



Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel

Volume 61, Issue 9

The Meadowlark

September 2026

UNIT NEWS

The **Manhattan Area** will have their meeting on September 2 at the College Avenue Methodist Church beginning with a coffee and social at 9:00 and their meeting at 9:30. Carol Bunning, the District 2 Director, will be there to present awards to Carol Adams, Bill Bunyan, Lew Faust, Sheryl Fjell, Joyce Leach, Greg Mann, and Debi Rogers. Thanks to Lew Faust, their President, for sharing this information.

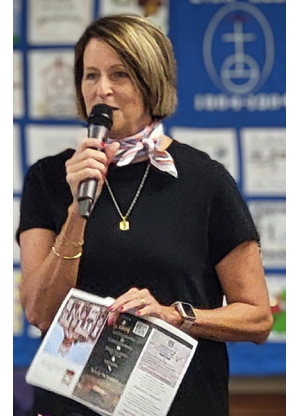
Members of the **Junction City Association of Retired School Personnel (JCARSP)** met at the Zion United Church of Christ on August 14 at 9:00 AM for their first meeting of the year. JCARSP membership consists of any school district employee who has retired, a spouse, or advocate for education.

New members were introduced by Sierra Jackson, President of JCARSP. The new members present were Shannon Echevarria, Natsha Kelly, Jenna Langvardt, Judy Sanner, Dr. Patricia Dozier, Donna Hallenbeck, Harold Macumber, and Cathy Hollis. Ellie Dillon and Becky Coy were the hosts for the potluck breakfast.

Donations were accepted for the C.L. Hoover Opera House Education Program. Ellie Dillon, C.L. Hoover Opera House Executive Director, shared information about the after-school program being held at the Opera House, upcoming shows, and Junction City Little Theater productions. The next JCLT

production will be the musical *Bye, Bye Birdie*.

Nita Miller, JCARSP Community Service Hours Coordinator, reported the Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel recognized the JCARSP unit on June 12 at the state convention for having served 9,969 hours to the community. At a rate of \$36.14 per hour the total amount of money our community saved for those hours was \$360,279.66.



The next meeting will be October 9 at 12:00 p.m. at the Zion United Church of Christ. It will be a potluck lunch taco bar. Donations will be given to the USD 475 Transition Program and/or the Food Pantry and Washington Elementary Students will make crafts with JCARSP members. Thanks to Ferrell Miller for sharing this information.

Emporia Area Retired School Personnel had a busy summer. The KARSP Convention was attended by members Dee Schwinn, Scott Capes, Mary Beth Janssen, and Ken Weaver. Ken was a speaker at the convention. Awards were won by Jeanette Schmidt (Sunflower Award and for most hours in the unit), Mary Beth Janssen (Meadowlark Award) and Dee Schwinn (Distinguished service award).

(Continued on Page 3)

EVERY MOUNTAIN IS WITHIN REACH

Beccy Isom
KARSP President



Another school year has started. For us, the retirees, it's bittersweet. Setting up our classroom, preparing our schedules and class rules, and that first day of welcoming "our kids" into "our home" for another 9 months.

But those days are over. We still care about our working colleagues and the kids, but it is different. We are now involved in other activities and have developed new interests and friendships. That's where our organization comes into play. The goals we have chosen will benefit all KPERs retirees. The school personnel, the firemen, the law enforcement, the state workers, the county workers, and the city workers are all part of this benefit. We paid into it and we expected to receive that benefit when we retired. There are 354,472 KPERs members which represent 12% of the present Kansas population (2.89 million). So, We Have Clout!!! The leadership in the Kansas House and Senate DO NOT think they need the retirees' and related folks' vote to win their election bids. The silver lining is that both will not be part of the leadership after the November elections as they are running for other offices.

Which leads us to the question – what can we do? If you haven't, register to vote and then vote. If you need to register to vote, contact your county clerk's office or email

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

PRESIDENT

- Beccy Isom
- (785) 476-8182
- mdisom2003@yahoo.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Jerry Henn
- (785) 232-8788
- director@karsp.org

MEADOWLARK EDITOR

- Dee Schwinn
- (620) 412-3452
- dadschwinn@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

- Leigh Anne Rogers
- (913) 231-6785
- membership@karsp.org
- 204 W. Dartmouth Rd.,
Kansas City, MO 64113

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Kay Sewell
- (620) 672-5484
- aksejm@outlook.com

Learn About Your KARSP Endorsed Benefits at:

www.myAMBAbenefits.info/karsp

You can also call our benefits provider at:

800.258.7041



Kell Smalley, District Manager of Kansas, Kansas City
(913) 912-2157

Dependable Benefits. Trusted Partner.
611 S KANSAS AVENUE, SUITE 100
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66603
(785) 296-6166 OR (888) 275-5737



New memberships and renewals are \$25.00 per year.
If you have a change of address, please contact us by mail,
phone, or email.

