDE

Ken Harsha

Lakin PRIDE

Becky Dunlap

Beattie PRIDE

Tracey Taylor

Rossville PRIDE

Dean Schmidt

Potwin PRIDE

Dr. Daryl Buchholz

K-State Research and Extension

Carole Jordan

Kansas Department of Commerce

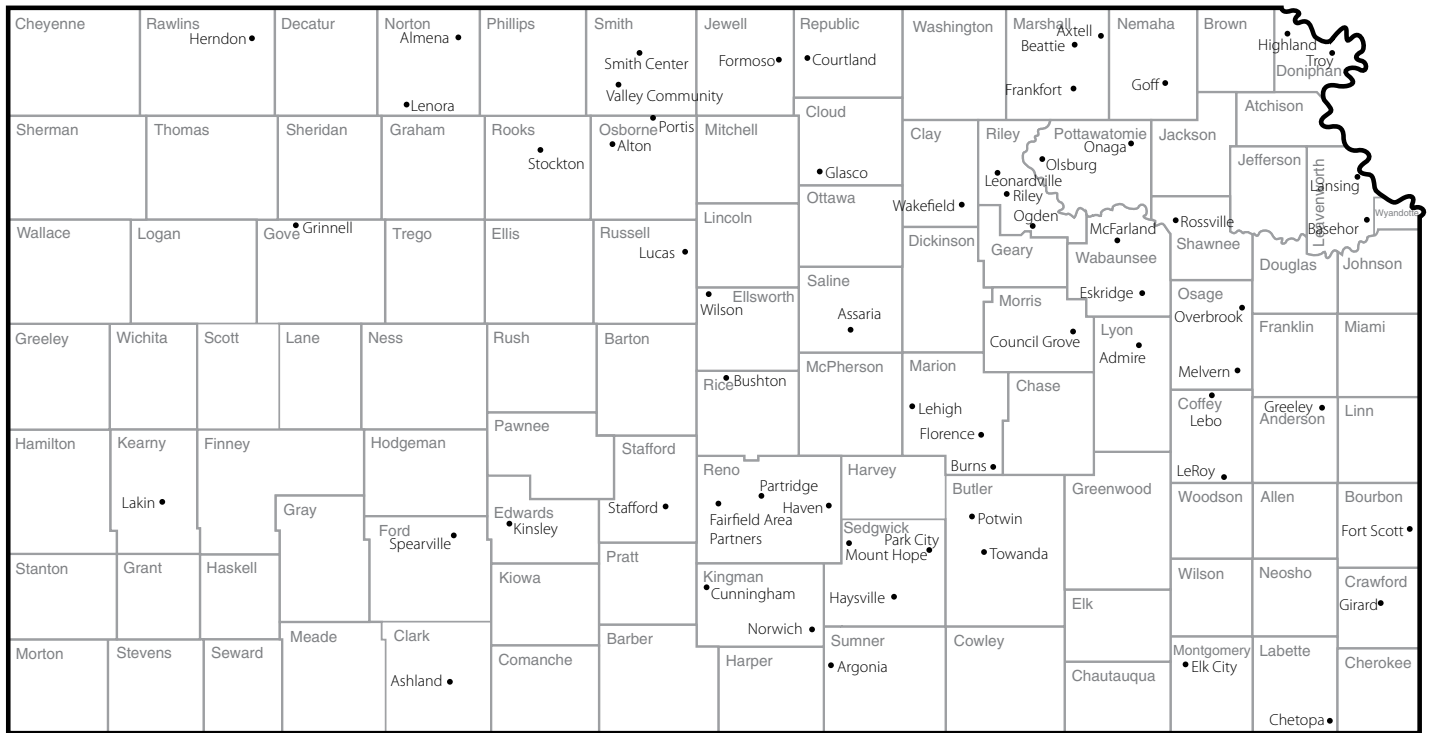
Jaime Menon

K-State Research and Extension

PRIDE Impacts Communities

In the 2008-2009 PRIDE program year, 70 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.

2009 PRIDE Communities *(enrolled as of 7/1/08)*



Admire (177) LY	Fairfield Area Partners* RN	Lakin (2,316) KE	Portis (123) OB
Almena (469) NT	(*Abbyville, Arlington,	Lansing (9,199) LV	Potwin (457) BU
Alton (117) OB	Langdon, Plevna, Sylvia and	Lebo (931) CF	Riley (886) RL
Argonia (534) SU	Turon)	Lehigh (208) MN	Rossville (1,014) SN
Ashland (975) CA	Florence (671) MN	Lenora (306) NT	Smith Center (1,663) SM
Assaria (449) SA	Formoso (129) JW	Leonardville (398) RL	Spearville (813) FO
Axtell (445) MC	Fort Scott (8,297) BB	LeRoy (593) CF	Stafford (1,161) SF
Basehor (2,238) LV	Frankfort (855) MC	Lucas (436) RS	Stockton (1,558) RO
Beattie (227) MS	Girard (2,773) CR	McFarland (270) WB	Towanda (1,338) BU
Burns (268) MN	Glasco (536) CD	Melvorn (429) OS	Troy (1,054) DP
Bushton (314) RC	Goff (181) NM	Mount Hope (830) SG	Wakefield (838) CY
Chetopa (1,124) LB	Greeley (327) AN	Norwich (551) KM	Wilson (765) EW
Council Grove (2,321) MR	Grinnell (329) GO	Ogden (1,878) RL	Valley Community** (346)
Courtland (334) RP	Haven (1,161) RN	Olsburg (192) PT	SM
Cunningham (514) KM	Haysville (8,502) SG	Onaga (704) PT	(**Gaylord, Harlan and
Elk City (305) MG	Herndon (149) RA	Overbrook (947) OS	Cedar)
Eskridge (589) WB	Highland (976) DP	Park City (5,814) SG	
	Kinsley (1658) ED	Partridge (255) RN	

