We Kan!

~ a rural culture newsletter ~

August 2012

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kansassampler.org

The mission of the Kansas Sampler Foundation is to preserve and sustain rural culture.

CATCHING UP WITH YOU

Hello!

We hope you've been receiving the We Kan! Tidbits e-blasts. If not, we've missed you!

We're writing now for four reasons.

1. To make sure we're connected.
2. To let you know what we've been doing and what it means for you.
3. To ask for membership support.
4. To share observations.

SUPPORTING KSF IS SUPPORTING YOU

We are constantly out there working on the front line for rural communities:

- Visiting towns.
- Doing interviews with the media or providing background or story leads.
- Presenting programs about things to see and do, or about common rural issues.
- Meeting with people who advocate for rural.
- Planning a class, conference or the festival.
- Designing new rural concepts and projects.
- Writing newsletters.

We request your membership support to offset the many things we do on behalf of Kansas communities that are not compensated or are under-compensated. We will never exclude a town because they can't contribute but if everyone chips in something, we can make it work. And thank you!

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WE'RE "ERV"ing!

It has been a decade since Marci's last trip to every town in the state. It's time once again to make the journey to research for the next *Kansas Guidebook for Explorers* --- and to check on towns to see how they are doing.

Some things are different this time around.

- The trip has a name--ERV! The Explorer Research Voyage is taking place in a 2012 GMC Terrain loaned to the Kansas Sampler Foundation by Midway Motors of McPherson. The car is the Explorer Research Vehicle! You'll recognize ERV when we drive into town.
- WenDee LaPlant, assistant director, is on the trip as a co-researcher and Facebook and Twitter expert.
- Thanks to digital cameras, we are taking pictures for the guidebook but also as archival evidence of how communities look in 2012 and 2013.
- The guidebook won't come out until 2015ish so we're blogging about each day's adventures. We want to inspire the public to explore and give exposure to the communities NOW!

We research a county at a time, in no particular order, but don't make appointments. We want to see the town just as the public would see it.

Logo was created and donated by artist/muralist Jim Stukey of Burlington

SUPPORT KSF *Con't from p. 1*

We are funded primarily through earned income which includes book sales, membership, program fees, and sponsorships. We hope to earn your extra contributions.

Here's the ask.

If you haven't made a contribution this year, would you choose an affordable membership level (see insert) to help support the work of the Kansas Sampler *Foundation?*

KSF PROJECTS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES

PowerUp MOVEMENT

Ruralbychoice.com

PowerUps are 21-39 years old and are rural by choice. Power Ons are those over 40 and still passionate about rural living. The Movement is about all of us working together to sustain communities with an emphasis on engaging and connecting PowerUps. Power Up Big Rural Brainstorms will take place October 6 and 8.

RURAL KANSAS: Come & Get It

Getruralkansas.org

We've held three classes this summer (**La Cygne, Hays, and Wamego**) to teach communities how to populate their own page on getruralkansas.org and a "Get" Facebook page. This site is a collective promotion for rural communities that don't have their own tourism web site. Over 81 towns are now live on the site.

KANSAS EXPLORERS CLUB

Explorekansas.org

We continue to grow and nurture the audience that has an interest in exploring towns of every size and making a difference through their visits. Average current membership is 1,700. We've had a group adventure in **Greensburg** this year with another one scheduled for **Marion County** in October and a "Bring your own lawn chair" (BYOLC) event in **Piqua** in September.

KANSAS SAMPLER FESTIVAL

Kansassamplerfestival.com

The underlying goal of the festival is to provide communities of every size a quality environment where they can strut their stuff and collectively prove that Kansas has a lot to offer. Liberal will host the 24th annual event on May 4 & 5, 2013. The 2014-2015 host will be announced in late August 2012.

BIG RURAL BRAINSTORM

kansassampler.org/wekan/page.php?id=488

There will be more of these events to bring people from every aspect of rural life together to figure out how to move things forward. There are no keynote speakers at this event. The experts are the attendees.

KANSAS GUIDEBOOK FOR EXPLORERS

kansassampler.org/erv/

The next edition of this guidebook will be designed to bring people to your town, help them see Kansas with new eyes, and help them know how to make a difference in small ways. 22,000 copies of the previous guidebook were sold.

WE KAN! CONFERENCE

March 12-13, 2013, Salina

The conference, as always, will feature presenters who implement successful Explorer tourism or community development efforts in small towns.

8 WONDERS OF KANSAS

8wonders.org

216 places in Kansas will forever have the designation of being a winner or finalist in the one-time "8 Wonders of Kansas" contests. Designations are being used in marketing campaigns. Many entries report very positive results due to the contest. More than 11,000 people have purchased the *8 Wonders of Kansas Guidebook* with another 9,000 books available. The book is intended to inspire travel in Kansas but it's also being sent out of state to showcase Kansas and to recruit and welcome people to Kansas. More than 100,000 people voted in the contests and got to know Kansas.

