



# Project 17 Newsletter



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## Inside This Issue

1	Project 17 Seeking Two New Board Members
2	Morgan Awarded First KLC Teaching Certificate
3	USDA Invests in Rural Development in Kansas
4	Seeking Small Businesses Needing Marketing Help
5	Former Circles Programs Transition to New Program:
6	Broadband Planning Finalists
7	Miami County Thrive
8	Regional Job Opportunities
9	KSU Center for Engagement and Community Engagement presents Project 17 its Excellence in Engagement Awards

## 2-Morgan Awarded 1<sup>st</sup> KS Leadership Center (KLC) Teaching Certificate



Congratulations to Heather Morgan from Project 17- Together We Succeed, the first recipient of the Kansas Leadership Center Teaching Leadership certificate. Heather received this award in October after completing extensive training with the Kansas Leadership Center. In acceptance of this award Heather acknowledged and thanked the leadership center for its generous support of Project 17 and specifically Ron Alexander for helping increase the region's leadership capacity to make progress on difficult issues!

## 1-PROJECT 17 CORE GROUP BOARD MEMBER OPENINGS--

Project 17 currently has three core group board member openings due to job change or retirements. The open positions are for people who would represent the K-12 education community, the broader education community, and the community at-large. If you or anyone you know would be willing to serve on the Project 17 Board of Directors, please email [hmorgan@twspjct17.org](mailto:hmorgan@twspjct17.org).

The typical time commitment for the Core Group is a quarterly meeting lasting for one to two hours. Generally, meetings will be held via conference call if possible and in a centralized location in the region if a face-to-face meeting is needed.

As a Core Group member you will represent the community and ensure Project 17 is informed about the needs and concerns of the citizens of Southeast Kansas with regard to the region's economic vitality. The Core Group provides organizational policy guidance and direction to Project 17.

The Core Group is made up of 10 members from the following sectors: Manufacturing; Agribusiness; Services (Law, Insurance, Etc.); Capital Community (Bankers/Investors); Utilities/Energy; Hospitals and Healthcare; K-12 Education; Secondary Education; Public Sector (City/County Management); and Transportation/Construction. In addition, three at-large members of the region's community comprise the balance of the Core Group. Ex-officio stakeholders and staff will also be part of the Core Group.



### **3- USDA Invests in Rural Economic Development Projects in Kansas—Project 17 Awarded Funds to Assist Small Businesses with Marketing and E-Commerce**

Topeka, Kan., Oct. 5, 2016 – USDA Rural Development Business Programs Director Randy Snider announced the selection of three grant recipients that are receiving financing to help spur business development in rural Kansas. Highland Community College, North Central Regional Planning Commission, and Together We Succeed Inc., are receiving a total of \$233,000 in grant funding through the USDA's Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Program. "The RBDG program helps facilitate business development and create jobs in rural Kansas communities," said Snider. "We are happy to partner with the organizations announced today, which are focused on helping small, rural businesses thrive and supporting the rural economy." USDA's Rural Business Development Grants are designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues.

USDA Rural Business Development Grants announced are:

#### Highland Community College

Funds will be used to equip a business incubator for entrepreneurs interested in entering the Kansas wine industry. In addition to entrepreneurs having access to equipment and storage space, the incubator will provide tutoring, teaching and mentoring services provided by Highland Community College's Viticulture and Enology staff. Highland Community College staff will also provide workshops and consultation to current or prospective Kansas wineries.

#### North Central Regional Planning Commission

Funds will be used to conduct a feasibility study on operating a food hub within a grocery store. Grocery stores in Iowa, Kansas, and Michigan will serve as pilots. The findings from the study will be shared with communities across the states as a best-management tool.

#### Together We Succeed Inc.

Funds will be used to provide technical assistance to small and emerging private businesses in rural Kansas. The organization will partner with Kansas State University students to provide access to small business marketing, social media, and E-Commerce services. Local food businesses will be able to receive safe food practice and food sales education.

Since 2009, USDA Rural Development has invested nearly \$13 billion to start or expand nearly 112,000 rural businesses; helped bring high-speed Internet access to nearly 6 million rural residents and businesses; helped 1.1 million rural residents buy homes; and funded nearly 9,200 community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care facilities. USDA also has invested \$31.3 billion in 963 electric projects that have financed more than 185,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines serving 4.6 million rural residents.

### **4- FREE Small Business Marketing and E-Commerce ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

#### **CONTACT PROJECT 17 TODAY!**

Project 17 is seeking small businesses who need marketing assistance to help increase their sales. Specifically, businesses related to food, agricultural products, and artisan products are preferred. However, any business that has under 50 employees and under one million dollars in gross revenue will be considered.