Youth Recognition Awards

Community Service Award

Developing an appreciation for the value of community service is one way to help ensure the sustainability of community. Each year, the Kansas PRIDE program recognizes young people that have given of their time, skills, and talents to make an investment in their hometown. The Youth Community Service Award provides an opportunity for these young people to be recognized for their volunteer service. The award is presented to youth nominated by their community PRIDE group. Kansas PRIDE, Inc. would like to recognize the following youth for their outstanding community service. The 2009 Youth Community Service Awards are sponsored by Casey's General Store.

Kayla Field (Almena) Kayla's ever-present smile is a familiar sight to many in Almena as she works with citizens of all ages on community improvement projects. In addition to her full load of school activities, athletics, dance team, FFA, and 4-H, Kayla has found time to help with community cleanups, delivering cookies to shut-ins, working for her church, babysitting for parents attending parent-teacher conferences, and has helped raise \$500 for the new community building. She is involved in many projects that have a positive impact on Almena, and the community is very appreciative of her efforts.



Kayla Field



Karissa Pankratz

Karissa Pankratz (Argonia) Throughout the last four years Karissa has been dedicated to the improvement of her community. This year she has been involved in the Kansas Association for Youth, where she has worked on a recycling project and raised money for UNICEF. She has helped host five blood drives, delivers meals on wheels to the elderly, and is active as a mentor to a fifth grader. In addition to her community service, she has provided volunteer service to her school's athletic program. Her actions have helped keep her community and the environment clean, created the chance for lives to be saved through blood donation, and helped provide a positive role model for younger children. Karissa has earned this recognition by her outstanding community service.

Shannon Orth (Bushton) Shannon has invested more than 80 hours of service to Bushton PRIDE. Her work has included everything from helping hide Easter eggs to being involved with the installation of new playground equipment at the park. She also helped with fundraising for the playground project. In addition to her work with PRIDE, she mows lawns for those who are not able to do it for themselves, picks up trash along the highway with the FFA chapter, and helps her family renovate properties to keep affordable housing available in their community. It is easy to see that Shannon's involvement makes a big difference in Bushton!



Shannon Orth



Megan Schoendaler

Megan Schoendaler (Grinnell) Megan has always been willing to participate in community improvement activities, whether through Youth PRIDE, school, or her church youth group. She has helped with the Youth PRIDE Easter Egg Hunt, serves as treasurer for Youth PRIDE, worked at the Harvest Fest concession stand, and participated in a community trash pickup. In addition she gives assistance to several elderly by watering their gardens and yards, shoveling snow and helping them care for their pets. Megan is the treasurer for her freshman class. Megan is working on improving her leadership skills by attending the Kansas Youth Leadership Academy at Fort Hays State University. With these skills and Megan's willingness to help wherever she is needed, her community is grateful for the service she provides.

Mykel Seirer (Lucas) Mykel has become a role model for young adults in his community. He teaches by example, maintains high academic achievement, has received awards in both music and sports, and has been active in several community service projects, such as clean-up days, festival parade, and youth activities. He helped the Lions Club with the youth recreational baseball program. He has worked with his classmates to organize and implement fundraisers for the school. Through his work as president of his church youth group, he has helped with Easter sunrise services, youth rallies, community clean-up, and providing assistance for the elderly. He has also committed time every other weekend to volunteer at the community owned Cinema Theater. Mykel's dedication to community volunteerism has inspired many other youth to participate in community betterment.



Mykel Seirer



Melissa Jansen

Melissa Jansen (Stafford) Melissa has been showing personal commitment to PRIDE community projects since she was eight years old. As she has matured and honed her talents, she has taken on more responsibility and become increasingly more involved in activities. She has been the teen youth leader with Stafford PRIDE's "Get-It - Do-It!" grants for the past two years. She has attended leadership training and community fitness training at Rock Springs Ranch so she was better equipped to conduct a community wide "Get Moving" fitness program. In addition she is an entrepreneur in the Stafford Economic and Entrepreneur Development program where she has developed a T-shirt screen printing service for the community. Melissa is a quiet, introspective leader; she steadily goes about getting the work done while she encourages others to work in partnership to accomplish more!

Honorable Mention

Chris Davenport (Fort Scott) Chris is a very busy 8th grade student at Fort Scott Middle School. He has worked on 20 of the 23 PRIDE projects, earning first place in his grade for earning PRIDE points! He has worked on the downtown Halloween parade, led pumpkin carving at an adult care home, helped at the Fort Scott National Historic Site, worked at the Beacon benefit soup line, and donated baked goods and other items for projects. He has encouraged his friends to sign up and participate in projects. Chris is no newcomer to PRIDE, he has won first place in PRIDE all three years at the middle school. Kansas PRIDE and the Fort Scott community are pleased to recognize Chris for his efforts and encourage him to stay involved and make a difference in his community.



