

SOUTHEAST KANSAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission

News

February 2021

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About SEKRPC

Our Mission

At SEKRPC our goal is to improve the quality of life in Southeast Kansas by providing the tools to create and retain jobs and increase the services available in our communities

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www.sekrpc.org

 www.facebook.com/SEKRPC

Executive Board Members

Executive Director: Matt Godinez

Board Members:

John F. Brocker - Allen County

Anthony Mersman - Anderson County

Lynne Oharah - Bourbon County

Lorrie Johnson - Cherokee County

Tom Huginin - Coffey County

Jeremy Johnson - Crawford County

Lonie R. Addis - Labette County

Jessica Hightower - Linn County

Larry McManus - Montgomery County

Paul Westhoff - Neosho County

Kris Marple - Wilson County

John Weseloh - Woodson County

Jody Hoener - Member-At-Large

SEKRPC New Executive Board Members

SEKRPC Says Goodbye to Two Long Time Board Members

The Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission is represented by a member of each of the twelve counties that are served by the planning commission and one member-at-large on the executive board. The member from each county is chosen by the county and is usually a current county commissioner. This year, the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission had three executive board members who were no re-elected and will therefore be replaced on the planning commission board.

Jerry Howarter with Anderson County will be replaced starting in February by Anthony Mersman. Having served eight consecutive years as a volunteer, Jerry is a long time, much appreciated board member of the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission. Jerry was born in Ganett, raised in Anderson County, and attended schools in Anderson County.

Jerry graduated from Kincaid High School and later graduated from Emporia State University with a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Arts Education and followed up with a Master's degree in Industrial Education. Initially Jerry's goal was to be an educator, and he was for 41 years. Being an educator coincided with a career in coaching cross country for 35 years and track for 15 years as head coach. The last 10 years of teaching were in Ottawa High School, where Jerry taught Power Mechanics, Architectural Design and Drivers Ed. Jerry also taught Outreach classes for Neosho County Community College.

Jerry's wife Pam, who is also an educator, and Jerry raised three sons all of which now have families of their own. Jerry stated that great kids and grandkids are the best gifts of all.

When Jerry retired in 2010, He decided to give being a commissioner a try: "My father served as one of Anderson County's Commissioners for 24 years, so it was sort of in the back of my mind to give it a try." Jerry was elected and served two terms, 8 years and simultaneously served on the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission at that time. Jerry added: "I have learned a great deal about a lot of

different things and my time on the Regional Planning Commission was no exception. This is a great bunch to work with and I will always be thankful for the opportunity to work with all of you. Thank You! Jerry will be missed by our employees and board members greatly and we are very thankful for all the time that he donated to the Regional Planning Commission.

Neal Anderson will also be leaving our Executive Board as of the end of January. The new representative for Cherokee County will be Lorrie Johnson. Neal has been a volunteer on the Regional Planning Commission Executive Board for four years, serving his most recent year as Chairman of the Board. A high time with the Planning Commission is greatly appreciated and he will be missed by all employees and the board members.

Neal was born in 1946 in Cherokee County and has lived there all his life. He graduated from Riverton High School, in Columbus and then attended Pittsburg State University where he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics and later obtained a Masters Degree in Mathematics.

Neal taught high school for 31 years, 9 of those years were in Baxter Springs and a year in Oklahoma. He was also a high school coach for football, basketball, and girls' softball. Neal retired in 2001 and decided to do some home construction for about 13 years until his wife Ruth decided to retire.

Neal has 2 children and 3 grandchildren. Neal was a pastor of the United Methodist Church for 45 years and the Bethlehem United Methodist Church for 35 years. He became a County Commissioner four years ago and only intended to serve one term. Neal served on the Executive Board at Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission for his entire term.

The Planning Commission is very thankful for Neal and his time that he has volunteered to our organization. Our organization would not be what it is today without our board who volunteers their time to ensure our organization is able to continue its efforts to help region communities.

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Susan Galemore Steps Away from SEKRPC

Susan Galemore started with the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission (SEKRPC) in May 2001 as a Planning and Development Consultant. Susan gave the next 20 years of her career to the betterment of Southeast Kansas economic development. After years of outstanding service Susan decided that it was time to step away and play an important part in her hometowns development as the Planning and Development Director for the City of Chamute. During Susan's time with the regional planning commission, she made many connections, relationships, and marks across the communities that she served during her tenure.

During her time with the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission she worked on 104 grant funded municipal and economic development projects with budgets totaling over \$83 million, of which \$32 million were federally funded.

Susan served as interim Executive Director for the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission from February through July of 2018. Susan also mentored many in her tenure at the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission which is greatly appreciated and has been a true benefit to the ongoing mission of the Planning Commission.

Susan was a true asset to the planning commission and instrumental in assisting the southeast Kansas communities with improvements throughout her tenure and will be missed greatly by all her coworkers and communities that she worked with. The Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission and its board all wish Susan the best and thank her for all the work that she has put in with the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission throughout her time here.



