PRIDE Annual Review 2007

KANSAS PRIDE

Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas. Getting things done with PRIDE in Kansas.

August, 2007

Dear PRIDE Members and Friends;

Serving as PRIDE Board Chairperson is a uniquely rewarding experience. I have the undeniable privilege to meet the dedicated individuals who serve this outstanding organization. As Chair, I'm honored to have the opportunity to work with many dedicated individuals who serve on the PRIDE board or who are active in local PRIDE organizations. By visiting PRIDE towns, and I clearly see the work that these communities are doing. In a time of shrinking rural populations, it is refreshing to see the "pride" 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 2006 - 2007 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 2007, the PRIDE communities reported completing nearly 600 projects focused on community health, cultural enhancement, leadership, and economic growth. Collectively, PRIDE groups reported collaborative efforts with nearly 583 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 100,000 hours of volunteer labor and re-invest more than $500,000 in local funds to make Kansas communities more healthy, economically viable, and fun places to live.

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,

James Bartling

James W. Bartling
2007 Board Chairperson
Kansas PRIDE, Inc.

Kansas PRIDE Program

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

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

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

Benefits of Participating in PRIDE

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

Kansas PRIDE Inc. Board of Directors

Members of the 2006 - 2007 Kansas PRIDE, Inc., Board of Directors include representatives of sponsoring corporations and organizations, PRIDE Community of Excellence representatives, and representatives of the two administering organizations of the PRIDE program; K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Department of Commerce. The Kansas PRIDE Inc. Board of Directors provides guidance and raises funds for the recognition of outstanding community achievement through the Kansas PRIDE Program. It is with gratitude that we recognize the following board members:

James Bartling, Chairperson
Atmos Energy Corporation
Jack Meyers
First National Bank of Cunningham
Doug Wareham
Kansas Bankers Association
Suzanne Coin
Westar Energy
Sarah Meyer
Kansas Association of Counties
Ken Harsha
Lakin PRIDE
Debbie Dwerlkotte
Beattie PRIDE
Dan Engelhardt
Almena PRIDE
Sandy Williams
Eskridge PRIDE
Gloria Heikes
Lenora PRIDE
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Staff

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Jeanne Stinson
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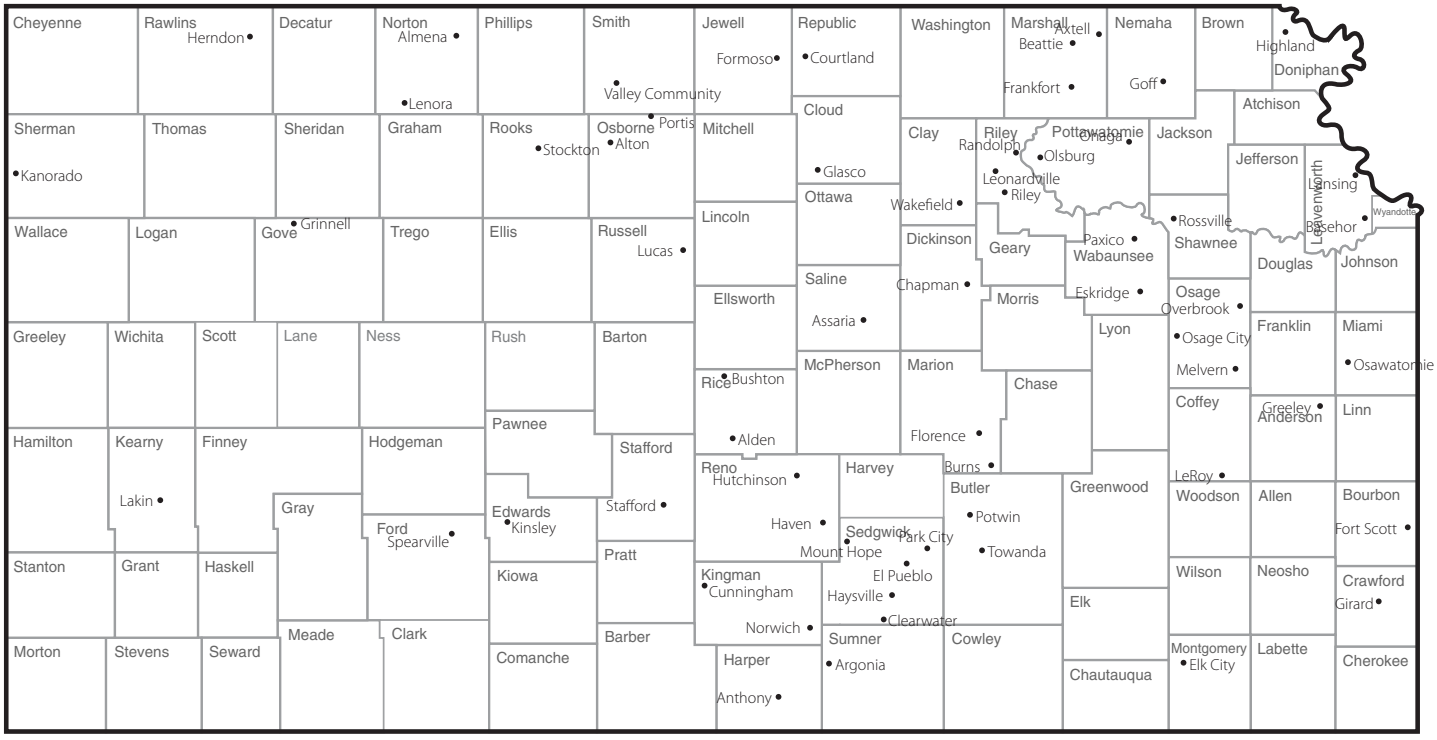
Kansas Department of Commerce

