

K-State

Kansas Health Foundation, K-State team up to reduce hunger in Kansas

State’s extension offices to play leading role in community-based projects

BY PAT MELGARES

K-State Research and Extension news

MANHATTAN, Kan. – The Kansas Health Foundation has awarded \$300,000 to Kansas State University to distribute grants to several Kansas communities, officially putting into action an initiative they announced last fall to combat hunger in the state.

The Hunger Free Kansas mini-grants – ranging in value from \$2,500 to \$30,000 – are going to 20 extension units, where local agents will lead programs that “drive meaningful change in food security and anti-hunger initiatives across the state,” according to Rebecca McMahon, administrator of the Kansas Local Food System program.

The awards will impact 33 of the state’s 105 counties initially.

“K-State Research and Extension has extension agents who are already embedded in every county in our state,” said Clara Misenhelter, a program manager with K-State’s Rural Grocery Initiative. “These agents know their communities and are well-connected to incredible partners who are already doing essential work. This funding is an amazing opportunity to catalyze our network of agents and change makers in pursuit of a common goal to eradicate hunger in Kansas.”

According to Feeding America, 1 in 8 Kansans and 1 in 5 Kansas children are food insecure. Ed O’Malley, the chief executive officer with the Kansas Health Foundation, announced the mini-grant program during K-State’s Research and Extension’s annual conference last October.

Approximately \$250,000 is funding programs through local extension offices, according to Misenhelter. Those programs are expected to begin in March, and be completed by the end of the year.

The awarded local extension offices and their project titles include:

- Barber County - Barber County Beef & Veggies.
- Central Kansas District - Charting the Path to Food Equity: A Strategic Community Food Assessment for Saline County.
- Central Kansas District - Nourishing Our Seniors: Ensuring County-Wide Meal Support.
- Cowley County - Growing Food is Medicine in Cowley County.
- Cowley County - Improving Food Access through SNAP and Area Food Pantries.
- Extension Nutrition Program - K-State Food Assistance Outreach Program.
- Flint Hills District - Full Plates, Bright Futures.
- Frontier District - Enhancing the Richmond Food Pantry in the Frontier Extension District.
- Hamilton County - Take a Bite Out of Hunger in Hamilton County.
- Harvey County - Increasing SNAP enrollment in Harvey County.
- Lyon County - Nourish Our Neighbors.
- Marais des Cygnes District - My Father's House Kitchen and Cooking Project.
- Marshall County - Supporting Social Service Access in Marshall County.
- Post Rock District - Post Rock District Food Pantry Enrichment.
- Pratt County - Pratt County Farm to Freezer.
- Reno County - Reno County Local Food Advocate.
- Riley County - Stock the Box - Filling a Gap with Community.
- River Valley District - Expanding Local Food Access to Low-Resource Households in Cloud County.
- Sedgwick County - Community Health Worker: The Next Step.
- Shawnee County - Community Garden for SENT's Southside Filling Station food pantry and Farm-to-Food Truck: Inclusive Workforce Development Program.
- Southwind District - Rural Pantry Network Initiative.
- Wildcat District - Increasing Healthy Snacking and Food Literacy in Vulnerable Populations.

“Some impacts will be more immediate than others,” Misenhelter said. “It’s important to note that one of the funding priorities was to advance policy, systems and environmental change, known as PSE. It can take time for PSE to occur, but we do hope to see an improvement in health and food access in the communities served by our mini-grant recipients.”

According to Misenhelter, some of the programs that were proposed include using a Community Health Worker at a food pantry; supporting food pantry upgrades; training volunteers to assist residents enrolling in the SNAP program; partnerships with K-12 schools; leveraging existing programs like community and school gardens and Kitchen ReStore projects in new ways; and more.

“It has been exciting to see the innovative ideas come through in the application process, and we hope that other communities across the state will benefit from the lessons learned in this first round of projects,” Misenhelter said. “For the projects that have been awarded funds, this is a unique opportunity to experiment and innovate.”