Chris Davenport

PRIDE Youth Leadership Award

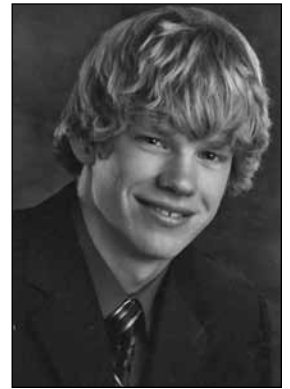
The Youth Leadership Award recognizes young people who have demonstrated leadership skills through addressing a community issue, proposing a new idea and organizing team efforts to implement the idea; thereby helping to resolve a community issues or inspiring others to community service. The following individuals have demonstrated those leadership characteristics and were selected for the PRIDE Youth Leadership Award. The 2009 Youth Leadership Awards are sponsored by Casey's General Store.

Melody Dickman (Grinnell) Melody has demonstrated her leadership qualities through many projects, but in particular by taking the lead with the annual Easter egg hunt, making sure there were plenty of eggs filled and hidden for the younger kids to find. She has also been a leader in the Harvest Fest concessions. She uses her leadership skills to get and keep people on track to complete the job at hand; at the same time she motivates others by keeping things fun and by setting a good example! Melody also has been involved in city-wide clean-up efforts, mowing, playing the organ, singing in the church choir, helping out with summer swimming lessons and much more. Her work has had an impressive impact on this small community.



Melody Dickman

Brennan McNickle (Stafford) Brennan exemplifies his leadership ability at multiple settings in the school and in the community. He has a knack of coming up with good ideas, and also can organize, facilitate, and follow through to the completion of the project. This last year Brennan worked twice a week with 25 students in an after-school program on rocketry. His after-school program helped motivate more students to attend the after-school program and have fun, while participating in hands-on learning. He was able to relate to the students and help them set project goals, while modeling good goal setting techniques. Brennan is a tremendous role model for the students as well as the whole community. Furthermore, through his involvement in FFA, he has been helping build the relations with the community for continued support of school activities and projects by serving as a positive representative for the teens involved in this group.



Brennan McNickle

Volunteers provided more than 85,231 volunteer hours of service to community improvement projects through PRIDE in the 2008-2009 program year. That is the equivalent of 10,654 eight hour days of work, or 41 years of full-time work.

Honorable Mention

Tia Dougherty (Lucas) Tia has gained the respect of other community youth as she implements activities for the youth at the annual community festival. She also serves as president of her class, and as captain of her team in sports settings. Tia volunteers in her church, community, and school. She has helped with the Community Theater, worked on fund-raising projects for her church, is on the honor roll and was selected by her peers as the 2008-2009 homecoming queen. As Tia gives her time to the community, her reward is to see the younger youth continuing her work as a leader in community activities. Tia has used her leadership to encourage so many youth to step up and give their time and talents as well.



Tia Dougherty

Hannah Hawks (Almena) Hannah has been a member of the Northern Valley High School PRIDE organization since the group was formed. She has served in many leadership positions and has organized groups of her peers in setting and completing their common goals. Not only does she lead by example in PRIDE, but she also is active in cheerleading, dance, sports, and forensics. She is not only a role model in community service; but also is a National Honor Society Scholar. Recently she has been leading the effort of Jr. PRIDE in producing a brochure designed to promote the community. Hannah realizes that every person in a community is important and that there is much work to be done if the community is to thrive. Her realization of this has helped her live the motto of the local school system: "Making the best – better!"

PRIDE STAR Projects

Each year the PRIDE program recognizes outstanding community projects submitted by PRIDE communities. The projects may be of any type, and are rated on how well they address a community need; demonstrate a high level of citizen involvement; and enhance the quality of life in the community (impact). These community projects are submitted for recognition to the PRIDE program. A volunteer evaluation team reviews the nominations and provides recommendations to assist the community in improvement efforts in the future. The STAR project evaluation process thus serves as both an education and recognition process. We thank all the communities that submitted STAR nominations for their commitment to continuous learning and for their investment in community improvement! The 2009 PRIDE STAR Awards are sponsored by Black Hills Energy and Rainbow Telecommunications.

Cunningham – Knowing the relationship between quality parks and community quality of life, Cunningham PRIDE has had an interest in community parks for a number of years. The community park areas provide a place for residents to gather and socialize in their community, exercise on a regular basis, and provide a landmark for travelers to remember the community. This year, Cunningham PRIDE took on reviving a vacant lot on Main Street to create a quality park area. Many community members donated their time and talents to work to complete the Daffron Park project on a vacant lot that had been donated to PRIDE. Landscaping, a gazebo, and six memorial lights transformed the empty lot into a



Cunningham

In the 2008-2009 program year, Kansas PRIDE communities raised \$900,712 for community improvement projects.

peaceful, attractive corner park. A host of volunteers were recruited for the park project, including students from the local schools and local contractors who donated their time and talent toward the lighting and construction. Trees were planted through Arbor Day activities involving the city Tree Board. The park has added to the aesthetics of Cunningham Main Street and provides an inviting place to rest. Good planning, collaborative work, and a valuable physical improvement in the downtown of Cunningham makes this a great STAR project!