PRIDE Impacts Communities

In the 2006 - 2007 PRIDE program year, 61 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.

2007 PRIDE Communities



Alden (168) RC
Almena (469) NT
Alton (117) OB
Anthony (2,440) HP
Argonia (534) SU
Assaria (438) SA
Axtell (445) MS
Basehor (2,238) LV
Beattie (227) MS
Burns (268) MN
Bushton (314) RC
Chapman (1,241) DK
Clearwater (2,178) SG
Courtland (334) RP
Cunningham (514) KM
El Pueblo - Wichita (SG)
Elk City (305) MG
Eskridge (589) WB
Florence (671) MN
Formoso (129) JW
Fort Scott (8,297) BB
Frankfort (795) MS
Girard (2,686) CR
Glasco (536) CD
Goff (181) NM
Greeley (327) AN
Grinnell (329) GO
Haven (1,175) RN
Haysville (8,502) SG
Herndon (149) RA
Highland (976) DP
Kanorado (248) SH
Kinsley (1,658) ED
Lakin (2,316) KE
Lansing (9,199) LV
Lenora (306) NT
Leonardville (398) RL
LeRoy (593) CF
Lincoln School – Hutchinson (RN)
Lucas (436) RS
Melvern (429) OS
Mount Hope (830) SG
Norwich (551) KM
Olsburg (192) PT
Onaga (704) PT
Osage City (3,034) OS
Osawatomie (4,645) MI
Overbrook (947) OS
Park City (5,814) SG
Paxico (211) WB
Portis (116) OB
Potwin (457) BU
Randolph (175) RL
Riley (692) RL
Rossville (1,014) SN
Spearville (813) FO
Stafford (1,161) SF
Stockton (1,558) RO
Towanda (1,338) BU
Wakefield (838) CY
Valley Community* (346) SM

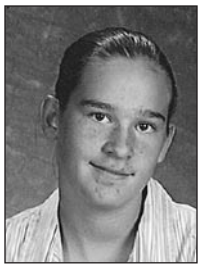
*Gaylord, Cedar and Harlan

Population Source: U.S. Bureau 2003

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. Kansas PRIDE, Inc, would like to recognize the following youth for their outstanding community service.



Christian Sellers

Christian Sellers (Fort Scott) In her third year participating in the PRIDE program at Fort Scott Middle School, Christian has been involved in 30 of the 35 PRIDE projects this year. Whether Christian is helping to provide childcare to community groups like MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers), volunteering at a nursing home, helping with fund-raisers, or baking cookies for the local tourist center, she is always willing to help. In addition, Christian is involved in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet program and volunteers for the commodity foods program and her church, while maintaining straight A's at school. Fort Scott is proud of the commitment Christian has shown to helping in her community.

Nathan Ellis (Lucas) Nathan is actively involved in many community service projects as well as his church, 4-H, Heartland SHARE, and the Lucas Area Community Theatre. He is always willing to step-up and help whenever his community is in need of assistance. Nathan's commitment to help the Lucas Area Community Theatre, which is run completely by volunteers, demonstrates his leadership skills and ability to motivate other youth in his community. The Lucas community appreciates the devotion that Nathan has for working on these community projects.

Michael Callaway

Michael Callaway (Almena) When Almena was hit with a heavy ice storm this past winter, Michael was ready to help his community. The community was without power for a week, and he helped to clean up tree branches, deliver meals, and remove snow for older residents in the area. He is a member of Junior PRIDE and the Cedar Ridge 4-H club. He helps with the annual Halloween Parade, the city Christmas lights, Easter egg hunt, and PRIDE pancake suppers. No matter what community service project Michael is helping with, Michael has fun. Michael's generosity and helping hand has earned him the PRIDE Youth Community Service Award.