“We hope this effort will serve as a pilot to bring in additional funding in future years to continue this effort to reduce hunger in Kansas,” said Gregg Hadley, K-State’s director of extension and assistant vice president.

More information on Hunger Free Kansas is available online at <https://hungerfreekansas.org>. Kansas residents also are encouraged to visit their local extension office to learn more about programs available in their area.

Thank You for Reading the Blade-Empire & The Miltonvale Area News!!
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CVA honors 2024 Customer Service Specialists of the Year

(York, Neb.) Central Valley Ag (CVA) has announced the recipients of the 2024 Customer Service Specialist (CSS) of the Year awards, recognizing employees who exemplify the cooperative’s mission and core values.

Each year, CVA accounting team collaborates with its Regional Operations Managers to select individuals who demonstrate exceptional customer service and dedication. The selection criteria focus on providing outstanding customer service both internally and externally, maintaining a positive attitude in an ever-changing environment, and supporting the sales team.

“Our customer service specialists are the backbone of our cooperative, ensuring smooth operations and fostering strong relationships with our customers,” said Brenda Meis, Regional Accounting Supervisor at CVA. “We are proud to celebrate these outstanding individuals and their unwavering commitment to excellence.”

The winners were honored at the annual CSS Summit, where they were recognized for their contributions to the cooperative’s success.

2024 Customer Service Specialist of the Year Recipients:

- Cassie Schindler, Elgin, Neb.
- Katie Winkelbauer, Hartington, Neb.
- Tisha Frisch, Humphrey, Neb.
- Traci Schwede, Oakland, Neb.
- Jennifer Wojtalewicz, Benedict, Neb.
- Tessa Bridges, Utica, Neb.
- Shelley Peters, Greenleaf, Kan.
- Ashlei Hanks, Hinton, Iowa
- Janelle Remus, Beloit, Kan.

In addition to the CSS of the Year awards, CVA also presented Outstanding Service Awards to individuals in specific departments for their dedication and contributions:

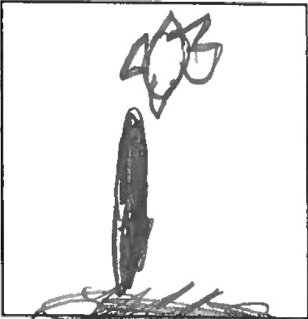
- Venessa Fernandez: Feed Department
- Stacy Shoemaker: Energy Department

To show appreciation for their dedication, recipients received a two-night weekend getaway, a Visa gift card, custom apparel, and a crystal desk paperweight.

“I strive to support our member-owners and our CVA team in any way I can, whether that is offering suggestions towards solutions, lending a helping hand, or making sure we are working safely,” said Katie Winkelbauer, CSS in Hartington, Neb. “It’s all about integrity of doing the right thing and looking out for each other, which is what makes CVA a great place.”

Weather pictures provided by the Concordia Elementary Students

Rainy



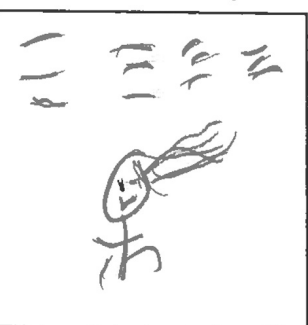
Today's weather artwork by
Faith Sargable
a 1st grader in
Mrs. Peltier's class

Windy



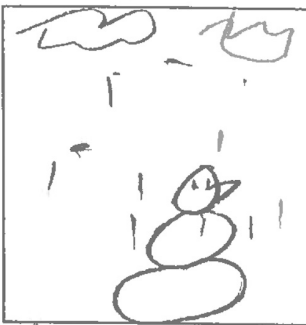
Today's weather artwork by
Lincoln Kindel
a 4th grader in
Mrs. Richard's class