The assistance provided is FREE, one-on-one, intensive advice related to e-commerce and more traditional marketing strategies for products to help increase sales and grow business. Assistance ranges from business strategy, to logo design, newsletter creation, to social media and e-commerce assistance. All assistance is customized to meet the unique needs of each business. If your business needs a website, is interested in selling your products online, needs a social media marketing plan with preprogramed posts promoting your business or products, a logo, or just general marketing assistance please contact Heather Morgan at [hmorgan@twsp17.org](mailto:hmorgan@twsp17.org) as soon as possible.

## 5- Circles Programs Change Name and Curriculum

All participating counties in the Project 17 region are united in this change.

Project 17 is pleased to announce name changes for the workforce reengagement/anti-poverty programs which had formerly been called Circles.

The Franklin County (Ottawa) program will now be called Ripples for Change. This program meets on Thursday nights at 5:30 at the First Baptist Church.

The Chanute (Neosho) program will now be called Circle of Hope. This program meeting times will vary.

The Bourbon County (Fort Scott) program will now be called Partners in Change. This program meets at 5:30 pm on Wednesday nights at the First United Methodist Church and eats prior to the meeting with the help of the Feeding Families program. Changing the meeting night is currently under consideration.

The Miami County program will now be called Miami County Thrive! This program meets at 6:30 pm on Tuesday nights at Little Lambs' Day Care in the back of Cross Point Church in Paola.

The Independence and Coffeyville programs will also be transitioning names in December.

The Crawford County (Pittsburg) program will no longer meet after Dec. 31st, 2016. However, the program participants will be encouraged to work with other local organizations like Wesley House, Catholic Charities and Kansas Works to continue their journey back into the workforce and to be productive community members.

All programs will be transitioning to a new curriculum. They continue to meet on a weekly basis for a meal and group discussions facilitated by volunteer mentors. Meeting times and locations are subject to change. To donate or to become involved in one of these efforts, contact Heather Morgan at [hmorgan@twsp17.org](mailto:hmorgan@twsp17.org).



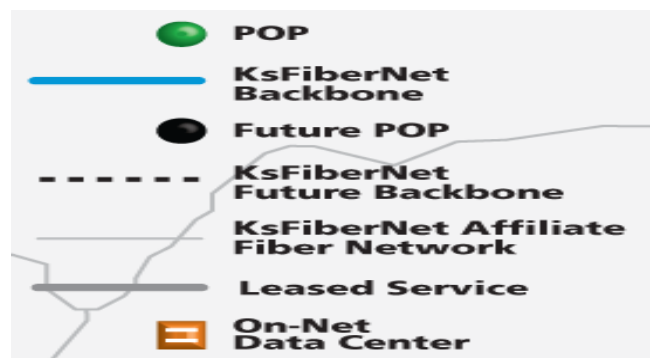
Initial Circles USA (now Partners in Change) Organizational Meeting in Fort Scott on January 15, 2015

## 6- BROADBAND PLANNING FINALISTS

Two communities selected

This fall Project 17 released a RFP for broadband planning for communities or groups of communities in conjunction with private firms for broadband service providers to assist two different communities/ counties/ or smaller regions within the Project 17 region to develop a broadband implementation plan. This plan included engineering services, community needs assessment, as well as financial modeling to determine feasibility.

These plans will improve broadband access to businesses in a self-identified region and provide a logical plan for how broadband will be expanded in the area to bring the greatest economic impact to the region. The communities who were finalists for the award submitted compelling proposals that sought to foster broadband access to unserved/underserved areas. Both cities, who will be announced publically in February are utilizing KansasFiberNet as their private sector partner in this work. Final negotiations are ongoing with the projects beginning in February.



## **7- SPOTLIGHT--MIAMI COUNTY THRIVE**

*Amazing and encouraging success when committed people help their neighbors*

Project 17 is pleased to announce additional support in Miami County for Miami County THRIVE! Originally, the Hillside Community Lutheran Church in Spring Hill, with support from Project 17, received funds to begin a community dialog around the root causes of poverty and explore how a relational poverty program may be a good solution for our coalition in Miami County to help people thrive, not just survive. The result was a program called Miami County Circles. However, the program is now transitioning to a new name called Miami County Thrive!.

In addition to the name, other changes include new curriculum, additional mentors, and building stronger employer partnerships. Most recently, a number of businesses have taken an interest in supporting program participants as they begin to transition their life from just surviving to thriving through providing job opportunities and opportunities for other work related experiences to strengthen participant's resumes. Employers have had increased job openings and have found that program participants who have improved their skills have become much better employees and able to meet their businesses' needs. We are hopeful to see even more partnerships with area businesses in the future as the program continues to grow. Additionally, businesses have found value in volunteering and getting to know individuals which has made recruiting easier and given them a preview of what they may be able to expect from the individual as an employee. Miami County Thrive! Welcomes business participation from any Miami County or surrounding area employer.