Alexandra Minnis

Alexandra Minnis (Stafford) Alexandra has a true sense of helping others and serving the community. She has worked on the Stafford Food Bank for the past year and the Summer Lunch program for the past two summers. Alexandra is a charter member of the charter school in Stafford called Stafford Entrepreneurship and Economic Development or SEED programs. When Alexandra is not busy working with community and school activities, she serves as a mentor for the PALS program. PALS is a program that mentors fourth graders by helping them with school work, listening to them read, and serving as a role model for future Stafford leaders. Kansas PRIDE and the Stafford community is pleased to recognize Alexandra for her outstanding community service.

Allison Dohm

Allison Dohm (Grinnell) Allison has been very active in various community service projects in Grinnell. She is always willing to help PRIDE or her 4-H club with the soup supper, community cleanup, delivering May Day baskets, and arranging care packages for troops overseas. Allison's leadership skills and willingness to help are qualities that make her a role model within the Grinnell community. Grinnell is grateful for the dedication and service Allison contributes to her community.

Honorable Mention

Audrey Laughlin (Mount Hope) Audrey is a valuable Mount Hope PRIDE volunteer. She helps with story hour at the library two hours a week as with well as the summer reading program. In addition, Audrey helps the children in attendance with crafts, handing out reading incentives, and listens to the first graders read. Audrey's willingness to commit her time to service in her community is a great source of pride and Mount Hope is grateful for all her help.

Overbrook 4-H (Overbrook) The fourth through ninth grade 4-H members in Overbrook have been an active group this year in supporting Overbrook PRIDE. They assisted Overbrook PRIDE with the biscuit and gravy feed fund-raiser by serving participants and helping with the clean up. It takes the whole community participating to make fund-raisers such a success, and Overbrook PRIDE is grateful for the collaborative support of 4-H.

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 PRIDE Youth Leadership Award.

Travis Stoneburgh (Lucas) Travis was nominated for the PRIDE Youth Leadership Award for his outstanding leadership through his youth group and the youth recreation summer program. He has been a member of the honor roll and earned honors and awards for his instrumental solos, vocal ensembles, and art work. Travis volunteers for many activities at school and in the community. He understands the importance of community projects like community dinners, yard cleaning for the elderly, nursing home services, and summer youth programs. He leads by example and works hard to encourage other members of the community to become involved in service project. Lucas PRIDE appreciates the leadership that Travis Stoneburgh has given to the Lucas area community.

Yance Farney (Stafford) Yance, a remarkable young leader at Stafford High School, served as president of FFA during his junior year of high school. As president, Yance led his group in a fund-raising project, a healthy choice vending machine. In order to place a healthy lifestyle vending machine at the high school, Yance and the other members had to research products, ordering, and stocking procedures and then presented the proposal to their fellow classmates, school administrators, and the school board for approval. Yance's leadership kept his organization motivated until they met their goal. Kansas PRIDE is proud to recognize Yance with the Kansas PRIDE Youth Leadership Award.

Cody Zabel

Cody Zabel (Onaga) Cody is a one of a kind, very special youth. He knows no stranger and is always willing to help. Recently, when Onaga was ready to construct their new area playground Cody was one of four youth selected and allowed to participate during school hours. He put his skills to use and was in charge of the parameter fence for the playground. Cody is a starting player for the Onaga Varsity Basketball team. He is starting his own cattle business aside from being known in the area as one of the best fence builders you can hire. Cody's dedication and leadership have earned him the PRIDE Youth Leadership Award.

Honorable Mention

Jamie Albers (Grinnell) Jamie has demonstrated strong leadership skills through many volunteer activities. She is a National Honor Society Member and has helped to organize community and school events such as the Red Cross Blood Drive and the Grade School Field Day. In addition, Jamie has planned and organized a dance camp for youth 5 to 11 years old and tutors students after school. Jamie has demonstrated great leadership skills as well as being a positive influence in her community.

Kelsey Kinderknecht (Almena) Kelsey serves as an active member and leader in both community and school activities. She is serving as the secretary for Almena Junior PRIDE. She is involved in KAYS, National Honor Society, and is president of her junior class. Kelsey is also active in forensics, music, and high school rodeo. The example that Kelsey sets as a leader has earned her the respect from her school and throughout the community.

Emily Reichenberger (Mount Hope) Emily is a star example of young leadership. At 15-years-old, she stepped up to become Mount Hope PRIDE president. One project that Emily coordinated, as PRIDE president, was the care packages for the troops stationed in Iraq. Through effective leadership skills, Emily brought the community together to work on this project. As a result, the troops have responded back and have donated flags that were flown over Iraq to Mount Hope. Through effective communication, Emily has shown that she is a true leader.

