

CAPPINGS

www.kansashoneyproducers.org

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The Legislative Update by Buck Bradley

Bees Under the Dome: Educating and Inspiring Kansans About Pollinators

Our Bees Under the Dome event was a tremendous success! Hosted by the Northeast Kansas Beekeepers Association (NEKBA), the Kansas Honey Producers Association (KHPA), and the Wichita Beekeepers Alliance. The event highlighted the importance of native pollinators and honey bees for Kansas agriculture, ecosystems, and communities. Nearly half of Kansas legislators stopped by our display, and more than 400 members of the public came to learn, ask questions, and experience the world of bees up close.

To make the experience even sweeter, we provided honey sticks for the public and 1 lb. bottles of honey for legislators. This gave recipients a taste of the local honey we produce and the remarkable work bees do every day. Many beekeepers also stopped in personally to deliver a bottle of honey to their representative, making the event even more meaningful.

I cannot thank the dedicated members who helped with the booth, as well as all the beekeepers who took the time to engage with the public and legislators, enough. The energy, curiosity, and support we saw at Bees Under the Dome were truly inspiring, demonstrating just how much Kansans value pollinators and the beekeeping community. This event was a perfect opportunity to educate, advocate, and celebrate the work of honey bees and native pollinators across the state.

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The President's Message by Becky Tipton

Every organization runs in cycles. I've been part of KHPA for over 30 years, and I've rarely missed a meeting/conference. We have been an organization that catered to the state's commercial beekeepers and their thousands of hives. We have been an organization investing thousands of dollars to help bring awareness of beekeeping to youth and programs for the beginners-beginner. The cycle of KHPA involves change and trying to meet the needs of our evolving membership. The vast majority of our current membership is the sideliner beekeeper; someone trying to be the best bee steward they can be and maybe sell a little honey as well. Toward that end, you will notice a few new things this next year.

As you'll read elsewhere in this Cappings, we will not be offering a spring meeting this year. As I am sure some of you have been aware, we have struggled to gain momentum at our meetings post Covid. Lots of organizations have experienced a similar waning. So, this next year, we will try to reevaluate and create an event that will not just meet the needs of our members but surpass their expectations. Our new program chair, Dan Young and his committee are meeting regularly, and they are laser focused on changes that will bring interests, needs, and information together. A starting point will be a survey. We will be asking for input from every beekeeper we can reach.

The Kansas Honey Producers represents every Kansas beekeeper, whether they are members or not. We want input and we want to create a conference that will become one people will put on the calendar and count the days! When the survey arrives in your email box, please don't put it off. Reply!

Other ways KHPA is working for all beekeepers:

Check out "Bees Under the Dome." We met our legislators in the people's house and talked to them about the importance of honey bees. There are so many topics that impact our bees and our industry, we want to keep those channels of communication open.

KHPA is classified as a 501c5 non-profit organization. We are working to change that to a 501c3. The change will enable us to take advantage of some tax breaks as well as make us eligible for support from some organizations (Microsoft) who offer assistance and support to non-profits. That's not exciting news but an important step to help us become more efficient and a better run organization.

After these changes, we will also be working to update our constitution. It has been over 10 years since the constitution was amended. We need to keep our constitution and bylaws aligned with our practices and use it as our guiding

structure. Look for published changes in upcoming Cappings issues. We will vote on our amended constitution during our business meeting at the November conference.

My usual message here focuses on positive accomplishments, bee health, and the joy of beekeeping. Although the industry has sustained horrific loss, scientists seem to be coming closer to cracking the code on a viral vaccination for our queens. We are learning more about the science of diet and management strategies to improve bee health. Our daily practices can make the difference in our bee success. Any day I can spend part of it in the garden or among the bees is a good day. Others have written about the Zen of beekeeping. When you open the hive, you can focus on the amazing honey bee and leave all those other cares behind. The hum is the thing. Poet Elizabeth Lawrence, “The hum of bees is the voice of the garden.” Emily Dickenson, “To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee, One clover, and a bee, And revery. The revery alone will do, if bees are few.” Find the joy until spring and we can open the hives and greet the bees.

Meet the New Program Chairman

Hello, I’m Dan Young, your new Kansas Honey Producers Association 1st Vice President and Program Chair. My wife Val and I run Sticky Business Bee Company in Wichita. We are heading into our fifth year of beekeeping with forty hives across Sedgwick, Harvey, and Butler counties.

After 30 years in the Air Force, we retired to Wichita to start our second chapter. Figuring there had to be more to life than launching airplanes, deployments, and moving every four years. We took time to decompress, completed the Hives to Heroes course through Michigan State University and became beekeepers. At first, it was a therapeutic hobby with hopes of harvesting our own honey (and a quick lesson that it’s cheaper to buy local honey than produce it). But it has evolved into Sticky Business, and we are showing no signs of slowing down. As we have grown from hobbyists into small business owners, we’ve come to appreciate the broader community that supports beekeepers across Kansas.

The Kansas Honey Producers Association has a long and meaningful history. The organization, originally name the Kansas State Beekeepers Association, was founded on December 30, 1903. It is among the oldest active beekeeping organizations in the country. I think it might rank within the top ten nationwide. That legacy deserves events and programming that reflect where we have been and where we are headed.

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I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve Kansas beekeepers. My first month has highlighted where we need to focus. This will shape how we approach the future, hopefully with clear direction and purpose. But to do that well, the Program Committee needs your input. Specifically, we need to understand what you want and need from KHPA and our annual conference.