KARSP
990 SW Fairlawn, Topeka, KS 66606
(785) 232-8788
karsp@karsp.org or membership@karsp.org
or visit us at www.karsp.org



STRENGTH IN UNITY

election@ks.gov. If you can't get to the polls, ask for absentee ballots, but vote. We have CLOUT!!! However, do not vote against yourself. What do I mean by this? Too often we simply vote our party lines when the actions of our elected officials run contrary to our own interests. We vote for politicians who simply give lip service to public education and then vote to give public funds to private schools, vouchers, and so-called scholarships depriving our public schools of much needed funds. Help your peers register and vote.

Do not be silent. Contact your legislators and candidates and ask their position on a COLA for KPERS. Attend candidate forums and tell them about the lack of a COLA for 30 years. We have post cards available and can see that you get some through your District Directors that have pertinent information for the candidates. Just keep the cards, letters, and emails coming.

- If you have been doing this, DON'T STOP
- If you have not, we beg you to start
- It is known that there is support out there for a COLA by many legislators, so take the opportunity to talk to them about it.
- WE CAN NOT LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP AWAY

We need help! We have CLOUT to shake things up. As my motto says, "Every Mountain Is Within Reach."

(Continued from Page 1, Unit News)

These certificates were passed out at the July and August meetings.

In July, the unit honored current teachers who had received awards during the school year by inviting them to be guests at our

meeting. On August 11, members of our unit were present at the USD 253 Convocation and passed out highlighters and candy to the 1,000 new and returning staff. They are currently doing fund raisers at



Gambinos Pizza to raise extra money to help them honor current staff and students. Their August meeting's program was speaker Mike Torres who talked about Hispanics for Today and Tomorrow. In September, the speaker will be Dawn Young from the Emporia Arts Council. They meet on the second Friday of the month at the Emporia Recreation Center in their large meeting room.

Wyandotte County Association of Retired School Personnel (WYCARSF) will have their meeting on September 1, 2026 at 11:00 at the Wyandotte United Methodist Church. The theme for this month is "Getting to Know Our Fellow Retirees." The lunch will be meatloaf, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, and a roll. Members are reminded to ask about how to help with scholarships and to be sure to bring their Best Choice labels. Thanks to Nancy Warren for sharing this information.

KARSP FOUNDATION WINNERS... THE FINAL GROUP.

Erin Goodwin's project is entitled "Little Hands, Big Learning." She is a kindergarten teacher in Southern Lyon County USD 252 at Neosho Rapids Elementary. She wants to increase student engagement and independence, provide developmental instruction, and improve number and literary sense. She will purchase multiple hands-on kits including magnetic letters, shape

manipulates, stringing kits with lacing beads, etc. Evaluation will be through student performance, teacher observations, and program results.

Kale Clark from Lyons Middle School at USD 405 teaches eighth grade science. This project, “Kansas Kid Wind,” will allow students to learn how wind energy is converted into electrical energy. They will also work with data analysis and design their own wind turbines. The grant will provide the funds to purchase the materials they need to create their turbines. The concepts meet the state standards and will affect approximately 60 students each year.

Daylan Faltysek is also from Lyons Middle School at USD 205 and teaches math and tech classes to seventh graders. The project funds will help to purchase a 3-D printer and filaments. These items are aimed at expanding hands-on learning and project based opportunities. Students will be able to fully experience the designing and production process which will reinforce their math and technical skills with real world experiences. Approximately 100 students in seventh grade will be impacted.

Emily Carlson and Sarah Bloomquist are music teachers in Oakville Elementary in the Haysville School District 261. Their project is called “Rockin’ with my Doods.” They will purchase 13 Nuvo Doods that are a step above a recorder and prepare them for the clarinet. Learning how to play these will help them make a smoother transition into band. They learn how to use and care for a reed instrument. Even if the students do not join band, these instruments will foster music appreciation and provide a hands-on activity. The skills they learn will align with the music education standards. Over 10 years these

durable instruments will affect around 450 students.

Annie Yungbery is a preschool teacher in the Washington County Preschool in USD 108. Her project is entitled “Big Stories for Little Listeners.” The project will fund Tonie Boxes which offer an independent learning center which promotes learning without screens with uncomplicated controls ensuring all children can participate. The Tonie Box is a durable child operated audio player that allows students to independently access lyrics, stories, and informational content. This will directly affect 24 students per year.

Leslie Lucas is a science teacher at Logan Elementary in the Seaman School District 345. Students will build wind turbines, construct the blades, and will show energy transfer and conversion. They will create power from wind as they look to the future in energy. As a durable reusable resource, they will provide ongoing STEM opportunities for years to come.