Elk City – Improving and protecting natural resources is fundamental to a healthy, quality community. Establishing a recycling program for the Elk City area was selected as a PRIDE project because of increasing local interest. A local church group had been leading a local recycling effort, but asked PRIDE to help with the expanding demand for recycling. The Elk City PRIDE Committee sought and received the support of the city council to expand the area recycling effort. About a dozen adult volunteers and several children were on hand to accept the bags of recyclable items on the first collection day. Workers were eager to smash plastic containers, carry bags of recyclables to the trailer, or chase down wayward items blown by the wind. The amount of recyclables brought in on the first collection date overwhelmed everyone and they were glad that it was not going into the landfill. As community support for recycling has gained interest, the numbers of volunteers working to recycle have also grown. Many of the volunteers are youth. Recycling provides work for everyone, which helps volunteers feel ownership in the success. Even though it was once called trash, the recycling project has brought together many people in the community, both young and old, for the common cause of improving the environment!



Elk City

Glasco – Glasco PRIDE chose to participate in the Get It – Do It! Healthy Community Initiative through the Kansas PRIDE office because it would enhance the community’s determination to improve the health and well-being of all Glasco citizens! An initial assessment of community health needs and existing resources highlighted the existence of many facilities in the community. Some were under-utilized; others were in need of updating or repair. Glasco citizens organized to tackle this challenge from several directions. High school youth developed a walking program for K-8th grade students. The high schoolers then expanded the program to include swimming, biking, and walking in the second year. The Walk Kansas fitness program saw five Glasco teams on the road, walking 3,900 miles this year! The city supported work to improve the tennis courts at the park and scheduled time at the city swimming pool for adult water exercise classes. Through motivation, training, improved resources, and planned events, Glasco has taken meaningful steps toward becoming a healthier community.



Glasco

Goff – On May 1, 2009 hundreds of books became available for enjoyment to the people in the Goff area. To make books more accessible to people in Goff and the surrounding area, Goff PRIDE began spearheading a project to develop the Goff Honors Library. PRIDE coordinated fund raisers and book drives. In all, more than \$4,000 of cash and materials were donated in addition to countless hours of volunteer time. Over a four-year period, a dark, unfinished storeroom in the Goff Exercise Center has been converted into an attractive home for the Goff Honors Library. The transformation of space required walls, ceilings, and floors, as well as new lighting and shelving. While PRIDE will provide some oversight, the library is operated by the honor system — hence its name. The month of May coordinates with May 5, 1934, when the Goff Women’s Club opened the first known library in Goff. It is not known how long that library was in operation, but the Honors Library of Goff is a continuation of the spirit of that library that was started 75 years ago.



Goff



Greeley

Greeley – The Greeley PRIDE “Fun in the Park” project was identified to fill a long-standing need for more and safer equipment for the children in the community. PRIDE community surveys had indicated a need for better facilities and additional play equipment in the City Park. The Greeley PRIDE group decided to meet this need and enlisted the support of other groups and organizations in the community. Working together the community was able to raise the funds to purchase and install the equipment. Greeley PRIDE was responsible for purchasing some of the equipment and they held a chili supper to raise funds. Parents in the community, a day care provider, and the church are just a few of the groups and citizens that now use the park. People continue to express their delight in being able to sit in the park and enjoy the rose gardens while the children play.

More than \$1.7 million of volunteer time was invested in Kansas communities through local PRIDE volunteers in the 2008-2009 program year. (\$1,725,928 based on 2008 values established by The Independent Sector www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)

Grinnell – The combination of the need to renovate the community bulletin board on Main Street and add a new entrance sign to the recently completed walking trail at the Grinnell City Park created a need for the Grinnell PRIDE “Signs of the Times” project. The original community bulletin board was constructed in the 1980s as a means to communicate information about upcoming events to the public. Since its origination, this message board has become a symbol of community PRIDE and inclusion. After nearly 30 years, the bulletin board was in need of replacement. PRIDE also recognized the need for another sign in the community. A major feature of the city of Grinnell’s recent park improvement project was to create a walking trail. This trail needed an entrance sign. PRIDE funded the cost of materials and helped to mobilize volunteers for both sign projects. In addition to the involvement of the city, the “Signs of the Times” project involved many community volunteers. The city of Grinnell council and staff, Grinnell Middle School vocational educational teacher and students, a metal fabrication business owner, and several local businesses all assisted the Grinnell PRIDE to complete this project. Working through PRIDE, Grinnell was able to provide a consistency in signage and network and collaborate with a number of community organizations.



Grinnell



Melvern

Melvern – Melvern PRIDE enjoys serving people. All year, Melvern PRIDE asks for and receives support from community members for projects in and around the area ... time and time again. Melvern PRIDE wanted some way to say, “Thanks for being a great community and for supporting one another.” That is the way the Free Thanksgiving Dinner started a few years ago. From it, the “Christmas Box Project” grew. There was an opportunity to serve others in the community, especially the young and very old, during the holiday season. By working with other organizations and individuals, the community was able to make the Christmas season joyous for entire families. More than 3,000 pounds of food was distributed in 50 boxes of food, essentials, and gifts to families in the community. The effort reached 95 children and 120 adults. One anonymous family from a neighboring town donated \$1,200.