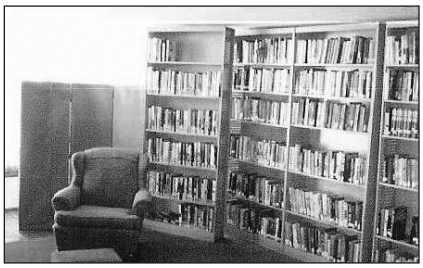
Kansas communities enrolled in the PRIDE program completed **576 community improvement projects** in the 2006 - 2007 program year. Projects included investments in community health, cultural enhancement, leadership development, infrastructure improvements, and economic development.

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 2007.

Alton – In November 2006, Alton's oldest limestone building, Hartzler's Hardware, burned to the ground. An immediate cleanup began with plans for a new building. Many volunteers pitched in to assist with the cleanup. In appreciation of the work and to help the rebuilding effort, Alton PRIDE sponsored an appreciation/benefit soup supper in January. An appreciation dinner for the community volunteers was combined with a benefit idea to raise money for the destroyed business. The Bull City Community Foundation helped in co-sponsoring the event. The event was a great success. The dinner raised more than $4,000 for rebuilding the store and boosted the enthusiasm and support of the community for the project. Alton PRIDE proves again and again how investment in the community helps everyone.

Alton



Beattie

Beattie – With the sale of the public building that was the former community elementary school in February 2006, Beattie found itself without a public library or a place for city hall. The PRIDE group and the city worked together to find a downtown building that could be purchased by the city. A vacant building was purchased by the city and remodeling began immediately. Many PRIDE members answered the call to volunteer to create offices and library space. PRIDE scheduled workdays for the project and recruited volunteers. Many of the items from the old elementary school were put to good use. By working together, the Beattie PRIDE volunteers helped bring new life to a downtown building and fill an important community need. The Beattie Library/City Hall was opened for business on September 16, 2006.

Glasco – Connecting with the past was a big part of the seventh grade student driven project "Locating the Civil War Veterans buried in the Glasco Cemetery and researching their settlement experience." The project was chosen because of the merit for its contribution to the community. It drew the community together, reconnecting with its forgotten past and also allowed students to discover the role of their great, great grandfathers. The project established the value of young people going beyond the school week to devote their time to a project of their own design. During the year-long project, students were supported by community members assisting in research. In the end, the students published brief individual veteran biographies. The project was an important way to involve the youth of Glasco in a project that brought history to life and helped them realize the important role they play in the life of the community.

Volunteer investment in Kansas communities through PRIDE in the 2006 - 2007 program year was more than **one and a half million dollars**

($1,553,697.00 based on 2005 values for Kansas established by The Independent Sector)

Lenora

Lenora – The community of Lenora was in the process of building a new community center and library. With the new facility, the Lenora PRIDE group knew they needed new furnishings. With a goal of raising $21,000 for furniture, shelving and books, PRIDE mobilized to begin fund-raising. Funds were generated through food sales, bake sales, candy sales, and soup suppers as well as by selling funnel cakes at the Lenora Jubilee. The building construction was started in June 2006 and volunteers had completed the project in November 2006. PRIDE met its goals and purchased the furnishings before the community volunteers moved the library to its new location. Persistence, support of the entire community, and many volunteers hours, have helped Lenora reach its goals

Grinnell – Grinnell PRIDE has always made the appearance of the town a top priority. After damaging ice storms, Grinnell found its town amidst the ruin of fallen tree branches, torn down by the winter ice and snow. Before a clean-up date was determined, PRIDE got together to plan an appreciation dinner to be held after the clean-up project. A soup supper was organized and held, with a profit of $750 made for funding the appreciation dinner. On March 11, 2007, the city of Grinnell partnered with PRIDE volunteers and local schools to clear the debris. Individuals volunteered equipment such as tractors, loaders, trucks, and trailers for removal of the unsightly remnants of the storm. A burn pile was placed at the north edge of town and was safely monitored. Tree replacement was then implemented. After the cleanup, the appreciation dinner was held at The Catholic Parish, which donated its space free of charge for the occasion.

Lucas – The Lucas Area Community Theatre is a great place for entertainment. The theatre is used by local and traveling performers, for high school band concerts, and youth and community theater productions. The community has been supporting the Lucas Theatre since 1998 when renovations were done to update the old building to be used as a movie and stage theatre. As use of the building expanded, the building also needed to expand. Volunteers have worked 18 months to build an addition to the renovated theatre that includes changing rooms and an expanded staging area. State grant funds were utilized and supported by a huge out-pouring of volunteer labor and support from the community. This building project responded to a clear community need, involved community volunteers, and invests in the future of the community – all great reasons for Lucas to be awarded the PRIDE STAR project award. The Lucas Theatre is community-owned and volunteer- operated and is an important arts and cultural center for the community.

