



KEITH COUNTY FOUNDATION FUND

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ~ Where Are We Headed?



The Keith County Foundation Fund is an affiliate of the Nebraska Community Foundation. The Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) is recognized across the country as a model of how community foundations should be structured. They believe in empowering local leaders to identify needs in their own communities, and then provide the support needed to address those needs through peer training and professional services. We raise money locally for our Legacy Endowment, and we direct all disbursements through our local Fund Advisory Committee (FAC).

Keith County Foundation Fund has awarded grants totaling over \$300,000 since 2004. Those grants are provided through our Legacy Endowment Fund. Over time, our local Legacy Endowment has more than doubled in size, and we are now able to grant about \$30,000 each year. With this growth, the vision for our endowment fund is growing as well.

Starting in 2017, we began to look for projects and programs we can partner with to make a bigger impact in Keith County. We have held public visioning sessions to help identify the most pressing needs in Keith County. As a result of those sessions, we have shifted the focus of our grant giving to include areas where we can have a bigger, long term impact on the needs in our communities.

Some areas we feel we can impact are workforce development and market rate housing. Keith County operates at nearly full employment, which is a good thing, but also makes it challenging for businesses to find a pool of qualified workers who are seeking jobs. When a new employee moves to the area to start a job, there is often a shortage of housing for employees to "land in" while they start their new jobs. We feel like we can make an impact in these and other areas by partnering with local groups who are already working to solve these kinds of problems.



Our Fund Advisory Committee is made up of local volunteers who are dedicated to helping solve some of these long-term needs. We are working to grow our Legacy Endowment significantly over the next several years in order to meet the challenges we face in Keith County. The advantage of an unrestricted endowment such as our Legacy Fund is that future advisory committees can address the needs of our communities as they change over time. By building our endowment, we can continue to make a significant impact in our communities.

I want to personally thank everyone who has been a part of our Keith County communities, and those who have donated to our Legacy Endowment or served on our Advisory Committee over time.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Eric Duhachek, Chair
KCFF Advisory Committee

Fund Advisory Committee Members Attend NCFs Annual Conference

Six members of our FAC attended the Nebraska Community Foundation's Annual Celebration and Affiliated Fund Training, Expo and Banquet in LaVista in early November.

This year's affiliated fund training focused on identifying opportunities, imagining new possibilities and acting together to bring about the hometown and counties of our dreams.

Ideas and information from each breakout session was bountiful – and each of our participants wanted to share a little of the wealth of information and excitement about what's happening in our state. As new-to-our FAC member Angie Kolste stated, "This educational event reinforced the importance of growing partnerships to build a better Nebraska. Together, our KCFF and NCF are providing new opportunities to showcase our county's unique and historical attractions. I am honored to be surrounded by a such a special group of people and look forward to the new opportunities for Keith County!"

"This educational event reinforced the importance of growing partnerships to build a better Keith County. Together, our KCFF and NCF are providing new opportunities to showcase our county's unique and historical attractions."

**~ ANGIE KOLSTE,
FAC MEMBER**



KCFF committee members attending NCF's Annual Meeting; L-R front row: Pam Abbott, Angie Kolste, Ron Hollmann; back row: Ken Snyder, Mary Weber, Eric Duhachek

Angie Kolste

I attended a couple of breakout sessions; Engaging Young People and Listening, Learning and Doing Better Together.

The first discussed how other communities are committed to fostering collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity in young community leaders.

The latter discussed how to identify the strengths of each team member and leading through them.

Each speaker stressed the importance of working together to grow Nebraska's philanthropic organizations which would enable us to retain/grow our workforce, attract newcomers, and give our high school graduates incentives to build their lives in Nebraska.

This event truly reinforced the importance of growing partnerships to build a better Nebraska.

Ron Hollmann

The retention and return of youth to a community is necessary to promote growth and viability and I thought a breakout session that discussed Aquaculture was a great example of how to involve and educate youth using ELO (expanded learning opportunities). This provided a package curriculum to the school.