Project Spotlight

Yates Center and Fort Scott Receive New Fire Engines

Community Development Block Grants are awarded throughout four different categories, Community Facilities, Water/Sewer, Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation and Urgent Needs.

CDBG Community Facilities grants may be awarded for the use of fixing sidewalks or streets, use towards the building or reconstruction of ballfields or playgrounds and splash pads, making areas more ADA accessible, community centers, community vehicles such as a rescue vehicle, fire truck, or ladder truck, demolition, and many other areas so long as they pertain to a

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betterment for the community.

In 2020, Fort Scott and Yates Center submitted an application to the CDBG Community Facilities grant for funds towards the use of purchasing a new fire engine. Fort Scott was awarded \$665,303.00 with a local match of \$665,303.00. Yates Center was awarded \$400,000.00 with a local match of \$400,000.00, you can see Yates Center newly purchased fire engine in the images above.

If you or your community are interested in learning more about CDBG Community Facilities fundings, please contact Carey at carey@sekrpc.org or Amber at amber@sekrpc.org or call our office at (620) 431-0080.

Tourism Spotlight

Neosho County

Neosho County has many things to do while visiting like a summer swim at their aquatic center, a visit to the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum or grabbing a drink at the Cardinal Drug old fashioned soda fountain.

Things to do in Chamute:

Howard's Toys for Big Boys: Opened in April of 2017 in the heart of downtown showcasing Howard Alger's classic car collection and other memorabilia. Located at 216 E Main, the museum is open 9a.m-4p.m Monday- Thursday and 1p.m-4p.m Friday. Tours at other times and private tours can be arranged. No admission charge. Call (620) 902-5100 Monday - Thursday.

Summit Hill Gardens: A blend of art, nature and historic preservation, Summit Hill Gardens offers a step back in history. The first school in Neosho County, Summit Hill, was restored and a historic home and a modern structure were added to create a one-of-a-kind family residence. Handcrafted soaps, antiques and other items are available for sales in the gift store. Soap-making demonstrations can be scheduled. The gardens are breathtaking. An event center is now open for rental in a restored barn on the property. Summit Hill Gardens is located at 2605 160th Road, just 3 miles south of Chamute. For directions, hours and more information, visit www.summithillgardens.com or call (620) 212-3878.

Shopping in Chamute: You will discover a variety of restaurants and retail shops offering a wide range of goods and services in the historic downtown area.

Old Fashioned Soda Fountain: A step back in time! Be sure to stop by Cardinal Drug Store in downtown Chamute and take a step back in time. Cardinal is the home of one of the oldest original soda fountains in Kansas. It and the other 30+ still in operation are one of the 8 wonders of Kansas-Culture. A rare collection of Coke memorabilia and medicine bottles adds to the historic atmosphere. Cardinal is located at 103 E. Main and hours of operation are Monday - Friday 9a.m-6p.m and Saturday 9a.m-12p.m.

Maring Aquatic Center: The Maring Aquatic Center opened in 2010 at the site of the former Chamute High School. The center has a lazy river, slide, children's play area and a competition pool. A party room is available for rental and birthday party packages and after-hours pool rentals are available also. The center was named for Norma and Keith Maring, long-time pool managers. For more information visit www.chamute.org or call (620) 431-5237.

Restored Downtown and Historic Homes: Both the downtown and historic home district offer a variety of architectural styles and beautiful examples of restoration. Brochures for self guided tours of the historic homes (exterior only) are available at the Chamber office, 21 N. Lincoln. The historic home driving tour takes you down broad tree-lined brick streets that make you feel you have stepped back into another era.

Chamute's wonderful downtown is filled with historic buildings, many of which are restored to their original beauty. In addition, Chamute has many WPA structures.

The Historic Tioga Hotel: Enjoy one of Chamute's treasures- The Tioga Hotel. Built in 1929, the hotel was one of the first completely fire-proof structures in the state. it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Tioga building is now home to the Tioga Extended Stay

Hotel. For more information call (620) 431-3343 or visit www.tiogahotel.com.

Santa Fe RV Park: Camp for up to 10 days - first two days are free with the remaining days only \$10 per day. Pull through padded sites with water and electric. Shower facilities and dump stations are located nearby, and free WiFi is available. The park is located in Santa Fe park which also houses the ball diamonds and a great fishing lake. The RC Lot is easily accessible at 35th street and S Santa Fe only a mile off US 169. No reservations are needed/taken.

The Center of Google Earth: Chamute is the center of Google Earth on Apple Products thanks to programmer Dan Webb, a Chamute Native. A mural commemorating this designation is at the intersection of Main Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum: Located at 111 North Lincoln, award winning art exhibits and programs highlight the achievements of Martin and Osa Johnson, pioneering documentary filmmakers, photographers, authors, explorers and one of the 8 wonders of Kansas people. Relive the Johnson's 1917-1936 adventures in Africa, Borneo and the South Seas. The museum offers educational programs, showings of Johnson films, a research library and a gift shop.

