

K-State's Engagement E-News

Connecting K-State to Kansas
and Communities Worldwide

Engagement Through K-State Research and Extension

This edition of the newsletter will focus on the engaged work of Kansas State University through the K-State Research and Extension system. As a land-grant university, K-State has a state-wide system through which applied research, teaching and service meet the citizenry of the state. The Center for Engagement and Community Development works to be the catalyst, connector and promoter of efforts engaging both university and extension on projects which address public needs concerning citizens, businesses and communities.

At the heart of K-State engagement, you will find two common threads— our commitment to creating partnerships of mutual learning and respect, and to facilitating knowledge creation between citizens and researchers toward the resolution of complex issues.

In this issue of K-State's Engagement E-News, you will find examples of collaborative, engaged work that contribute to healthy, sustainable communities. We have highlighted four stories that reflect collaborative efforts to strengthen social, human, cultural, political and economic aspects of community.

To see more examples of engaged work and to learn more about the K-State Center for Engagement and Community Development, visit www.k-state.edu/cecd. To learn more about the work and programs of K-State Research and Extension, visit www.ksre.k-state.edu.

Collaborations Featured

Morland Grocery Project

GetREAL

*Healthy Gardening in Juniper
Gardens*

Business Succession Planning



Distance Collaboration

by Mindy Von Elling

One of the most successful ventures that the Center for Engagement and Community Development has started in collaboration with a community extension office, is the Morland grocery store project. CECD has been partnering with the Graham County Extension office and principle investigators, Chris Petty and Leah Tsoodle, to develop a new grocery store in Morland, Kan. after the previous one was shut down due to its owner's retirement.

So what makes this project so special? Simply the healthy and successful collaboration between a major land-grant university and a community that is three and a half hours away. Chris Petty, agriculture and 4-H agent of the Graham County Extension office, said one of the main reasons the project has been so successful is the constant communication between partners.



The Morland grocery store in its beginning redevelopment stages.

“Communication has probably been the key as far as getting this project rolling because my office is three and a half hours away from Manhattan,” Petty said. “Without good communication as far as online and through telephone, we wouldn't be able to get it done the way we have.”

Partnering with Petty on the project and someone who is equally excited about the outcome is Leah Tsoodle, an extension associate in the agricultural economics department at Kansas State University. Tsoodle said she thinks any potential obstacle has been overridden by technology and a key component: communication.

“They've been very open to any type of communication. I think that's the key to

overcoming that distance obstacle,” Tsoodle said of the Graham County extension office.

The grocery store project has included a series of surveys sent out to the Morland community, as well as refurbishing the interior. One of the biggest challenges occurred with the location of the store. Tsoodle said the store was first projected to be built on a floodplain, but new survey results confirmed the location for the store was ready for development. Incidentally, the only thing needed was more funding.

“One of the strongest positive influences in the project was the support of the CECD personnel,” Tsoodle said.

With the help of CECD, any logistics problem the project approached, such as the aforementioned, was overcome. The collaboration among the university and the extension office has made the project so successful and made long-distance project work do-able.

“I think it's having good partners that have been willing to help out and have a good attitude,” Petty said. “Having good partners to work with really makes the job easy and their enthusiasm helps me be enthused. Having good people to work with sure makes life a lot easier.”

The new Morland grocery store is expected to be completely refurbished and erected by October 1, 2010.

Getting Real

by Mindy Von Elling

GetREAL is the name of the game and the slogan could not ring more true. Investigators on the GetREAL project (Rural Engagement and Action Leadership) believe their endeavor had a real impact on rural communities around the state of Kansas.

“It's really embodied within the name: Rural Engagement and Action Leadership,” Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development said. “It's leadership in action.”

The project was funded by the Center for Engagement and Community Development in the fall of 2007 and within the past two years, has generated a large impact on communities due to the dedication and collaboration of its partners.

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The goal of the project was to imbue a sense of leadership and leadership practice within rural communities so that citizens could feel a bond and strength within the community. A grant of \$500 was given to each community to fund projects.

“The reason we chose the name REAL is because we wanted to have a real impact,” Wilson said. “We wanted to get beyond the academic theory and see leadership at work on the ground.”