Lucas

Melvern – Melvern PRIDE, representing a community of about 400 people, wanted to find a way to say "Thanks for being a great community." In an effort to say thank you and reach out to the community during the holidays, the PRIDE group decided to offer a Thanksgiving dinner. But when Melvern PRIDE gets involved, expect big things. Nearly one hundred letters were sent requesting donations and support, eighty of which were answered. The event coordinated the help of the school district, service clubs, churches, and PRIDE youth. The dinner was held a few days before Thanksgiving, and the day of celebration was very rewarding to all those who attended. Twenty PRIDE youth waited tables. The group planned for 800 meals, and served more than 750 plated meals. The leftover food was given to 24 families in need for Thanksgiving Day. Melvern PRIDE has proven once again that they are a small town with a big heart.

Melvern

Onaga

Onaga – Children, regardless of their financial status of handicap, should have a safe and fun place to play. The Onaga PRIDE Committee, along with several other area adults in Havensville, Wheaton, and Onaga joined in to build such a playground. In April 2006, 23 volunteers started to build a custom designed playground to incorporate a broad range of accessibility needs along with safety. The Leisure Land Area-Built Playground came into fruition. Everyone worked hard on many fund-raising projects to raise $100,000 for materials. Projects included holding a garage sale and a Christmas Home Tour, as well as selling personalized pickets and engraved bricks for the playground entrance. Between April 18 and 22, 2007, more than 600 volunteers came together to build the playground.

Spearville – The Spearville community park was becoming an unsafe eyesore. It was the dream of Spearville PRIDE to replace the old rundown wooden fort with a new play set. PRIDE began planning and researching to identify supporting funding to build it. A community fund was set up by a PRIDE member with the Ford County State Bank for the project. The community fund allowed community members to donate to the purchase of a new playground set. The equipment was delivered and volunteers unloaded it into storage to await construction. City employees and volunteers worked to build the new equipment. Through the donations and efforts of community and city volunteers, the project improved the playground tremendously. Spearville now has a safe place for children to play and exercise.

Spearville

Stockton

Stockton – The Stockton PRIDE committee was looking for funding to support the building of tennis courts in town. After researching, Stockton PRIDE learned of a new program, Tennis in the Park, a program jointly sponsored by the US Tennis Association and the National Recreation and Parks Association. Stockton PRIDE stated their need in a grant application. The grant was approved, and became the first of several grants and fund-raising events that provided the necessary funding for construction of the tennis court and complex in the city park. The courts, nets, fencing, and equipment were purchased and readied for installation. The subcontractors finished the project on September 30, 2006, and the courts were in use by the beginning of October. Through the research, persistence, and active work of the PRIDE committee, Stockton continues to make investments in the parks and people of the community.

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

The following communities were visited and evaluated in the spring of 2007 and have been selected by the evaluation teams to receive the Community of Excellence Award to recognize their success.

Volunteers provided **more than one hundred thousand hours** of service to community improvement projects through PRIDE in the 2006 - 2007 program year.

Almena – Through active participation, leadership, and good planning, Almena is a Community of Excellence. The community evaluators were impressed with the responsiveness and effort the Almena PRIDE group continues to demonstrate. For example, two years ago, Community of Excellence evaluators commented that integrating youth into the community PRIDE group would strengthen engagement and community sustainability. Almena took those comments seriously and developed a Junior PRIDE group. The Junior PRIDE involvement has been a valuable addition to planning, and their active involvement in projects has re-energized the community. Evaluators also commented on the quick and creative responsiveness of the PRIDE group to community issues including clean-up after storms and park improvements.

Alton – In their eighth year as a "Community of Excellence," Alton residents have demonstrated how a community that works together can accomplish great things. The Alton PRIDE group is involved in economic recovery, social event organizing, community health related issues, and cultural investment. The PRIDE group impressed the evaluators with their efforts to help the hardware store recover (see STAR awards), to recognize and involve volunteers, and with their work to provide cultural and social activities. There were many examples of events and projects that Alton PRIDE sponsored this year such as the rabies clinic and its annual Russell Stover's Chocolate Festival. Alton continues to exemplify what can be accomplished through unselfish determination and effective planning.

Argonia – Excellence is demonstrated in Argonia through the example of teamwork and planning between the city, schools, businesses, and churches that work together to maximize community resources. The Argonia housing project is just one example of the whole community approach. Through the efforts of PRIDE community planning meetings, Argonia is developing a new housing area that has trails linking the housing development and community parks. Two new houses have been constructed to date, with two more in the planning stage. The openness and strength of partnerships through Argonia PRIDE has once again earned them the designation of Community of Excellence.