Additional exhibits feature changing themes as well as the Elizabeth Main Le Blond photography collection. Open Tuesday-Saturday 10a.m-5p.m and Sundays 1p.m-5p.m. Call (620) 431-2730 or visit www.safarimuseum.com for more information.

Chamute Art Gallery: Unique for a small town, the Chamute art Gallery was founded in 1973 and includes more than 1,500 sq. ft. of exhibit space and houses a Permanent Core Collection that includes 25 mediums, representing 135 artists. Special exhibits change every month. The gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday from 12p.m-4p.m. Special time tours can be arranged. Closed in January. For more information call (620) 431-7807.

Chamute offers many more experiences like the Historic Austin Bridge, the Historic Santa Fe Depot, the Chamute-Wright Brothers Memorial, the Chamute Veterans Memorial, the Chamute Historical Society, and five parks to enjoy!

Also in Neosho County is Beantown, USA, Erie, KS. Erie is the host to the oldest consecutively running Old Soldiers and Sailors Reunion in America. Held annually during the third week of July since 1873, the reunion features a "Free Bean Feed." The beans are prepared using a historic recipe, simmering all day in cast-iron kettles over wood fires like soldiers used in the Civil War. The beans may be an old tradition, but guest country and western musicians from Nashville add a touch of modern spice to the Friday night celebration.



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Southeast Kansas Living

A Celebration of Southeast Kansas

Southeast Kansas Living is a quarterly magazine that has been celebrating the people, places and spirit of Southeast Kansas for more than 19 years. In each issue, you'll find stories about Southeast Kansas' people, events, outdoors, history, homes and gardens, businesses, restaurants, attractions and more!

Joanne Smith

serves as the magazine's publisher and editor. She grew up in Elk City, Kansas, and graduated from the University of Kansas with a bachelor's degree in journalism and an emphasis in magazine production. After working in the journalism industry for a few years, including as the assistant editor at a daily newspaper, Joanne gravitated to public relations, and spent a 22-year career managing

marketing, community relations and fund-raising for Mercy Hospital in Independence, Kansas, before the hospital was closed in 2015.

From that significant turn, Joanne's true calling as an entrepreneur emerged, and she created FAB Creative Services LLC, a comprehensive marketing company providing support to individuals, small businesses and non-profit organizations throughout southeast Kansas and beyond. Her second home is Fab Lab ICC, a maker space and entrepreneurship center on the campus of Independence Community College, where she

fabricates custom marketing and gift products for customers and from which she has received incredible support as an entrepreneur.

An active civic supporter, Joanne has served with many community boards, committees and civic clubs, including the Independence Chamber of Commerce, Independence Optimist Club, Soroptimist of Independence and the

Kansas Children's Service League Healthy Families Program Community Development Leadership Council. In 2018, she was named one of the "50 Kansas You Should Know" by Ingram's magazine, and she is the host of the "She-Power Adventures in Entrepreneurship" podcast featuring the stories of fellow women entrepreneurs.

Joanne and her husband, Michael, reside in Independence and together have four adult children, Madeline, Jacey, Cortlan and Trace, and one sassy and fierce teenager still at home, Claire.

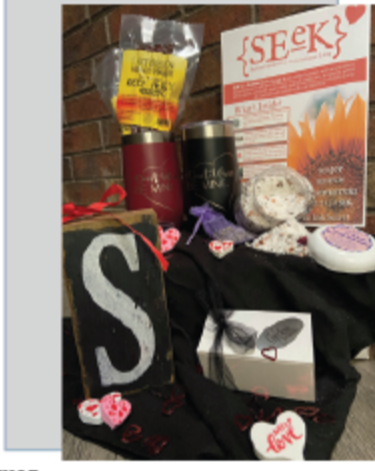
Southeast Kansas Living is the only magazine dedicated to celebrating the "specialness" of our corner of the world! In it, we share stories about our history, people, events, industries, small businesses, culture, recreation, opportunity and much, much more.

Southeast Kansas Living is published four times a year in March, June, September and December. A fifth tourism issue is printed in even-numbered years, and other special editions are sometimes offered. For more information about the magazine, contact

mag-Joanne via one of the methods listed on sekliving.com.

Southeast Kansas Living has made an addition to the ways that you can enjoy Southeast Kansas! NEW from Southeast Kansas Living, they are thrilled to partner with local, Southeast Kansas businesses to offer you the ultimate regional sampler box. It makes the perfect gift for anyone or will allow you to collect and try local items, some of which are one of a kind and made exclusively for the SEeK box.

The first SEeK box was offered around the holidays, and there is a SEeK box available for order until February 5 for Valentine's day as well! Additional SEeK boxes will be available around holidays throughout the year, with Mother's Day being the next planned offering! For more information on SEeK boxes, visit sekliving.com.



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Visit our new website at www.sekrpc.org to see programs and services we

offer, projects we have worked on, events in the area and more!

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