Any obstacles that the investigative group may have encountered were squandered by good communication, according to Donita Whitney Bammerlin, instructor of business management.



Speakers at the E3 seminar in the spring of 2009 introduced ways to promote leadership and cohesiveness throughout Kansas communities.

“The extension mission is to serve through delivery, knowledge that is generated and created at the university,” Bammerlin said. “If we keep that information in an ivory tower, it doesn’t make a difference in the daily lives of all our constituents, the taxpayers, the citizens in the communities of Kansas. I feel like the REAL project modeled delivering that across the state of Kansas.”

One of the biggest ways that Wilson said he has seen extension at work in this project is through the actions of Western Reno County.

“They formed an organization called Fairfield Area Partners enrolled in the Kansas PRIDE Program and they’ve done a whole list of things,” Wilson said.

That list included road trips with city commissioners, surveys, work groups and even obtaining a feature in *Government Journal Magazine*. Besides these achievements however, Wilson said there is collaboration with extension through the PRIDE Program, further emphasizing the importance of engagement through extension.

“The PRIDE Program is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension, so that’s a very nice connection there,” Wilson said.

Perhaps one of the biggest achievements this project has made through active collaboration is turning something small into something large enough to impact several Kansas communities.

“We didn’t have that big of a grant, but we were able to make a difference in several communities, not just one, so it was the multiplier effect,” Bammerlin said. “We used a small grant to touch the lives of many people.”

And Wilson would agree.

“The \$500 REAL grant was leveraged into about \$2,000 worth of investment that was made just with a little bit of encouragement due to this process,” Wilson said. “We’ve seen impact at the community level that excites me.”

Healthy Partnership

by Mindy Von Elling

Healthy eating and maintaining a healthy lifestyle has long been a focus for the majority of Americans, including those that may not have the best resources readily available. Principle investigators Spencer Wood, assistant professor of anthropology at Kansas State University; and Nozella Brown, county extension agent for the metropolitan sector, recognized a need for improvement in community health in the Juniper Gardens area of Wyandotte, Kan.

A community gardening project idea was developed in order for the citizens of the community to grow their own food and experience the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.

“We talk about gardening and we talk about low income families taking up gardening and making dietary changes,” Brown said. “When they begin to learn the benefits of eating healthier and they begin to taste it from the garden and discover that it’s really kind of fun and their children enjoy it, and they can share it with their neighbors, that’s exciting for me.”

The curriculum for the program consists of going into the impoverished community and teaching seminars on how to grow food at home and cook it in a healthier way for the family.

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The program has been somewhat difficult to install, so it is just getting under way, having stumbled over the obstacle of working with an agricultural university to develop an urban area.

“I don’t know if the university had all of the resources available that could have been helpful, just because we were looking at gardening in an urban setting,” Brown said. “There were barriers there that I don’t think the university knew about.”

Despite the project’s slow start, Wood said the preliminary efforts have paid off.

“I’ve made a concerted effort to try to hire local folks to pay respondents for their time to keep some portion of the resources as much as possible in the community,” Wood said. “So far it seems to be working.”



Residents of Juniper Gardens in Wyandotte County are taught gardening and healthier eating.

Brown, whose office is in Kansas City and who has had the opportunity to teach seminars, as well as witness results firsthand, said that the effort has not been put to waste.

“Extension has been willing to go into an area that is considered to be depressed,” Brown said. “Yet when you go in you realize it’s just parents that care about their children and their family and they’re not any different than anyone else, so it is gratifying to know that we went past where we were told and just got to know the people.”

She said that the residents of Juniper Gardens are already asking when they can start their own first gardens and she feels that extension and K-State have worked well together to provide a sense of empowerment to the people of the community, as well as draw out of them what they did not even know was there. Wood shared her opinion and said it is his personal task to make sure the community has its own part in the project.

“I ask the community what they think needs to be done, how they would go about it, who they think should be talked to,” Wood said.

However, the two investigators said there is more to be done on this project to uplift the community of Juniper Gardens and that the work is far from over.

According to Brown, despite the light beginnings of the project, she has already learned as much as she has taught and through the course of this curriculum, there will be more education for all parties involved.