A group, Whispering Roots, provided a presentation on recirculation aquaculture. This company provides a system where fish are utilized with a circulation mechanism to provide nutrients to plants. The closed system allows harvest of the plants and ultimately, the fish. The system is scalable to allow involvement at all age levels. The benefit of knowledge about all aspects of constructing the system from actual building to understanding the science of managing plants, water and fish with all being managed by the students. The cycle is completed by learning how to prepare the food for consumption. Aquaculture will be a significant provider of food in the future and knowledge about the functions would be valuable to our youth.

Pam Abbott

I first attended the Rural Futures Institute overview, specifically briefing us on the Student Serviceships available to rural Nebraska communities.

These “serviceships” connect communities to college students and students to rural communities, leaders and mentors. It is a hybrid between service learning and traditional internships and “serviceships” provide communities with tangible results on important self-defined projects while giving these students resume-building work and snapshots into life in rural communities.

A panel of students that have experienced a “serviceship” gave insight into what helped create the best synergistic outcome for both the community and themselves as participants.

In addition, I attended a workshop that discussed how to turn our local assets into opportunities. Some of the greatest assets in our communities are in plain sight, but often overlooked. We learned how other communities have capitalized on these assets - whether they were natural, cultural, relational, or something else - to create a more magnetic community.

Another workshop, Leadership Advancement, segued our FAC’s interest in youth engagement, retainment and development. I heard how other communities are successfully teaching their young adults skills such as grant writing, community economics, community building, and identification of hidden assets, to name a few.



Pam Abbott speaks to banquet attendees about the power of partnerships and collaboration.

Ken Snyder

I attended a meeting to learn about Early Childhood Development. In fact, as often happens, I learned much, much more about something quite different. Yes, I heard about the tremendous impact that high quality education can have on very young children. I heard that parents often decide where to live depending on where the best child care is available. However I learned something more important. I learned how much community members can accomplish when they work together.

Here is what I heard: Red Cloud, the Home of Nebraska’s most famous author, Willa Cather, was a sleepy town of about 1000 people typical of rural Nebraska. It was in decline like many Nebraska small towns. Then in 2003 the community began the restoration of the Opera House, where Willa Cather had learned to love the arts. The Cather Foundation turned the building into a vibrant community hub. Then, the Red Cloud Community Foundation, that had existed mostly to give out scholarships, began to raise serious money and hired Jarrod McCartney as tourism director. Later, the Cather Foundation raised a staggering \$7 million and renovated a city block of the historic Main Street. Former first lady Laura Bush cut the ribbon on the National Willa Cather Center in 2017. Separately, a group of parents spearheaded by Ashley Armstrong, a Red Cloud Community Foundation board member, decided to remedy the area’s appalling lack of child care. In March 2018, a child care center will open that is capable of handling 80 children from six weeks to twelve years of age. It will offer after school programs and summer programs, all at a level that is as good as the best offered in Nebraska.

What I learned is how powerful a community can be when it works together.

Fund Advisory Committee Members Attend NCFs Annual Conference - cont'd



Past and present Keith County residents enjoyed NCF's evening banquet (Bev and Andy Pollock, Brad and Bonnie Bauer)

Mary Weber

At the Nebraska Community Foundation Annual Meeting, I was able to attend sessions entitled "Youth Engagement" and "Celebrating and Creating a Positive Culture." Both were filled with valuable information and support for our current challenge grant embarkment.

Keith County Foundation Fund has a profound appreciation and admiration of our local youth. However, we would like to implement more creative programs that will focus on engaging the next generation of community builders. When young people feel connected to their community they are more likely to return.

Eric Duhachek

I attended a workshop on Workforce Development in Rural Communities. One of the biggest problems in rural areas is a shortage of skilled workers for specific jobs. Rural communities in Nebraska tend to operate close to full employment, which leaves a smaller pool of workers to draw from. The purpose of the work-shop was to share ideas from different communities as to how they have worked to solve this problem.