To see so many people receive so many pounds of food and gifts was a great community builder. The families could hardly believe that the community was providing all of this for them. When delivering a Christmas Box to one senior lady in Melvern, the two men taking the items to the door were met with “but this cannot all be for me no one has ever done this for me before.” Crying she thanked them for stopping by. Over and over grateful families extended sincere thanks. The entire community should be proud for reaching out to those in need. The youth, churches, businesses, organizations, and Melvern PRIDE were all involved in this effort.

Portis – In 2006, a Portis PRIDE survey asked local citizens what projects were most important to their community. At the top of the “community wish list” was a shelter house for the City Park. For years the park had hosted family and class reunions, entertainment events, and church picnics. However, there was no permanent structure with seating available to provide comfort and protection from the elements for such assemblies. Portis PRIDE coordinated with the city council to select a site in the park for the new shelter. A local business donated their services to draw plans for the project and the PRIDE members acquired materials and set to work. A vast array of individuals assisted with the project ranging from retirees to teens and individuals to businesses. The result of all this effort is a cement block shelter house with a bright green roof to be named the Scott Noel Memorial Shelter House in honor of a local farmer. A dedication ceremony was held and the park was filled with more than 100 people including Scott Noel’s family members who expressed gratitude for this gesture of community support. In the days since, countless groups have enjoyed using the shelter house. The dream of local citizens is now a reality, and thanks to the Portis PRIDE, this structure greatly enhances the shared activities that keep the Portis community strong.



Portis

Rossville – Rossville PRIDE’s Native Plant Rain Garden is the most visible benefit of their participation in the Kansas PRIDE’s Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities program. On the surface, a rain garden provides control and filtering of rain water from parking lots and other structures, but for Rossville, it represents a passion to assure long-term survival, or sustainability as an environmentally healthy and economically growing community. After collecting assessment information in six core areas, the rain garden team presented the findings to the entire community at a public meeting. The team then asked the community to identify the core values and visions to be used in guiding the community into the future. Next, the community identified 20 key projects to move the community forward. A rain garden was a top priority. From the first planning meeting to the designing phase with two truly gifted students from the K-State Department of Landscape Architecture; through the actual construction and finally the instillation of car stops and plant markers, the project has included preschoolers, teenagers, parents, grandparents, local contractors, and government officials. Not only do individuals visit the rain garden to enjoy its beauty, but local and state organizations are using it as a demonstration to educate others on water quality protection!



Rossville



Spearville

Spearville – Since Spearville PRIDE completed the Greenstreet Park playground project, the community no longer describes the park and equipment as unsafe, unsightly, and unused. Due to the condition of the equipment and area, not many children were using the playground. The PRIDE committee recognized the danger of the equipment and the value of improving the park. They decided to take on the playground area as one of their projects. They started by meeting with the recreation commission to gather and share ideas. After receiving project approval, they talked to other communities and companies that install equipment. The Kathy Feist Foundation supported the project with funding. This foundation is a true gift to the community and youth. The community PRIDE group organized volunteer labor to install the new play area. By using volunteer labor to assist the professionals, the community was able to save several thousand dollars. Playground equipment and a

rubberized play area matting were installed in 2007. This was expanded in 2008 with additional equipment and an expanded rubberized surface. Spearville now has an area that is attractive and safe for the children to play in thanks to the Kathy Feist Foundation and Spearville PRIDE volunteers.

By partnering with other community organizations, PRIDE builds the capacity of communities to reach shared goals. In the 2008-2009 program year, PRIDE groups reported partnering with 644 other community organizations to reach collaborative project goals.

STAR Award Honorable Mention:

The STAR projects from the communities of **Lucas**, **Overbrook**, and **Stafford** were recognized as solid projects of the local PRIDE group which enhanced the quality of life in each of their communities. The Lucas PRIDE Mini Park Mural Project contributed to the enhancement of Main Street through beautification and education relating to the limestone heritage of the community. The Overbrook PRIDE playground equipment for the City Lake Park is one phase of a large improvement project that enhances the lake area and connects it to the ball fields allowing recreational activities for all ages in one location. The Stafford PRIDE Bike and Hike with Birds is entering its third year as an event that highlights the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge and its natural beauty and promotes Stafford’s quaint hospitality.

Community of Excellence 2009

The Kansas PRIDE Community of Excellence Award is the highest level of recognition possible through the state PRIDE program. The Community of Excellence award recognizes a quality sustainable community development process. To be evaluated for this award, a PRIDE community must request to have a team of community development professionals visit the community. During the visit, the evaluators observe and rate the community atmosphere, environment, and program impact. Effective community development efforts must be inclusive, based on identified community priorities, and demonstrate community impact. Those communities that were determined to be excelling in their approach to community capacity building were selected for recognition as a Community of Excellence. The 2009 Community of Excellence Awards are sponsored by Kansas Gas Service Company.

Alton – Alton has a history of excellence. The citizens of Alton have been enrolled in the PRIDE program for 24 years. During that time, they have worked to continuously cultivate new leadership and to be responsive to surfacing community needs. The Community of Excellence evaluators reported that Alton demonstrated an outstanding community pride and spirit. Their “can do” attitude was contagious, and their shared commitment to leadership and inclusivity is a model for others to learn from. Evaluators were impressed with the creativity of the “Alton Twitter” newspaper, by their efforts to re-establish polling sites in the community, and by the commitment of the entire community to create more opportunities for youth. Through the tireless work of Alton PRIDE, citizens are investing in culture, business support, quality of life, and healthy activities that combine to create a friendly, active community atmosphere.