THREE CONCEPTS ON OUR MIND

We Kan! Bank
Pump House
Map of statewide projects with donation

STAYING CONNECTED

You are receiving this newsletter because you are part of the rural Kansas team. We hope you've been receiving the We Kan! Tidbits e-blasts.

HOW TO JOIN THE E-BLASTS

Go to kansassampler.org and find the place to join our e-blasts on the right side.

- We Kan! Tidbits
- Explorer Extras
- Kansas Sampler Festival
- Media
- PowerUp

If you have registered and are not receiving the e-blasts, your server may be blocking this Constant Contact e-blast. Contact your server.

THE ERV BLOG – *kansassampler.org/erv/*

The ERV blog has more pictures and copy than the guidebook will have! Follow our adventures to every town in the state and "Get Kansas!"

FIND OUR PAGES ON FACEBOOK

- Kansas Explorers Club
- Kansas Sampler Foundation
- ERV
- PowerUps – we're Rural by Choice
- Kansas Events (List your events here!)
- Kansas Open for Business (post business news here – businesses for sale, businesses you are seeking, job availability)

WE KAN!
c/o Kansas Sampler Foundation
978 Arapaho Road
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WHAT WE'RE LEARNING ON THE ERV TRIP

We have only been to 20 towns but already we see trends. An advocate from one small town (260 people) told us that his town has stubbornly decided not to die. And you can see the difference!

1) **Trails and parks.** Walking trails and improved parks are everywhere, as are swimming pools. The town of Parker sold sections of the new park sidewalk to families who could decorate it as they wish (see ERV blog). People had fun with it!

2) **Find an item** in your store that is unique and promote your store with emphasis on that product in your tourism promotions. For instance, Glogg is sold in Scott's Thriftway in Lindsborg. Because people don't know what this ethnic drink is, clever focus on this will bring people to the store!

3) Restaurants that go to the extra effort to make **made-from-scratch food** are doing well in towns of every size. Fresh foods, locally-grown foods add to the advantage.

4) **Farmer's Markets** are everywhere!

5) Businesses, especially restaurants**, that are clean** are doing better and are much more appealing to customers than those who aren't.

6) For first-time customers, a friendly clerk can make the difference of a sale, of inclusion in a guidebook, or forming a good impression for the entire town. **Who you hire is an important business decision.**

7) Locals sometime have **misconceptions** that the local grocery has higher prices than super centers. Check again – and if your hometown store is clean and offers good service, support them!

8) Does your door or façade need some **minor repairs**? Maybe the sidewalk in front of your store needs swept daily. Make sure to make the first impression a good one, even for locals.

9) More and more small towns have **loft living** on the second story above downtown businesses!

10) **Preservation efforts** are everywhere!

11) **Simple or even crude interpretive** signage is much better than not telling the story at all.

12) **Public restrooms.** These are becoming more and more common and are nicely done. Great examples are found in Lindsborg, McPherson, and Marquette. Lucas has the most amazing public restrooms, possibly in the United States!

13) Great job to those who have **created web sites or Facebook pages** for your businesses and local events. You're helping people find you!

14) People who **volunteer** for a town seem to really love the town and love living there. Make it appealing for your citizens to get involved! (In Courtland, they assign everyone in the town a task for their local event).

WE KAN! AWARDS

Each year ten unsuspecting individuals are recognized for their contribution to helping preserve and sustain rural culture 2012 winners are:

Myrna Barnes, Elkhart, Commitment to county history

Amy Bickel, *Hutchinson News*, Perfectly penning about past Kansas towns

Vicki Gillett, Larned, Longtime community promoter

Connie Grafel, Oberlin, Steady regional influence

Keystone Gallery, Logan County, Fabulous fossil stewards

Connie Kimsey, Arkansas City, Rock solid regional partner

Dick Mosier, Herington, Valuable volunteer and Kansas Explorer

Fred Peterson, Marquette, Determined community booster

Julie Roller, Wamego, Awesome supporter of her towns

Ruben Schuckman, Hays, Devoted promoter of Ellis County towns

2012 WE KAN! MEMBERS

Your membership this year also helps support ERV (Explorer Research Voyage).

**Asterisks indicate those who signed up to be part of the ERV promotion.*

AD ASTRA ($1,000+)

Help pay for a day of ERV expenses plus some expenses back at the office and become eligible for a banner ad on the ERV blog for two years.

Sally Frame, Kinsley

SUNFLOWER ($500+)

Pay for a day of ERV expenses and become eligible for a banner ad on the ERV blog for a year which includes a link to your organization and a picture and link to your favorite attraction.