Beattie – This PRIDE community understands the value of a strong main street, value of a quality library, and the importance of documenting and preserving their history. This is indicated by their creative use of vacant downtown buildings in the creation of a library and museum. In addition to the buildings themselves, the PRIDE group helped to design and deliver services to enhance the library. Through the new summer reading program, newly offered Internet access, and a scheduled book van, the community is alive with energy and pride. To help cover the expenses of these activities, the Beattie PRIDE group has been busy through the year working on fund-raising with a Triple Treat Breakfast/Brunch, running concession stands, and holding garage sales. The result? Beattie PRIDE reports that the list of volunteers for activities across the community continues to grow.

Cunningham – Cunningham residents understand how investing in the youth and school is an investment in the future of the community. They also understand how investing in healthy individuals helps to build a healthy community. In addition to partnering with the school on the kick-off of a new fitness trail, PRIDE helped to host a community health fair. By partnering with Public Health department, the fair was able to provide low cost flu shots, testing and screening. The county sheriff's department participated by promoting and encouraging parents to enroll their children in the Ident-a-Kid program. PRIDE also promoted community cleanliness with various programs and projects like the Yard of the Week, which encourages and rewards residents for taking pride in their homes and neighborhoods. Cunningham PRIDE is creating healthy community partnerships for a brighter future.

Kansas PRIDE communities re-invested more than **one-half of a million dollars** in community improvement projects in the 2006-2007 program year.

Eskridge –When the Symphony in the Flint Hills was held just outside of Eskridge, the Gateway to the Flint Hills Coalition PRIDE Boosters saw not only a fund-raising opportunity but also a chance to let travelers know what their community has to offer. Through encouragement and the offering of many helping hands Eskridge was ready for guests. One visitor commented that they had never seen the main street of Eskridge look so good. In addition to that event, PRIDE has kept active serving the community by hosting blood drives, park projects, celebrations, and annual events. Eskridge is a town full of new and creative ideas of how to move their community forward, and the Gateway to the Flint Hills Coalition PRIDE is the catalyst that is moving them there.

Goff – Goff is a small community that shows perseverance and forward thinking by investing in the health of the community through the fitness center, food pantry, and library. Goff PRIDE identifies the greatest needs in the community and designs their project goals around them. Through effective planning and the building of partnerships, they work hard to meet these goals. PRIDE members worked to expand their food pantry by obtaining donations from Second Harvest, "Lets Help" in Topeka, as well as collaborating with Colorado Share. The food pantry is helping to provide food to 30 area families. PRIDE's after-school tutoring program is demonstrating continued success, and they have obtained a grant from the STEP Foundation for renovations to the Honor System Library. The goal is to provide expanded access to books for youth and senior residents alike. These are all examples of how this small community is demonstrating great success in community improvement.

Grinnell – Grinnell PRIDE recognizes that investment in local business is an investment in the community. Grinnell PRIDE implemented a broad customer survey on behalf of the community-owned grocery. In the last two years, Grinnell PRIDE has worked to help make changes recommended from the survey. This year, PRIDE volunteers continued to help the store with repairs, painting, and the installation of awnings. In response to damaging winter storms, PRIDE helped the city of Grinnell pull together for the clean up. PRIDE paid for the use of a city truck to haul debris away and many volunteers helped to clean up branches. After the clean up, PRIDE hosted a soup supper to raise funds. Grinnell PRIDE impressed the evaluators with both their planning, flexibility, and responsiveness to aid the community.

Highland – Highland PRIDE has worked hard to build relationships, fulfill community needs, and provide fun family events that the whole community will enjoy. Their work with community beautification prompted one evaluator to comment, "This is a beautiful community whose pride is immediately apparent upon entering town!" In an example of Highland PRIDE's investment in helping the community pull together, Highland hosted more than 1,000 people in attendance at their Sesquicentennial over the Memorial Day weekend. Behind the scenes, PRIDE helped coordinate approximately 200 volunteers who served 6,000 volunteer hours to facilitate the successful event. In addition, PRIDE held a fund-raiser for the event, planned a Halloween celebration at the local nursing home, a welcoming event at the community college, and many other events. This is not Highland's first "Community of Excellence" award and they continue to have a positive effect on the lives of Highland residents through the collaboration and commitment to their community.