Goff – In the 10 years since the citizens of Goff have come together in PRIDE to work on community improvement, they have built a fire station, community center, fitness center and library. In addition, they have helped establish a toy museum and operate a community food pantry. This small town thinks big, and the Goff community really impressed the Community of Excellence evaluators! Evaluators commented that the community has accomplished many significant projects and are using a great system for planning and documenting their work. After seeing the photographic journal of their success, one evaluator commented, “They are very good at reporting events and projects with before and after pictures!” Goff PRIDE continues to identify important community needs, identify solutions to resolve them, and mobilize citizens to sustain their work. Goff is working a quality process to address important projects.



Goff



Grinnell

Grinnell – Community improvement requires constant re-investment. Learning from 30 years of experience with PRIDE, Grinnell knows community improvement. Evaluators visiting Grinnell were impressed with the depth of leadership and breadth of community investment through PRIDE. By sharing responsibility and welcoming a diverse investment of skills and interests, Grinnell PRIDE is able to serve as a facilitator of community action. The evaluators commented on Grinnell’s “very strong leadership with great support across committees.” They were impressed with the broad involvement of citizens and especially the success of engaging youth. It is clear that Grinnell understands the long-term benefits of having youth take ownership and investment in the community. Their success is reflected in the walking trails, Get It – Do It! opportunities, and community fitness programs. Clearly, the whole town is a member of PRIDE and the physical community really reflects their pride. One evaluator summed it up by saying, “Great people! Great cooperation! Great Pride!”

Highland – Highland PRIDE is tuned in to the needs of the community. PRIDE has evolved to be an organization that can mobilize to address the needs of others. This is demonstrated through their work to raise funds for community nonprofits, their work to operate a community food pantry, and through the establishment of a community garden. Twenty four years of enrollment in PRIDE has also helped Highland PRIDE to become very organized. The evaluators visiting Highland were impressed with the succession plan the organization was using, and commented on the strong partnerships and collaborative relationships that the group maintained. The integration with Highland Community College was highlighted as a great partnership, and the connections with the students and faculty of the community create many opportunities. The “student donations” garage sale is an innovative example of how Highland PRIDE is always seizing opportunities to better serve the community. Highland PRIDE has established itself as an integral part of the community services and quality of life in Highland.

Lakin – Working in conjunction with the local K-State Research and Extension unit, Lakin PRIDE has adopted an effective process of engaging the community to step forward to address community needs. Lakin has been enrolled in the PRIDE program for 14 years, and 11 of those have reflected their exceptional community involvement process (Community of Excellence). What makes Lakin a Community of Excellence? The evaluators’ comments reflect that Lakin has developed many opportunities for leadership, and has engaged broad community involvement. They have developed and maintain a close working relationship with the city government, and have done great work reaching out to involve youth and the Mennonite community. They have facilitated a visioning and planning process for their community and are working to achieve the goals identified through that process. They have had success with creating quality parks from empty spaces and are currently maintaining three parks as well as Main Street planters. Improving outdoor recreation areas has been an important focus of Lakin PRIDE. They maintain an open and inviting group process, while keeping organized and on task for community goals. Lakin PRIDE is a great model of sustainable community improvement organization!

Lenora – Leadership is the word that best characterizes Lenora PRIDE. A citizen in Lenora remarked, “Most people realize that if you want to get anything accomplished you need PRIDE’s leadership.” This is evidence of how Lenora PRIDE has established itself as an important network for community development. Community of Excellence evaluators commented that the leadership is strong in Lenora PRIDE and observed that power and responsibilities are shared. This shared leadership approach is an excellent way to involve youth and residents in an approach to community development that encourages ongoing commitment to projects and long-term investment in community. When you realize that community improvement is a continuous process, you also realize that continuous leadership development is a necessity for community sustainability. With 20 years of enrollment in the state PRIDE program, Lenora PRIDE understands this, and is demonstrating it very effectively. The inclusion of community members (including new residents) reflects the openness of the group, and evaluators observed that most of the projects are set up to be sustainable even if leadership changes. One evaluator commented, “Community awareness [is a strength] — everyone in town is considered a member of PRIDE!”



Lenora

Melvern – PRIDE member Jim Irey says, “If you move to Melvern, don’t plan to retire!” Melvern PRIDE is not a place for spectators! Citizens of Melvern invested more than 4,000 hours of work on their trail development project, and the trail development project was one of 17 projects Melvern completed during this last year. The investment in community projects in Melvern is spectacular. Working through a community planning process with the KDHE/PRIDE sponsored Healthy Ecosystem-Healthy Communities process, the community has examined how they can maximize their investment in community projects by exploring ways PRIDE projects can support health, environmental protection, economic development, leadership development, and community involvement. This approach to community projects is evident in the trails project, the community and fitness center PRIDE built, and through the many cultural events that Melvern PRIDE hosts. The group is paying attention to serving youth and families, providing cultural activities, improving the local economy, and maintaining a high quality of life.