Chanute Area Chamber of Commerce & Office of Tourism*
Clark Construction, Hutchinson*
Don & Janet Shepherd, Haysville
Finney County Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Garden City*
Jerry Kissel, Wetmore*
Jim & Bonnie Miller, McPherson
Kansas Barn Alliance*
Kansas Travel Division, Topeka *
Kansas Underground Salt Museum, Hutchinson*
Larry & Karen Hornbaker, Wichita*
Susan Howell, Wichita
WaKeeney Travel & Tourism*
Winfield Convention & Tourism*

MEADOWLARK ($250+)

Help pay for a tank of gas, food, and a night's lodging for ERV and become eligible to be a day sponsor twice on the ERV blog.

Franklin & Nancy Thompson, Lenexa
Jane Koger, Republic of Grass
James & Patricia Schramm, Home
Shirley Black, Howard

If you've already made a contribution this year and would like to upgrade for the ERV exposure benefits, just e-mail WenDee at wendee@kansassampler.org.

COTTONWOOD ($100+)

Help pay for a tank of gas and food for one ERV day and become eligible to be a day sponsor on the ERV blog, which includes a link to a favorite attraction.

Anonymous
Bill & Susan Bunyan, Dodge City*
Chris & John Hershberger, Inman**
Cloud County Tourism, Concordia
Dave & Sandy Procter, Manhattan
Fourth of July Celebration, Wamego*
Gary & Bunny McCloud, Wamego
Janet Krack, Wichita*
John & Charlene Walleghen, Wichita
Ken & Bobbie Bower, Leavenworth*
Lydia Gray, Liberal*
Manhattan Convention & Visitors Bureau*
Mark & Carolyn McGinn, Sedgwick
Marquette Chamber of Commerce*
Niko Letunic, San Francisco, CA
Sarah Werner, Winfield
Tom & Joyce Bishop, Holton
Wellington Chamber of Commerce*

BUFFALO ($50+)

Help pay for a tank of gas for ERV and get listed on the Support link on the ERV blog.

Christy Hopkins, Tribune
Ed & Marta Howe, Eskridge
Fort's Cedar View Bed and Breakfast, Ulysses
Jay & Lisa Yoder, Partridge
Lidia Gray, Liberal
Rose Pace, Salina
Seasons of the Fox B&B, Michael J. Fox & Sue Schlegel, Lindsborg*
Ad Astra Publishing, Lucas

HOME ON THE RANGE ($25+)

Help pay general expenses and get listed on the We Kan! Tidbits e-blast or in print newsletter.

Bob & Dottie Harder, Topeka
Ellen Morgan, Salina
Helene Landenberger, St. Francis
Jeff Hofaker, Phillipsburg
Marcey Gregory, Goddard
Nancy Nolte, Blue Rapids
Old School Seals, Tipton
Ragnar Thorisson, Seattle, WA

SUPPORT KSF IN 2012

1) If you haven't contributed yet in 2012, please fill out form below. ERV sponsorships double as We Kan! Memberships.
2) Consider also joining or renewing your Kansas Explorer Club membership

PowerUp Big Rural Brainstorm Sponsorships to be announced soon - $200 (will be listed as sponsors on information about both the Oct. 6 and Oct. 8 BRB's).

Pass It Forward fundraiser – Direct mailer fundraiser will come out in November. We suggest becoming a We Kan! member or making a contribution to this fundraiser.

FOR YOUR BUDGET CONSIDERATION IN 2013

- **We Kan! membership**
- **ERV blog banner ads ($500) – Doubles as your We Kan! membership.**
- **ERV day sponsorship ($100) – Doubles as your We Kan! membership.**
- **We Kan! Conference (March) sponsorships will be between $50 and $250.**
- **Kansas Explorer Club membership – Individual $18.61; Family $30.**

WE KAN! Membership Form **Unless your name is listed on the other side of this insert, your We Kan! membership is due!**

Name _____ **Organization** _____

Mailing Address (include ST & Zip) _____

Email_____**Phone**_____**Website**_____

WE KAN! MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

___ $25; ___ $50; ___ $100; ___ $250; ___ $500; ___ $1,000; ___ Other

___ I'm also paying for Kansas Explorer Club membership ($18.61 individual; $30 family). The member must be a person.

___ Do you prefer to be listed as anonymous on the ERV blog? **_____ Are you getting the We Kan! Tidbit _____ e-blasts?**

(Your membership - We Kan! or Explorer - will be good for 12 months upon receipt of payment)

PAYMENT:

_____ Check enclosed **_____ Credit card#** _____ **(we do not accept Am. Epress)**

Expiration date:_____**Name on card:**_____

Return form and payment to: Kansas Sampler Foundation, 978 Arapaho Road, Inman, KS 67546
Or renew online at kansassampler.org/wekan/