Lakin – To achieve the Community of Excellence award, PRIDE must demonstrate their ability to create positive change in the community. Lakin doesn't have any difficulty with that. Lakin PRIDE is improving the community through their investment in both the place and the people. At Ad McVey Park, a park created by Lakin PRIDE, they continuously upgrade the walking path, Skateboard Park, and playground equipment. They successfully received a grant from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Local Government Outdoor Recreation Grant Program to assist in park improvements. They also started a train ride at the county fair and Christmas parade for the youth. This year, the information booth built at the intersection of Highway 50 and Highway 25 will provide a new way to share information with visitors about the great community of Lakin.

Lenora – Lenora PRIDE is always working hard and the Lenora Meridian, a PRIDE weekly paper, serves to keep everyone informed about their upcoming activities and new information within the community. When Lenora was in need of a new library and a place for city hall, they set a goal, created a plan, and went to work. By working with the Kansas Department of Commerce KAN-STEP program, volunteers began building construction in June 2006 and had it completed by November. They had also set and reached a fund-raising goal of $21,000 in order to furnish the new city hall and library. They achieved their goal and purchased the furnishing before the community volunteers moved the library to its new location. Through persistence, support of the entire community, and many volunteers hours, have helped Lenora reach its goals.

Lenora

Melvern – Eight to ten percent of the population of Melvern attend the monthly PRIDE meetings. They have discovered the secret of getting, and keeping people involved. The PRIDE group in this small community does not hesitate to invite others in, and is quick to express gratitude and appreciation. Their Thanksgiving dinner (see STAR Awards) is an excellent example of their impressive outreach. The Melvern community and PRIDE has also stepped forward to participate in a pilot project funded through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment linking their environmental improvement goals with goals for fitness, education, involvement, and economic enhancement. Through participatory planning, setting clear goals, involving others in projects, and their tremendous support of others, Melvern is again showing that it is a Community of Excellence.

Melvern

Mount Hope – No one ever said that community improvement couldn't be fun. Mount Hope PRIDE has demonstrated this by sponsoring fun activities to help move toward their goals. Working closely with youth in the community, they have provided craft classes for youth during Spring Break and hosted a haunted maze at Halloween. As a fund-raiser, PRIDE cooked up 50's style burgers, fries, and created a 50's diner atmosphere for bingo at the Legion. It was a great success for Mount Hope PRIDE and it demonstrates how through creativity, leadership, and fun they are able to move toward meeting their goals. The evaluators were impressed with Mount Hopes energy, youth, and level of commitment.

Onaga – Onaga is a community that is not afraid to think big. In this last program year the city and PRIDE have accomplished great things. In a matter of five days, volunteers built Leisure Land Playground that was built with Onaga and surrounding communities in mind. With the hard work of community members and the city, PRIDE helped reopen Cool Springs Golf course in the spring of 2007. Onaga has also been working on a plan for attracting new families to its picturesque community. PRIDE is taking action to move its community forward through investing in culture, housing development, parks, and recreation. The vision, bold action, and ability to get things done has made Onaga a Community of Excellence.

Onaga

Park City – Park City is an excellent example of providing opportunities for involvement, leadership, and collaboration. Park City PRIDE has kept busy this PRIDE year with such projects as home and park improvements, cultural programming, assisting the schools, investing in the library, and working to keep the food pantry, which presently serves an average of 23 families, as a valuable asset to the community. They have also planned and held an Easter Egg Hunt after many years without one. As well, Park City has worked with the local television station to provide a candidate forum that allowed residents not in attendance to call in and ask questions of the candidates. Through shared responsibility and active leadership Park City sets in motion project plans and turns them into reality, while building a stronger community.

Through partnerships with other community organizations, PRIDE builds the capacity of communities to reach shared goals. In the 2006-2007 program year, PRIDE groups reported **partnering with 583 other community organizations.**

Potwin – What is it about Potwin that makes evaluators come back year after year and say that Potwin is a Community of Excellence? It may be that Potwin PRIDE annually completes more than 50 community improvement projects. It may be that Potwin PRIDE continually asks the community for direction and project goals. It may be that the PRIDE group also takes on projects that serve others, like the Ken Whittington Memorial Plant a Row for the Hungry Garden, or making certain all equipment in the parks are fully accessible. Maybe it is because of their investment in the place itself, including their community clean-ups, and Adopt A Highway program. Or perhaps it is because they still know how to have fun, like during the community movie nights in the community center. Then again, maybe it is a combination of the many ways Potwin PRIDE has found to invest themselves in the people and the community itself, which makes Potwin a Community of Excellence.

Rossville – Rossville shows great depth in leadership and in building partnerships. Through collaboration with the city and school, Rossville has teamed up to place a new community/school swimming pool between the school and the park. This was a great collaborative project that involved youth, community members, and city and school administration to accomplish. Now Rossville has a beautiful pool facility that will serve as a great asset for years to come. Through investing in cultural events like the Tall Corn Festival and their support of the local school, the community PRIDE builds strong relationships. Through their involvement in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Healthy Ecosystem/Healthy Communities pilot project, Rossville is also investing in their physical infrastructure and natural resources while tying their work to goals that strengthen community health, economy, and culture. Rossville PRIDE is planning, and creating action on important community goals.