THRIVE! Meetings are held every Tuesday night at 6:30 pm at Little Lambs' Day Care in the back of Cross Point Church in Paola. A meal is served to all participants and volunteers. Volunteers from the community provide childcare and transportation can potentially be arranged if a family has no way to get to the meetings. Two Classes are then held each Tuesday: One for those entering the journey of moving from surviving to thriving and the other class for program participants who have finished the first class, "Getting Ahead," and are ready to participate in other Research and Extension Curriculum from Kansas State University and other Universities across the county. This curriculum helps participants reflect on the changes needed in their lives to be on firmer financial grounds but also rooted in a community where they are able to learn to trust and connect to the journey forward, as they plan it for the of their lives. At this point participants are connected with community volunteers who serve as mentors to be an intentional friend and help encourage them along their journeys.

Over the past two and a half years, the coalition with the support of many dedicated county residents have identified and continue to identify those in poverty who want to change their lives and the future potential for their families. The Miami County Coalitions overarching goal is to move 10 percent of the region's children out of poverty in ten years and reduce the number of children who are being removed from their home and put into foster care through the use of the Circles program. Spring Hill Mayor Steve Ellis is including Miami County THRIVE! as part of the 2016 Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund and THRIVE! is open to donations from anyone wanting to support this mission.

Since the fall of 2015 many civic and church organizations and several individuals have given donations to help defray costs of operating this out-to-poverty initiative. Civic organizations involved include the Spring Hill Rotary Club, the Block Rotarians, Paola Lyons Club, the Osawatomie Elks Club, Paola Business Women's Organization. Also many Churches and businesses involved have provided for the weekly meals, recruitment support, and speakers for the programming, which include K-State Research & Extension, Marais des Cygnes District; Salvation Army; Department of Children and Families (DCF); ECKAN - East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation; Parents as Teachers; Hillside Community Lutheran Church; Life Spring Church Community Food Pantry; Osawatomie Food Pantry; Endless Mercy Baptist Church, LaCygne United Methodist Church; Cross Point Church and Harvester's Food Pantry; Grace Community Nazarene Church; Miami Co. Connect Kansas Coalition; Osawatomie, Paola, and Spring Hill School Districts; several of the Chamber of Commerce in Miami County; Southeast Kansas Works; Spring Hill Multi-Purpose Center (serving Miami County); My Father's House; CASA; Spring Hill Electronics; Millard Lumber; Price Chopper; First Option Bank; Progressive 4-H Club, Alpha Delta Kappa Iota Chapter, and the Elizabeth Layton Center.

To donate or volunteer to become a part of Miami County Circles contact Heather Morgan at [hmorgan@twspjct17.org](mailto:hmorgan@twspjct17.org) or Janice Hawley at 913.226.3334 or [janiceahawley@gmail.com](mailto:janiceahawley@gmail.com).



## **8-EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGEMENT AWARDS-- Project 17 Recognized**

The Center for Engagement and Community Development is proud to announce the 2016 winners of the Excellence in Engagement Award. The award was established in 2011 and recognizes Kansas State Research and Extension and campus faculty initiatives that demonstrate innovative and/or sustained efforts in university/community engagement.

**One of the award recipients is Project 17**, a large-scale regional economic development effort in the 17 counties in Southeast Kansas. Jeff Tucker, Executive Director of the K-State Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI) and Heather Morgan, AMI's Executive Director of Project 17 accepted the award on behalf of the university and community participants involved in the project.

Project 17 was created in late 2012 to address chronic economic challenges in Southeast Kansas. Originally, 15 people were appointed by the region's senators to launch the effort and since that time over 1,800 citizens across Southeast Kansas have been engaged in work to improve the economic vitality, civic leadership, health, and strengthening the region's workforce. Project 17 was founded in creating a network-based, grassroots supported, civic platform that enables all citizens to participate through active recruitment of volunteers and partners; tackles socially complex problems; focuses on linking and leveraging regional assets; places priority on strategic doing over strategic planning; and launches multiple initiatives across several project pillars in an effort to seed large-scale change.

"AMI is pleased to receive this award in recognition of the work K-State faculty, staff, and students in partnership with the citizens of the region have engaged to stand up and support such a broad-based regional economic development initiative that is making a real impact on the region's future economic prosperity," said Tucker.