There seemed to be a recurring theme among all the communities: youth engagement. How do we attract area youth back to the communities after college? Many communities are working to bridge the gap between the schools and the business community by

providing students with interactive, behind the scenes tours of local businesses. The goal is to show students what employment opportunities are available in the communities they grew up in. Many times, the lack of awareness for these opportunities allows students to believe that the only chance they have to succeed is to look elsewhere for employment opportunities after college.

In Keith County, our FAC has recently partnered with our local economic development office and employers to provide reverse scholarships, which can reimburse tuition costs for someone who moves to our communities to accept a position that requires specific skills.

The image shows a website header for the Keith County Foundation Fund. The header includes navigation links: HOME, ABOUT KCF, GRANT PROJECTS, NEWSLETTERS, PUBLICITY & EVENTS, MORE, and a red DONATE button. Below the header is a photograph of a young girl in a pink swimsuit building a sandcastle on a beach. Overlaid on the photo is the text: "Building for a better tomorrow begins with you". To the left of the photo is a graphic with a megaphone icon and the text: "YAY HOORAY! our shiny NEW SITE IS LIVE! right this way".

Visit us at our new website: www.keithcountyfoundation.org or www.facebook.com/KeithCounty/

2017 KCFF Grants

Sheila Mitchell, Grant Chair

KCFF was able to distribute \$37,575.00 to 12 civic projects during our 14th year of grant giving. With the most recent gifts, KCFF has distributed more than \$300,000.00 to a diverse group of civic projects and organizations. The recipients were a wide ranging group of organizations and projects again this year.

Organizations we were able to benefit this year:

- The Brule Fire District requested funds for a communication system to its grass rig tanker.
- The Lemoyne Senior Center needed new kitchen equipment and warming table to serve their lunch guests.
- Keith County Historical Society plans to remodel the building they recently acquired to create a museum next to the Mansion.
- Ogallala Arts Council asked for funds to help with a youth arts program.
- Rotary Club of Ogallala plans to erect a historical marker in conjunction with the State of Nebraska on Highway 30.
- Ogallala Baseball Association wants to build an awning cover for the bleacher seating at Legion field.
- Keith County Senior Center also needed new kitchen equipment to serve the many guests they serve at lunchtime.
- Lake Mac Dive and Rescue wished to purchase a side scan sonar/ underwater communications/PFD.
- Keith County Food Pantry wished to acquire a new larger refrigerator.



Date Nights 2017

Sheila Mitchell, Coordinator

KCFF started Date Nights in early 2016. We had a series of three dinners at local restaurants and averaged 35 couples for each event. The dates were late January early March and mid April so not to conflict with holidays. The restaurants kept their meals to a set price which allowed for the us to make a small profit and give the participants a tax deductible donation. We had a great response from last years donors and many asked for us to do it again in 2017. While a good many of the 2016 participants joined us again this year we have attracted some new people.

"I think the Date nights have expanded awareness of the KCFF and they have turned into some really fun events. 2018 events will be called "Night on the Town". Watch for more information on our Facebook page and the Keith County News."

~Sheila Mitchell, FAC member

Exciting News For Ogallala's New Library/Learning Center

The Ogallala City Council has approved a proposal for preliminary design of the new library with JEO & Associates of Lincoln.

"The new design will allow us to keep the cost of the new library at \$2.5 million or below," says Elise Lockhart of the Ogallala Library Advisory Committee. "In listening to the public, we felt it was important to scale the project to this level in order to move forward. We feel that this is a very attainable goal." Lockhart added the committee will be sharing the new design with the public as soon as it's available. "It's going to be similar in size and design to the new library constructed a few years ago in Wahoo, Nebraska. Our library/learning center will be a beautiful, functional facility that will serve Ogallala for many years to come. We're so grateful for donors' continued support for the new building, and we look forward to sharing the new design soon."



