Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel

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UNIT NEWS

From all across Kansas, units are doing wonderful activities!

Brown County - Shortly after the start of the current school year, members of the Personnel Support Committee for the Brown County Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel delivered large bowls of assorted miniature candies to the faculty and staff in six attendance centers - three in Hiawatha USD 415 and three in Horton USD 430. A poster attached to each bowl of candy read: "Welcome Back! Enjoy the variety of students you will meet this year!"







The committee regularly shows appreciation to all employees of both school districts, including administrators, school nurses, secretaries, bus drivers, food preparation workers, and crossing guards. The committee's goal is to remind everyone that each district employee is significant in helping to develop the youth of our communities. ***Thank you to Sue Miller and Darlene Rake for the article and photos!***

Dodge City - At their September, meeting Naomi Harold, from the Dodge City Pregnancy Support Center, told them about the different types of support they provide expecting and new mothers. They provide medical professionals who can answer questions from new and expecting mothers regarding abortion, pregnancy, and more. They also refer clients to local agencies and other support systems. Afterwards their members donated $100 to the Pregnancy Center and members brought baby items to our October meeting to be delivered to the pregnancy center. The response by their members was overwhelming. The donations included everything from baby bottles to diapers to knitted baby blankets. ***Thank you to Tom Barnes for sharing this information!***





Junction City - On Friday, October 9 at noon the Junction City Retired School Personnel (JCARSP) met at the Zion United Church of Christ for a potluck taco bar. Hosts of the meeting were Karen Malec and Susan Kamphaus.

Sierra Jackson, JCARSP President, invited Fifth Grade students from Washington Elementary School to work together with JCARSP members in an intergenerational activity.

Forty-two students from Aspen Girard's and

(Continued on Page 3)

EVERY MOUNTAIN IS WITHIN REACH



Beccy Isom
KARSP President

We had the beautiful colors of fall and are entering the season of thankfulness and blessings. We look forward to celebrating with family and friends. Homes are decorated, the aroma of good food fills the air, and we are grateful for our blessings.

But with the changing season, we, as senior citizens, begin to worry about the chance of major injury from falling. Balance changes, muscles weaken, and vision declines. I did some research and also visited our local hospital's physical therapists for some fall preventions that could benefit all of us. A fall could seriously affect our quality of life; head trauma, hip fractures, bone breaks. Not only would the above mentioned situations might occur, but a fall could cause a great financial burden as one might have to spend time in a rehab facility.

I participated in the "Stepping On" program with a physical therapist that was designed to help older adults reduce their risk of falling. I has surgery on the base of my brain and upper spine and was told if I would fall, I would have a 90% chance of being totally paralyzed from the neck down. We had weekly sessions that focused on building strength, balance, and awareness of fall hazards. We learned many techniques of how to walk, balance, and avoid falls. It's important you continue physical activity so your body doesn't begin to lose muscle strength. Walking, water workout, and chair exercises are some of those ways to stay active.

The Meadowlark is an official publication of the Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel.

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KARSP

STRENGTH IN UNITY

Next, wear sensible shoes. I was addicted to high heels. I wore three inch heels to school most days. Now, they are a definite no-no. But so are those comfortable floppy slippers or shoes with slick soles that could make you slip, stumble, and then fall. I have always gone barefoot and in winter wore only socks, but as I aged it was not a good idea. Instead wear sturdy, flat shoes with nonskid soles. I learned this lesson the hard way.

Other precautions include removing home hazards such as clutter in walkways, loose throw rugs, or loose floorboards. Use non-slip mats in the bathroom. Light up your living place. Place nightlights where it tends to be dark especially at night. Turn on lights before entering the room or going on the stairs. And lastly use handrails, raised toilet seats, grab bars, and a sturdy seat in showers.

Fall prevention is an important topic to consider. As you age physical changes happen, things become more difficult, but they don't have to rule your life. Instead learn to compensate, hazard proof your home, and enjoy life.

(Continued from Page 1, Unit News)

Jasmine Risher's fifth grade Washington Elementary School classrooms accompanied by Lauryn Weather and Vernon Johnson, Paraprofessionals, made seasonal door hangers for local assisted living residents. Transportation and supplies were provided by Vickie Bobbitt and I.C.A.R.E.