Melvorn

Potwin – Potwin PRIDE is another example of a group of citizens, teaming up with the city government, that has made continuous improvement a community trademark. Throughout 29 years of enrollment in the PRIDE program, Potwin has been repeatedly recognized for their excellence in their approach to community development. It may be because of their strong vision statement, or the way they involve people in the community, or it may be their ability to collaborate with other organizations outside of their community – all of which were noteworthy traits of Potwin according to the Community of Excellence evaluators. Potwin PRIDE is an organization that is inclusive, broad-reaching, and comprehensive in the projects they support or lead. Potwin is improving the environment by recycling and clean-up projects. They are enriching community culture through movie night and hosting festivals and celebrations. The “Plant a Row for the Hungry” community gardening project is serving the needs of others. The PRIDE group has an on-going system of implementing surveys, prioritizing action, and successfully completing community projects in an efficient manner. This all adds up to Potwin’s recognition as a Community of Excellence!



Potwin

Rossville – Community of Excellence evaluators reported that the community of Rossville is full of energetic people and that their “passion shines!” The enthusiasm and creativity of the PRIDE group is contagious, and that energy is attracting the involvement of youth and young families. Opportunities for leadership abound, and the culture of shared leadership provides broad involvement and deep commitment to community work. Evaluators commented how Rossville PRIDE is promoting a good transition of leadership on projects, and noted how that sustains energy in project work. Rossville is also doing a great job of extending the invitation to be involved with PRIDE through visual displays, table-top information, PowerPoint presentations, a scrap book, and on the city web page. Through their collaborative work, Rossville has integrated health and fitness activities into community life, and has installed a swimming pool and sand volleyball court in the city park. Their rain garden project was also a great project that combined citizen involvement, public education, and community beautification with a project that redirects and slows storm water runoff. Rossville knows the value of having a “Leader-full” community!



Rossville

Spearville – If you have read the local newspaper (or the T-shirts people are wearing around town) you will have heard of Spearville PRIDE. This clean community in southern Kansas is looking to the future. One community of Excellence evaluator wrote: “[Spearville is] doing a good job of following the PRIDE format for community capacity building by setting, implementing, and accomplishing goals and projects. Great job—well done!” The residents of Spearville discuss and prioritize ideas for community improvement, and together, they have done an exceptional job of getting things done! Working with the local unit of K-State Research and Extension last year Spearville youth and adults planned community fitness and health projects through the Get-It Do-It project. The community PRIDE group hosts celebrations, fund-raisers, community beautification projects, and on-going services. And while Spearville is future-oriented, they also look back. Evaluators were very impressed that the PRIDE group assesses and evaluates every project. Working from 35 years of enrollment experience, Spearville PRIDE is a well-functioning program!



Spearville

Stafford – Some groups try to do everything at once. Stafford PRIDE has figured out that it isn't volume that matters, but quality. Evaluators of Stafford PRIDE said they appreciated that the PRIDE group prioritized project importance and impact and limited the number of projects for which they provide leadership. The evaluators commented that Stafford PRIDE is investing in youth, has mobilized a strong volunteer base, and is providing great community leadership! The efforts that PRIDE is leading include physical environment improvements like the fitness trail in the park, fun events like the Quivera bike and hike, and community promotion. The Stafford PRIDE group understands that long-term community sustainability relies on healthy people engaged in activities that improve the community, and their projects and activities prove they are demonstrating success! Evaluators especially liked the summer youth programs and the Youth of the Month recognition.



Stafford



Troy

Troy – Troy PRIDE began to organize in 2007 and in 2009 they are already demonstrating excellence! The diversity of this PRIDE group impressed the evaluators. Having a group deeply invested in the community success that included the judge, the Boy Scouts, retired citizens, city officials, and a local dairy farmer really demonstrated to the evaluators that Troy PRIDE was an inclusive group working on shared goals! The Community of Excellence evaluators were also impressed with Troy's willingness to listen and learn from others. Highland PRIDE has provided important mentorship – and the openness to advice and help also demonstrates a healthy community attitude! Troy is working closely with their local K-State Research and Extension unit to gain new ideas and insights, and is always open to growth and opportunities to learn. They launched into community improvement by tackling a city-owned pond revitalization, and have been working on community atmosphere by implementing a Yard of the Month project.

Wilson – In the 21st century, the community of Wilson has been in the PRIDE program for three years, and they are doing exceptional work! The PRIDE group surveyed the community to assess what the community wants and needs. They hosted a public meeting to report the survey results and to assess community priorities. They identified project teams that involved business owners, youth, civic groups, church groups, city representatives, and people that were both new to the community and those that had a long history in town. They network well within the community, and they do an excellent job of identifying and acquiring outside resources. Wilson has taken advantage of community support through state and private foundation funding sources. Residents of Wilson are looking forward and are engaged in projects to create a better future due to the inclusive planning process Wilson PRIDE is facilitating.



Wilson

Kansas communities enrolled in the PRIDE program completed 1,216 community improvement projects in the 2008-2009 program year. Projects included investments in community health, cultural enhancement, leadership development, infrastructure improvements, and economic development.

PRIDE Communities — Get It – Do It!