“We all come from different cultures, different experiences, and that’s exciting and we can learn from one another that we all have something to contribute,” Brown said. “That’s what I’ve learned as much from the families as what I have taught.”

CECD Mission & Vision

To promote engagement across the breadth of Kansas State University - in teaching, research and outreach - and to connect the vast resources of KSU to the significant issues of public need facing Kansas and communities worldwide.

Engagement occurs when collaborative partners — both on and off-campus stakeholders — work together to address a public need in a way that is both reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Through engagement, K-State endeavors to fulfill its historic land grant mission.

Open For Business

by Mindy Von Elling

A familiar phenomenon that has been sweeping across Kansas is finally being recognized by those seeking to combat the corporate struggle. On a daily basis, small business owners and farmers across the Midwest deal with family, weather and poor business planning issues that cause profits to dwindle. Principle investigators Susan Schlichting and Holly Dickman of the Ellis County Research and Extension office launched a DVD project two and a half years ago to teach successful business planning to small business owners and farmers.

“The DVD consists of several segments with various speakers talking about various aspects to consider with business succession planning,” Dickman said.

The goal of the DVD is to provide a private, secure lesson for small business owners in rural areas to implement when planning for successful business ventures. Susan Schlichting, 4-H Youth Development agent at the Ellis County Extension office explained what aspects could hinder a small business and what the DVD highlights.

“Looking at various scenarios that could happen, whether it be a tornado that comes along and wipes things out or there’s a divorce in the family,” Schlichting said. “How does a business cope with those kinds of things as it’s trying to make decisions for its future?”

The DVD was just released January of 2010 and so far, there has not been much feedback. However, Dickman and Schlichting said they believe this format is more beneficial than conducting seminars within the communities because it provides business owners with a sense of privacy in conjunction with a personal topic.

“Because this is a very personal topic, a lot of people don’t want to be seen in the community as thinking about retiring,” Schlichting said. “Businesses tend to be sort of private about those things. We felt doing it via DVD where they could sit in their own living room was probably a more appropriate approach than asking people to come into a meeting that maybe nobody will attend.”

Before the release of this product, there was a significant amount of collaboration that went into the development. The Ellis County Extension office partnered with groups like the agricultural communication department at Kansas State University, specialists at Ft. Hays State and the local high school’s radio and TV program. Although these groups working together provided a solid partnership, it also raised some obstacles.

“We just had to work around each other’s schedules,” Dickman said. “That was difficult at times. That probably led to some delays as far as getting the project out, but in the end it was great to collaborate with them because they did that for us as a favor.”



The opening shot for the DVD features two members of the planning committee symbolizing a dead business.

Despite the difficulty of conflicting schedules, the DVD production became a success and has been in circulation to be used by multiple small business owners and farmers in Western Kansas. This key public is getting new information that is not necessarily readily or widely available, and the principle investigators on this project have given business succession planning a voice.

“When we started down this path, we had a lot of learning to do,” Schlichting said. “The thing that brought us down the path to do this in the first place was that there was not a lot of information out there about business succession planning.”

Let the learning begin.

UPCOMING
EVENTS



President Schulz stated in his February letter to faculty and staff, *“Any successful plan should have significant involvement from the campus community;”* and asked, *“Does everyone have the chance to get involved?”*

The yOURcampaign is a great way for students to promote their organization in a campaign and is CECD’s way of showing student engagement in our communities. We are asking student groups to submit a 3-5 minute video sharing their story of how they are involved or what made them become involved in the Wildcat community. These videos will be shared through YouTube and K-StateTV on April 21 from 10-2 p.m. in the K-State Student Union. We will also be using Twitter and Facebook to encourage students to offer their personal stories to our campaign and to show our community how involved the students are at K-State. Go Cats!

Video submissions due: April 12, 2010, by 5:00 p.m.

E-mail: involvedbecause@gmail.com

Event date: April 21, 2010, 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Location: K-State Student Union

Questions? E-mail: involvedbecause@gmail.com

Rural Grocery Store Summit

Mark your calendars!

The Center for Engagement and Community Development will be hosting a Rural Grocery Store Summit. Please join us:

June 14-15, 2010

K-State Alumni Center in Manhattan, KS

For more information and to register, please visit:

www.dce.k-state.edu/conf/ruralgrocery



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