JCARSP members made donations to the USD 475 Transition Program and non-perishable foods to the Food Pantry. Stephanie Diehl represented the Geary County Food Pantry and told JCARSP members that one-third of the people (7,400) in Geary County lack access to food.

The next meeting of JCARSP members will be December 11 at Noon. The JCHS JC Singers will perform. Hats and gloves will be collected



for Early Childhood Center students and monetary donations may be made to the JCARSP Scholarship Fund. All retired school personnel are invited to be members and participate in the fun activities, be involved with youth, enjoy great food and fellowship and support our community.



Abilene - KARSP President Beccy Isom presents Tom Schwartz, Abilene representative, with a $500 check from the KARSP organization. Each unit in the state receives the same to be used as they see fit for their group.

Manhattan - At their October meeting the Manhattan Area unit had a presentation by the superintendent of the Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 school district. Eric Reid gave an update on USD 383. Music was provided by Judy Bolay. The unit is collecting clothing and cash for the FIT Closet at USD 383. Their November 4th meeting will have an update on the Wareham Hall renovations. Their newsletter had interesting information for the membership. There was one health report and one on protections against scams. ***Thanks to Lew Faust for sharing their information!***

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Ernie Claudel, KARSP Legislative Chair

It is very important that you vote in the election November 3. Please do so advisedly. **DON'T VOTE AGAINST YOUR OWN SELF INTERESTS**.

I borrowed the following from a gentleman named John Gregory.

- Listen to the candidates and what they actually say. Check their claims. Look at their records. Ask whether their actions match

their words and whether your life and your community are better because they were given the privilege of serving you.
- Then vote, not because someone scared you into it, or because that's how your family has always voted. Not because a church, a political party, a television personality or an algorithm told you how.
- Pay attention. Ask questions. Do your homework.

THINGS YOU CAN DO BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER 3RD!

Candidate Questions for all Running including Candidates for Governor:
[These can be used in private or public communications with the candidates.]
- If elected, will you publicly support the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) cost of living adjustment (COLA)?
- If elected, will you be willing to sponsor a bill calling for a KPERS COLA?
- If elected, will you include funding for a KPERS COLA in your annual budget recommendations? (Gubernatorial Candidates Only)

Brief Reminders
- The State Supreme Court Ruled that Public Schools Must be funded. Total School Funding – True but not true. -SPED Funding was not included in this ruling because of a "loophole" in legislation. (The Federal Government Requires 92% funding for these federally mandated programs. Because of the loophole, Kansas is at about 66% funding level.)
- No new tax cuts were passed in the 2026 session.
- Desire to cut property taxes.
  - Property taxes and sales taxes are the only way local units of government have to make up state contribution shortages.
- 30 years without a permanent KPERS Benefit increase.
  - Loss of buying power if you retired in 1997, has finally reached 50+%. What cost $1.00 in 1997 now costs $2.07
  - Death Numbers: As of May 1,2026, 345,472 KPERS Retirees and Beneficiaries have passed in the last 30 years.
- All KPERS include 354,472 individuals. WE HAVE CLOUT!!
  - THIS FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE SPOUSES AND DEPENDANTS OF ALL KINDS.
- Legislative Raises
  - Legislation 2023 provided the following base raises for Kansas Legislators.
  - Please note that one of the rationale used by the Salary Commission for the pay increase was that it had been 13 years since a raise. In our case it has been 29 years since a permanent rate increase.
  - Kansas Legislators' Salary
    - 2024 --- Base $22,000 - Average $30,000 [Last year before their raise became effective.]
    - 2025 --- Base $43,000 - Average $58,000 – An Increase of 93%
    - 2026 --- Base $44,900 - Average $60,500 –This includes a COLA of 4.4 %

VOTE!

Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees ® www.ksretirees.org

THE BOARD HAS APPROVED THE CONVENTION MINUTES AND IS NOW SHARING THEM WITH THE MEMBERSHIP.

The board meeting of the State Convention of the Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel was held at the Career Technical Academy in Hutchinson, KS. on Wednesday, June 10, 2026.