In the 2008-2009 program year, six PRIDE communities encouraged adult-youth partnerships to improve personal and community health. Get It – Do It! is a project supported by K-State Research and Extension, Kansas PRIDE, and Healthy Kansas (a project of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment). This group of communities successfully implemented projects to support healthy activities. Adults and youth participated in a two-day training, then used their training in their communities to encourage physical activity. The Get It – Do It! Projects for the communities included:

- Glasco – Walk Kansas for youth and adults. Five teams walked 3,900 miles!
- Grinnell – Youth Fun Day. Grade school youth participated in active outdoor activities and used the walking trail.
- Spearville – Summer Fun in the Park! A series of outdoor recreation opportunities for youth throughout the summer.
- Melvern – River Trail activities. Educational activities were designed and promoted through the local grade school. Many of the teachers have integrated use of the trail for physical activity and environmental education.
- Stafford – Nutrition education and physical activity for youth. A summer recreation program coordinated by a college student provided opportunities all summer.
- Rossville – A sand volleyball court was developed in the City Park as well as promotion of volleyball teams. PRIDE hosted a survey to find out who uses the park, what features are used, and what additions are needed to enhance the use of the park.

In addition to fostering adult-youth partnerships, the Get It – Do It! communities are also partnering with the local K-State Research and Extension offices for educational program support. Upon completion of their projects, communities become eligible to be designated as “Healthy Communities” by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Building on partnerships between PRIDE, youth organizations and local K-State Research and Extension, these communities not only get it, and do it (get support funding to do the project), they also impact the health and wellness of those living in their communities!

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 2008-2009 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 – Rural Development Division and Marketing Division

Kansas State Research and Extension – Extension Youth Development - Get It – Do It!, and Horticulture and Master Gardener Programs - *Our Communities More Colorful Places* project – and local unit staff

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

Kansas PRIDE Inc. – Board of Directors

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

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

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

Volunteer Evaluators – 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 2008 - 2009 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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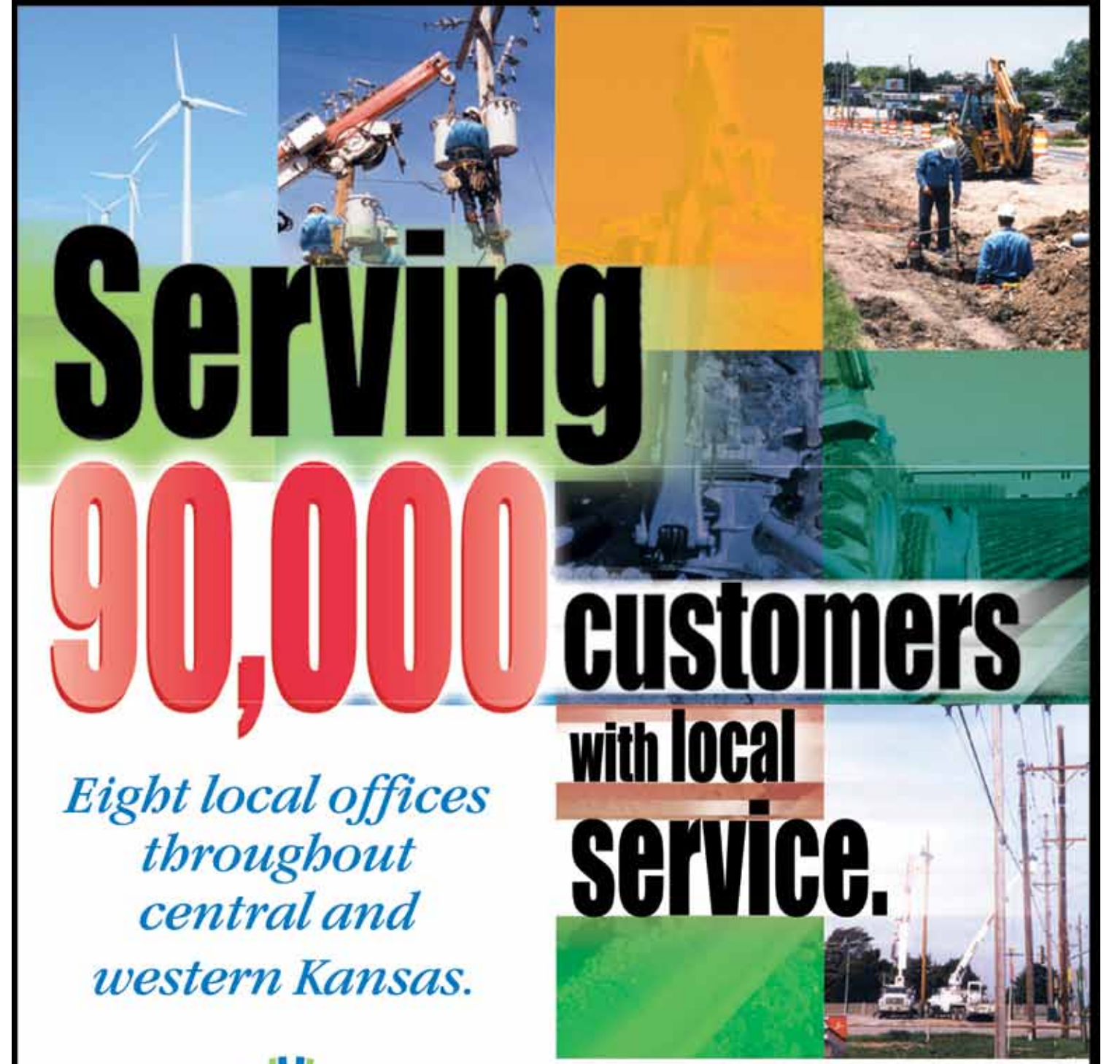
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