Kim Kassen is a gifted teacher at the North Central Kansas Special Education Cooperative in Phillipsburg USD 636. This project, called “Project Based Learning,” will purchase a subscription to an online platform offering high quality critical thinking exercises designed to challenge and engage gifted students. The project could also provide other students with enrichment activities. There will be pre and post assessments to show the growth the students achieve.

When the auctioneer is trying to get you to go just a little bit higher on your bid, remember these wonderful projects and all of the Kansas students they are touching!

LEGISLATIVE REPORT FROM ERNIE CLAUDEL

What Actions Can You Take?

1. Register to vote and vote and do not vote against yourself. Make sure you help your peers register and vote as well. Do not be silent.
2. We as retirees have clout, so we need to use it! We cannot vote against ourselves. This recently obtained information to be noted is as follows:
 - KPERs Membership
 - Total 354,472 (This includes Retirees, Beneficiaries, active members, inactive members, and Judges. [This is an increase in the total. While the population of Kansas is not growing and there is some reduction the amount is not enough to change the Percentage.]
 - This 354,472 represents 12% of present Kansas population (2.89 million) – So, we have Clout (This percentage DOES NOT include spouses and dependents)
3. If you include spouses, lovers, children, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors we could, this number only doubled the KPERs numbers, we could easily control 24%.
4. The leadership in the Kansas House and Senate DO NOT think they need the retirees and related folks vote to win their election bids.
5. Contact your legislators and candidates and demand they create a committee to study KPERs COLA potential.
6. Attend Candidate forums and share your story about the lack of a KPERs Cost of Living Adjustment.
7. We have received suggestions that a Rally and a Petition Drive be used. Thanks for the suggestions.
 - Rallies have not worked recently
8. Keep those Cards and Letters coming! – Referral to John Carson's famous line.
 - If you have been doing this, DON'T STOP. I would suggest it once a week.
 - If you have not, we beg you to START.
 - It is known that there is a lot of support out there from many legislators, they are afraid to oppose the legislative leadership.
 - WE CAN NOT LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP AWAY!!

because of the February weather and transportation concerns with transportation of our interested age group.

- KCPR feels that time can be better spent contacting legislators and candidates than using time and energy for a petition drive.
- One thing is apparent. Many of the legislators and statewide candidates DO NOT believe they need the retiree vote to win! We would disagree!

Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees ®
www.ksretirees.org

ATTENTION ALL UNITS!

The Meadowlark would love to hear from all of the units around the state. You all are doing great things including the fellowship of your members, having great programs that entertain and inform, and working to promote educators across the state. Please feel free to share those wonderful happenings. If you have photos, they are welcome as well. Thanks to all of those who regularly send items. Keep it up

Have a great fall!

PROTECTING RETIREMENT INCOME IN TODAY'S UNCERTAIN MARKET

Why Many Retired Educators and Public Employees Are Exploring Fixed Indexed Annuities (FIA's)

You spent your career building a better future for others. **Now it's time to protect yours.**

Fixed Indexed Annuities (FIA's) can help provide protection, growth potential, and dependable retirement income—**so you can enjoy retirement with greater confidence.**



HOW FIA'S CAN HELP RETIREES LIKE YOU



1. PROTECT

Principal Protection

Helps protect your hard-earned money from market downturns.



2. GROW

Tax-Deferred Growth

Interest grows tax-deferred until you withdraw it, giving your money more time to compound.



3. GET INCOME

Guaranteed Lifetime Income Options

Create a steady, pension-like income you can't outlive.



4. DIVERSIFY

Strengthen Your Retirement Plan

Compliments pensions, Social Security, IRA's, 401(k)'s, and other savings.



5. GAIN CONFIDENCE

Less Stress, More Confidence

Helps reduce the worry that comes with market volatility.



QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKING

- How can I help protect my retirement savings from another market downturn?
- What options may help provide dependable retirement income?
- Are there ways to earn interest without directly risking principal in the market?
- How do I create more certainty in retirement?

You're not alone. Let's talk about your options.



COMPLIMENTARY RETIREMENT REVIEW

As a valued association member, you may be eligible for a complimentary review to discuss:

- ✓ Your retirement goals
- ✓ Retirement income options
- ✓ Income planning strategies
- ✓ Asset protection strategies
- ✓ Market risk concerns
- ✓ FIA solutions

Personalized guidance. No obligation. Just clarity and confidence for your future.

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO PROTECT YOUR RETIREMENT

Contact me:
Kell Smalley

Call or email:
913.912.2157
kell.smalley@getamba.com



Fixed Indexed Annuities are insurance products and are not directly invested in the stock market. Product guarantees are backed by the claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company. Withdrawals prior to age 59 may be subject to IRS penalties in addition to ordinary income taxes. This material is for educational purposes only and should not be considered tax, legal, or investment advice.

In CA d/b/a Association Member Benefits & Insurance Agency
AR Insurance License #100114462 • CA Insurance License #0196562



AMBA