President Beccy Isom called the meeting to order at 10 am.

Members present included: Beccy Isom, Nancy

Sapp, Rod Dietz, Ernie Claudel, Junnae Landry, Gil Bunning, Carol Bunning, Hershel Martin, Tom Barnes, Betsy Zadorozny, Jay Brown, Karen Pulaski, Dee Schwinn, Jane Martin, Kay Sewell, Leigh Ann Rogers, Mike Isom, Jerry Henn and Denise Henn.

Dee Schwinn made motion and Gil Bunning seconded the approval of the agenda. Members passed.

Rod Dietz made a motion and Mike seconded approving the minutes of Zoom meeting on Jan. 9, 2026. All passed. Correction has been made to add Jay Brown to minutes as he attended the Zoom meeting.

Treasurer Report: Rod Dietz, treasurer - shared HO-(handout) for new, updated mileage report to all members. Rod will send to Jerry and he will add to the website.

Rod provided a copy of the treasurer's report for May 2026. He stated we continue to be on target. See Monthly treasurer's report (see yellow HO) for May 2026. He also shared schedule of investments on back side of report. He shared proposed budget for 2027-see (see pink HO). Rod proposed that we give 1,000 stipend to both Kansas Teacher Hall of Fames to Emporia Ks. and Dodge City, Ks.

Mike Isom moved and Betsy Zadorozny seconded to accept the budget as proposed. All approved.

Jay shared a Cash Flow Projection with board members (white HO).

Jerry Henn, KARSP executive director shared a written Executive Director Report and discussed with members.

Past President's Report: Gil Bunning, past president stated that his report is in the process and not complete yet, but will be completed before his term is up. He shared a handout "Be a Part of History" for members to fill out.

Membership: Leigh Ann Rogers, shared that 2,328 active members 627 life or related memberships. She noted an increase of 160 members. Since October to now - a decrease of 17 members in life membership was noted due to death or notification of death. Overall net gain of 140 members.

Foundation: Nancy Sapp shared information from the Foundation. Last year 16 grants were given and this year 17 grants. With approximately 43 applicants. Nancy made Foundation handouts.

Legislative Committee Report: Ernie Claudel, Legislative Liaison shared HO's for Annual deaths and Hutch Convention Presentation sharing death numbers, stats, revenues available, KPERS underfunding, Legislative Raises, etc.

Break for lunch

Meadowlark Editor: Dee Schwinn spoke on "The Meadowlark" monthly newsletter and encouraged members to encourage their units to submit articles. She also discussed the Memorial book and encouraged members to follow the procedure for submitting.

Membership: Kay Sewell shared a HO with board members. She received information from 28/29 units reported. Value of volunteer $36.46 per hour. Total number 215,668 hours. Youth hours 49,864, value 1,802,085. She shared handouts to district directors to share with their members for volunteer hours and encouraged that they be emailed or texted to her. Deadline is stated as April 30, but can be extended to May 20. She would like to get hours from the general Kansas volunteers.

Convention Report: Karen Pulaski shared HO including the brochure. If someone cancels the convention-contact Jay so they can keep track of meal count numbers. Karen is looking for servers for tonight, Thursday noon and tomorrow night-please contact Karen. Karen stated she

will be checking out the new Hutchinson Hilton Convention Center to check prices for next year.

Dianne Sisk: Came and was thanked by the board for being past secretary of KARSP for almost 20 years. In honor of her service, Beccy Isom, presented Dianne with a certificate of appreciation.

District 1: Mike Isom - attended all units in District 1. He shared he went over volunteer hour procedures with his unit planning and travel time count. May be helpful to review volunteer hours to help increase overall hours in your district.

District 2: Carol Bunning - 8 unit meetings. She installed officers for 3 different units.

District 3: Herschel Martin reported that he tries to go to the first and last meetings of units to stay up to date. Thanked every unit for participating, membership in to Leigh Ann

District 4: Junnae Landry she stated she runs her year from Sept. to August. She has a unit that offers $500 scholarship. Central Plains - larger group of people - had a large amount of money - so they are offering scholarship. Harper County - meet at renovated church with quilt shop. She wants to try and stimulate membership in her personal unit. She measures her success in the fact that her units are contacting her and calling her by name.