Since its inception, Project 17 has engaged and consulted with faculty from the following Kansas State University Colleges: Engineering, Business, Agriculture, Human Ecology, Arts and Sciences, Architecture Planning and Design, and the Staley School of Leadership Studies.

Right: Jeff Tucker, Executive Director of the KSU Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI) Heather Morgan, Project 17 Executive Director accept the award for Project 17.

Additionally, the following student groups have worked directly with businesses throughout the Project 17 region to apply their knowledge on real world small businesses to promote e-commerce: from the College of Agriculture, the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) and from the College of Business, Pi Sigma Epsilon. The involvement of K-State students with small businesses in the Project 17 region has been a tremendous asset to help these businesses grow. Students were able to apply what they have learned in the classroom and create websites, logos, marketing plans, and conduct market research. Both students and the businesses involved were happy with the experience. "I was so impressed by the talent of our students and their eagerness to jump in and learn hands-on what it takes to overcome challenges facing rural businesses," said Morgan.

Project 17 was also involved with Wichita State University in securing the national Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) designation, which entitles the region preference for several federal funding opportunities.

Project 17 has engaged in partnerships with over 100 local community organizations, assisted over 200 small businesses, and helped generate large amounts of private capital investment into the region.

Project 17 will represent K-State in the national competitions for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Scholarship Award and the C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Scholarship Award.



## 9- JOB OPENINGS IN PITTSBURG

EaglePicher Technologies, LLC in Pittsburg is hiring. They are expanding and have the need for additional employees. Current openings include:

Administrative Assistant  
Process Associate 3- Press Room  
Production Supervisor  
Quality Engineer  
Maintenance Controls Technician  
Process Associate 3- Stacker

To apply visit [www.jobs.eaglepicher.com](http://www.jobs.eaglepicher.com)

EaglePicher is a VECTRA company and has been a leading producer of batteries and energetic devices for more than one hundred years, currently serving the defense, aerospace, and medical industries. EaglePicher also provides custom battery assemblies, battery management systems, pyrotechnic devices and custom power solutions.



*Together We Succeed- Project 17 serving Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Elk, Franklin, Greenwood, Labette, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson counties.*

## Project 17 Board Members

1. Jerry Atkinson
2. Debbie Bearden
3. Carmen Coleman
4. Jim Correll
5. Randy Corns
6. Bruce Fairbank
7. Darron Hall
8. Dick Horton
9. George Knox
10. Mary Beth Warren
11. Kari West
12. David Whetstone
13. Robert Uhler

## Project 17 Executive Director

Heather Morgan

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## 9- Kansas Crossing Casino is Hiring-

Kansas Crossing Casino and Hotel preparing to open near Pittsburg is seeking to hire around 300 employees. They have already held job fairs in the region and will be holding another job fair on January 5<sup>th</sup> at Memorial Hall in Pittsburg. Please help spread the word to people around the region about these new available jobs. Below is an announcement from Kansas Crossing about the skills and abilities they are looking for.

“Do you or someone you know love to have fun and work as part of a team? Now is your chance to see if being a Table Games Dealer at Kansas Crossing Hotel is right for you! Whether you have Table Games experience or not, we invite you to learn more about the dealer opportunities. Previous casino-industry experience is not required, but a friendly, positive attitude is a must! We'll provide all the training you'll need to succeed in your job and grow in your career. Must be 18 Years or older to apply.”

Not interested in Table Games? Please watch the Kansas Crossing website, [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more job postings, open houses and job fairs. To complete your application visit our [careers page](#).

## **Excerpts from An Article Printed about Project 17 in KSU's Engage Magazine**

“Project 17 is unique because it's a grassroots approach,” said Heather Morgan, the project's executive director. “It's about the region's citizens identifying needs and putting solutions in place.”

With collaboration from a bounty of partners — including the U.S. Department of Ag.-Rural Development, the U.S. Economic Development Admin., the KS Department of Commerce, the KS Leadership Center, Casey Family Programs, the KS Department of Children and Families, faith-based groups and other community organizations — Project 17's accomplishments are many:

-Started antipoverty programs with the goal of moving 10 percent of the region's children out of poverty in 10 years.

-Spurred investment and construction of a multimillion-dollar broadband internet fiber trunk line to allow for business expansion, e-commerce and location of high-tech businesses.

-Developed trainings for youth to gain leadership skills and see the value of living and working in the region.

-Taken many additional actions to address systemic issues and create a platform for lasting change.

Ron Alexander, faculty member of the Kansas Leadership Center, told attendees at a workshop in Woodson County that Project 17 will continue to improve if residents and community partners keep pressing on to achieve the best for their region.