A Class With Class

A special thank you to the OHS Class of 1977 for their generosity to the new library. With an initial goal to contribute \$1,977 in honor of their 40th class reunion held over the summer, class members have so far contributed \$2,825 as a legacy to their hometown.

A Dinner to Die For

Community members gathered June 24 at "A Dinner To Die For," an evening of mystery dinner theatre to benefit Ogallala's new library held at the Petrified Wood & Art Gallery. Adams Mystery Playhouse of Denver, CO staged the production.



Remember The Library In Year-End Giving

** Contributions to Ogallala's new library may be mailed to the Ogallala Library Foundation at P.O. Box 275, Ogallala, NE 69153. Checks may be made payable to the Keith County Foundation Fund, with Ogallala Library Building Account in the memo line.

KEITH COUNTY FOUNDATION FUND

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS TO OUR LEGACY

PLATINUM LEVEL

\$25,000+

Adams Bank & Trust
Anderson, Clark and Eileen
Callen, Larry and Mary Lynn
Draucker Funeral Home
Jerry and Barbara Draucker
Holzfaster Farms
Ralph and Beverly Holzfaster
Johnson, Terry and Gwen
Keith County News
Legacy Challengers
Lockhart, Kevin and Elise
Pinnacle Bank, Ogallala
Pollock, Jack (late) and Beverly
Prophet Systems Innovations
Kevin Lockhart
Shimmin, Rita
Thalken, Jim and Peg
Western Prairie Hospice

GOLD LEVEL

\$5,001 - \$24,999

Abbott, Mike and Pam
Bechtel, Guy and Bonnie (late)
Dudden, Dick and Joan
Halligan, Clint and Joanie
Holzfaster, F. Jon
Jack Pollock Memorial
Jim Thalken Memorial
McQuillan Law Office, PC LLO
O'Donnell, Kevin and Molly
Peterson, Pete and Jonnie
Plummer Farms
Tom and Verla Plummer
Reiselman, Bernard
Snyder, Ken and Chris
Speck, Jerry and Joan
Spencer, Berl and Barbara
Summers-Zoellner Ford LLC
Teaford, Doug and Jo
Ward, Randy and Ellen

SILVER LEVEL

\$1,000 - \$5,000

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Brown, Daryl and Jo
Buenz, August R. And Jane T.
Buenz, John
Cole, Doug and Jerri
Crook DDS, Jon (late) and Geraldine
Eastman, Jeff
Eveland, Scott and Tracy
Fowler Photography
Dave and Gloria Fowler
Gamet, Kay and John
Gieschen, Tanya and Tim
Gilg, Dan and Deb
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Havermann, Doug and Jean
Headley, Jeff and Lynette
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Holscher, Gene and Delores
Howard, Ken and Dorothy
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Kolste, Maxine
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Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Midtown Motors/Fuller & Assoc.
Doug and Linda Fuller
Morrow, Clarke and Pam
Ogallala Rotary Club
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Dave Barrett
U-Save Pharmacy
Weber, Scott and Mary
Welsh, Mike and Karen
Williams, Neil and Julie
Wolf, Rodney and Barbara

Charitable giving does not require great wealth.

It requires generosity of spirit - the desire to share what you have for the benefit of others. So many of us have a desire to help in other ways - the challenge is how to best realize it.

To make your Legacy contribution
Make check payable to:
Keith County Foundation Fund
PO Box 104
Ogallala, NE. 69153

BRONZE LEVEL

\$1,000 or less

B & C Leasing Company
Clear Channel
Cobb Realty Inc.
Davis, Pickren & Seydel LLP
Jack Buettenback Memorial
Keith County Agricultural Society Inc.
Kildare Lumber Company
KOGA/KMCX
Lincoln County Title
Lucille Franken Memorial
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- Continued on back page



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An affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation

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Keith County Foundation Fund
@keithcounty

Visit Our Website

www.keithcountyfoundation.org

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Thank you to each and every one of our Legacy donors throughout the years. It is upon your shoulders we stand - so that we can continue to ensure a healthy and vibrant future for Keith County.