District 5: Betsy Zadorozny shared they have a membership director Kris Hutton. She books a coffee with a new retiree and recruits in Cowly County. She has attended all unit meetings. Wichita is an active group. She shares information from Jerry and Ernie.

District 6: Jane Martin Visited all units since January. Most of her units meet 6 times a year. Cherokee County unit - all women, a very strong group. Measures success in learning every unit is unique and valuable.

District 7: Tom Barnes - one active unit in district - Dodge City. Retired superintendent joined and he has added more members. Typically 28-30 members attend.

Elections: Gil Bunning - Gil shared that current officers have agreed to continue.

Tomorrow there will be a slate candidates that will be presented at the business meeting. Mike Isom, Hershel Martin, and Betsy Zadorozny, Tom Barnes, and Denise-secretary will be up for election.

Mike Isom moved to utilize the current slate for election - District 1,3,5,7, president, vice-president, and past president and secretary. Ernie Claudel seconded.

New Units: Jerry Henn and Mike Isom presented information-blackened copy - discussed a unit could begin with 10 members. Possible locations to look at Hays, Colby, Norton, Coffeyville, Liberal, Beloit, Ft. Scott, Scott City, Marysville, Concordia, McPherson, Holton, Russel, Lindsborg, Clay Center, and Garden City. Mike suggested that current members need to be a contact person for the new unit. Jerry shared that if anyone has a new contact they can share information with him. Consider looking at younger leadership candidates.

KARSP Office: Jerry suggested when he retires (no date yet) from USA that the KARSP office and paperwork will need to move from the USA office. He suggested sending records/etc to Dodge City.

He will continue the Executive office at his home, but will need to discuss phone/address. Discussion of getting another phone, goggle suite, new envelopes, printing, mailing, etc. and other ideas.

Vendor Booth at USA: Jerry, Mike, and Ernie shared information-
840 people at the USA convention, signs for foundation and legislative were up. Discussed

need to figure out a way to bring people in to the booth to share information about KARSP. Member Recruitment: Jerry Henn and Rod Dietz went to Rod's retirement home and met with people and added 2 new members. Rod shared there are over 100 KPERS residents. Other possible resources that could become members of KARSP might include community colleges, fire/police, etc.

Dropbox: Jerry shared information on dropbox. Current 1.8 Gigi bytes of storage, board meetings, Meadowlark, Foundation. Currently it is free, as more is added the 2,000 GB - $110 a month.

Mike Isom moved and Nancy Sapp seconded in going to the next step for Jerry to continue to next step of drop box when appropriate. He is hoping that it can be shared to others to use and upload but not to delete things.

The meeting was adjourned by president, Beccy Isom at 1:59 pm

Respectfully Submitted

_____

Denise Henn, KARSP Secretary



Here is your board members at convention. They recently met in Goddard. The minutes from that meeting will be shared after they are approved at the January meeting.

GRATITUDE IS IMPORTANT

It is always good to remember your blessings, especially at this time of year. I have a"Graditude Journal" which I use throughout the year but I decided to do some reflection of how grateful I am for KARSP.

I am thankful for:

- The opportunity to belong to this organization that cares about retired school personnel and about those who are in the trenches today.
- Jerry Henn, our Executive Director, who keeps us moving in the right directions and is always there to help members when they need it.
- The KARSP Board who gives of their time and gives the Units what they need to be successful.
- Ernie Claudel who is in Topeka representing our interests and giving us advice on legislative matters…and usually has a line or two that make me laugh!
- The District Directors who visit their units and are the glue that holds us all together.
- The Units who send their news to the Meadowlark so we can share the good activities happening around the state.
- Jessica Clark who takes what I send her and creates the Meadowlark you see!
- The members who actually read the Meadowlark!!!
- The Foundation and how they are making sure we are helping current teachers be the best they can be.
- The Convention Committee who works all year round so we can have the opportunity to get together.
- All members and the volunteering they do to make their communities better places.
- All the friends I have made throughout the state

The list could continue but suffice it to say I am thankful for my KARSP connection.

-Dee Schwinn, Editor of the Meadowlark