Spearville – The "City of Windmills" PRIDE committee is shaping the future of Spearville. Through the coordination of the Spearville PRIDE group, the community is pulling together to make Spearville a better community. Working closely with the city, the PRIDE group has successfully acquired grant support to replace park equipment and make park improvements to add to the recreation options for youth. The PRIDE group builds social capital by overseeing on-going welcome packets, volunteer recognition through "PRIDE Salutes", and seniors bingo. They are helping the local economy through the "downtown shopping night" and the city-wide garage sale. They have invested in the physical community through their welcome signs, park project, recycling program, and main street beautification. Spearville PRIDE is building a better community.

Spearville

Stafford – Stafford PRIDE does a great job of connecting with and complimenting existing community organizations and programs. They are members of the Chamber of Commerce, are working with the city administration on a community visioning and planning, and support the Stafford Main Street organization. In addition, they are working on their own projects that include fund-raising, recognition opportunities, cell phone and ink cartridge recycling, tourism promotion, and beautification projects. Taking advantage of an opportunity to employ a summer college student, PRIDE is promoting a project where the youth of the community write, produce, and present a play about Stafford. It all adds up to a group of committed volunteers that are improving the local economy, tourism, aesthetics, cultural opportunities, and building relationships in a way that made our Community of Excellence evaluators say, "Wow!" The community investment, the shared leadership and resourcefulness of Stafford PRIDE are qualities that make this truly a community of excellence.

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 2006 - 2007 program year, the PRIDE program was successful because of the investment of many partners. Thank you to these organizations and individuals that have made important contributions to a very successful year of community improvement.

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

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

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

Kansas Campus Compact – *AmeriCorps Summer Intern* Project

Kansas PRIDE Inc. – Board of Directors

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRIDE Sponsors

The Kansas PRIDE Program gratefully acknowledges the contributions of our partners and sponsors in the 2006 - 2007 program year whose generosity supports the efforts to build better communities through the training and recognition opportunities of the PRIDE programs.

Partner Level $500 to $999

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Contact: William K. Kloeblen
(316) 321-2200

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623 S.W. 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612
Contact: Mr. Jerry Slaughter
(785) 235-2383

Kansas Rural Water Association
P.O. Box 226
Seneca, KS 66538
Contact: Mr. Elmer Ronnebaum
(785)-336-3760

Southern Kansas Telephone Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 800
Clearwater, KS 67026
Contact: Lonnie Steiben
(620) 584-2255

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(913) 764-0531 Ext. 225 (office)

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Topeka, KS 66604-4407
Contact: Mr. Doug Wareham
(785) 232-3444

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1330 Canterbury
Hays, KS 67601
(800) 222-3121
Contact: Larry Berg

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4700 Hwy 56
Owensboro, KY 42301
(270) 852-5000
Contact: Tamara Morgan

In Kind

Kansas Association of Counties
6206 S.W. 9th Terrace
Topeka, KS 66615
Contact: Mr. Randy Allen
(785) 272 2585

League of Kansas Municipalities
300 S.W. 8th Street
Topeka, KS 66603
Contact: Ms. Kim Winn
(785) 354-9565

KANSAS PRIDE

For more information about the PRIDE program, contact:

Dan Kahl
Extension PRIDE Program Office
Kansas State University
Research and Extension
101 Umberger Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-3405
Phone: 785-532-5840
Fax: (785) 532-6175
e-mail: *dankahl@ksu.edu*
Web site: *www.kansaspridepro gram.ksu.edu*

Connie Hoch
Extension PRIDE Program Office
Kansas State University
Research and Extension
101 Umberger Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-3405
Phone: 785-532-5840
Fax: (785) 532-6175
e-mail: *choch@ksu.edu*
Web site: *www.kansaspridepro gram.ksu.edu*

Jeanne Stinson
Community Development Division
Kansas Department of Commerce
1000 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 100
Topeka, KS 66612-1354
Phone: (785) 296-3485
Fax: (785) 296-3776
TTY (Hearing Impaired): (785) 296-3487
e-mail: *jstinson@kansascommerce.com*
Web site: *www.kansascommerce.com*

J.R. Robl
Community Development Division
Kansas Department of Commerce
1000 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 100
Topeka, KS 66612-1354
Phone: (785) 296-6815
Fax: (785) 296-3776
TTY (Hearing Impaired): (785) 296-3487
e-mail: *jrobl@kansascommerce.com*
Web site: *www.kansascommerce.com*

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