Windy



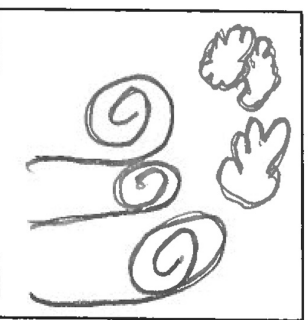
Today's weather artwork by
Kinsley Young
a 1st grader in
Mrs. Peltier's class

Snowy



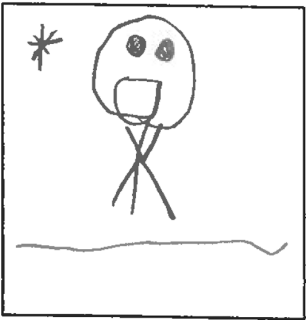
Today's weather artwork by
Kynsley Miller
a 4th grader in
Mrs. Stensaas' class

Windy



Today's weather artwork by
Charlotte Miller
a 2nd grader in
Mys. Snavelly's class

Snowy



Today's weather artwork by
Brynn Biery
a 1st grader in
Mrs. Popelka's class

NOTICE TO BID

The City of Concordia is accepting bids for the demolition of condemned structures and related cleanup of the lot at four separate properties:

- 202 Broadway Street
- 325 East 12th Street
- 421 West 14th Street
- 712 East 10th Street

The scope of the work for each property can be found on the City's website, www.concordiakns.org under Legal Publications/Advertising. Each property must be bid separately, and according to the scope of work for that property. Nuisance vegetation, including dead branches and/or tree removal will be a significant part of these projects. All bidders must meet the City's demolition requirements and have a demolition permit before work starts. Materials required to be disposed of at the Cloud County Transfer Station construction debris site, shall be separated as per their requirements and receipts provided to the City. Bids shall be submitted to the office of the City Clerk, 701 Washington St., Concordia, Kansas 66901. All bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Demolition Bid-" Bids deadline 3:00 P.M. Tuesday, March 25, 2025. Proof of general liability insurance must be provided with bids. Late bids will not be accepted. Bids will be considered by the City Commission at the April 2 meeting. EOE.

Chamber Corner

Please join us on March 11, 2025, as we travel to Prairie Land Partners, John Deere, 1441 Union Road, Concordia, KS 66901, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. for our weekly Chamber Coffee.

If you are interested in becoming a Chamber Member or being a Chamber Coffee Sponsor, please contact Annie Bergmann at 785-243-4290 or email info@concordiakansaschamber.com

Join us for coffee and donuts. Donuts provided by Me and Ma's Bakery. Keep up to date on all the events and activities happening in Concordia and the surrounding area.

•March 15, 2025 -National Quilting Day- 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. at the Concordia Lutheran Church

UPCOMING EVENTS

• **Saturday, March 15, 2025– Celebrate National Quilting Day** from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Concordia Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. Quilt tying for Lutheran World Relief. Come for an hour or the whole session. Soup luncheon will be provided.

• **Sunday, March 16, 2025 – The Nazareth Motherhouse Annual Spaghetti Dinner.** The event begins with dinner at 11:00 am. Meal tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. There will also be a Bake Sale, In-Person Silent Auction and Raffle Drawing. Tickets can be purchased in advance from the Nazareth Motherhouse or by contacting Ambria in the Development Office at agilliland@csjkansas.org or 785-243-2113 ext. 1225.

LAUNDRY LOVE

Free Laundry for the Community offered by OCCK Inc. and LaundryLove.org at 1548 Lincoln St., Concordia, Kansas. Laundry Love provides free access to washers, dryers, and detergent, helping participants wash work uniforms, school clothes, and other essentials. Events held twice a month: **The first Wednesday of each month : 8:30–10:30 a.m. and the third Wednesday: 4:00–6:00 p.m.**

COMMODITIES DISTRIBUTION

Cloud County Commodities distribution is scheduled for **Every 2 Months from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on the Third Wednesday of the Month**, at the First United Methodist Church, 740 W. 11th Street, Concordia, Kansas. Scheduled date: May 21, 2025.



Study Looks at Potential Ag Impacts of Global Depopulation; Soybeans and Sorghum At Risk

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