Good decisions are based on data and facts. Right now, we don't have a clue what our members need or want from KHPA events. I have a vision for what we could build, but without feedback and support from you, we are shooting in the dark. We will be sending out a survey soon, and we'd appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete it. Your feedback will help us identify our focus areas and move forward in alignment toward a common, understood goal. Planning a conference requires locking down venues, speakers, and all the details that members deserve. However, we need your feedback quickly.

The Program Committee and I are committed to making KHPA events worth your time, money, and effort — a reward for the hours many of you invest in supporting this organization, whether volunteering at the State Fair, serving on committees, or maintaining KHPA State Hives as part of your operation. But we can't do it alone — this must be a team effort. Be watching for the survey in your inbox, share your thoughts, and we can build something worthy of Kansas beekeepers and the legacy of this organization.

I hope you and your bees come out of winter healthy and strong, ready to tackle your plans for 2026. Until next time.

Dan Young, 1st Vice President, Program Chairman

The Legistlative Report *Continued*

HB2158 Update

While at the Capitol, we took the opportunity to engage with legislators on HB2158, which would allow beekeepers who meet certain requirements to sell packaged honey and honeycomb without needing a food establishment or food processing plant license. The House Committee that originated the bill last year voted last week to resume the conference committee, which will work out the differences between the two versions of the bill passed by both chambers last year. After the conference committee completes its work, the bill will return to the House and Senate for a vote and, hopefully, proceed to the Governor for signature. There is still time to contact your representatives and share your thoughts on this important legislation.

Buck Bradley, Legislative Committee



Bees Under the Dome 2026

Scholarship News

St. Andrews' Episcopal

It has been quite the rollercoaster with our bees over the last few months. We were excited to have been able to participate in the State Fair. Two members from our parish were able to volunteer this year. We were also honored to have several new people come out to the hives and get their first up close experience with bees. The winter months have proven challenging, however. One of our hives lost their queen toward the end of November. Stephani Phillips was able to come out and help us with combining the two and it went well. We learned how to make them candy for over winter. Sadly, the remaining hive did not survive the cold snap. We are working on getting the frames cleaned off and ready for spring when we will try again. We know fully understand the difficulties of keeping bees and the heartache that can come along with it but are eager to continue along into the future.

St. Andrews' Episcopal, Derby, KS



John Dewey Learning Academy

John Dewey Learning Academy provides an authentic, nurturing, and academically challenging learning environment for students who struggle in the traditional academic setting. JDLA is designed to help K-12 students connect with the world outside of the school setting in a meaningful way. Promoting a positive sense of the community, enthusiasm for learning, critical thinking and problem-solving, and social-emotional resiliency are at the heart of the JDLA program.

At the core of this mission is an authentic pedagogy –service learning- where students are reinforcing educational concepts while performing service that meets real community needs. This exciting honeybee project fits perfectly with our school's goal; students who attend JDLA come to see themselves as productive members of society.

We greatly appreciate the mentoring and supplies provided by the KHPA grant to build our apiary and learn all about honeybees! The addition of honeybees will benefit our local farmers, wineries, gardeners, and tree nurseries by improving pollination rates. We look forward to attending area elementary schools and community gatherings to educate students and community members about our honeybee project, showcase products from our apiary, and emphasize the importance of honeybees to the ecosystem.



Altoona-Midway School

The Altoona-Midway Apiary bees are snug as a bug in their bee hive homes. The high school-run bee apiary is in its winter maintenance phase, with students focusing on monitoring hive health rather than active honey production. The bees remain clustered inside their hives to conserve warmth, while students periodically check food stores, hive ventilation, and signs of moisture buildup during colder days. Under teacher supervision, the students review data from fall inspections, clean and repair equipment, and learn about winter bee behavior and colony survival strategies. This quieter month provides an important hands-on learning opportunity, helping students understand the seasonal rhythms of beekeeping and the responsibility required to support pollinators year-round. After losing one bee hive colony before winter, the students are hoping to see two healthy hives in the spring. If the two surviving colonies survive the winter, the hope is that we can split one of the hives to rehome into the third empty hive and reestablish three thriving bee hives.

Krystle Mayginnes, Principal, Altoona-Midway



Altoona-Midway Scholarship Hives

Extracting More \$\$\$ From Your Hive

Value Added Videos from Kansas Honey Producers

Are you aware there are educational videos on our club website? Find videos of recorded, educational, online meetings focused to increase income from your hives. The meetings were produced by KHPA from 2020-2024. Sessions are hosted by Joli Winer. Topics include marketing, comb honey production, honey extraction, cold process soap making, lotions, lip balms, and making and selling nucs plus so much more. The videos can be found at www.kansashoneyproducers.org/value-added.

Watch your inbox for a survey. Please respond quickly!

News Around The State

Northeast Region

Funday will be held June 6, 2026, at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, 2120 Harper St., Lawrence, KS, 66046. This year's Funday is being organized by Milisa Suckow. Speakers include Dr. David Peck, Director of Research and Education at Betterbee; David Burns, a certified master beekeeper and popular YouTube contributor; Dr. Judy Wu-Smart, who leads the Bee Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and Brian McCornack, department head for Entomology at Kansas State University and is also instrumental in the founding of the American Honey Institute. A queen rearing workshop, taught by David Peck and David Burns, will be held on June 5, 2026, 9 am-3pm. The workshop is limited to forty participants. The World Cup events in Kansas City coincides with Funday. It is anticipated to have an impact on room availability and cost in the Lawrence area. Those needing hotel accommodation are urged to book well in advance. The Douglas County Fairgrounds can also accommodate fifteen camper trailers. Visit www.nekba.org for details and registration.

Joli Winer is busy planning the upcoming year's activities at The Educational Open Apiary, located at Pendleton's Country Market, 1446 E. 1850 Rd, Lawrence, KS 66046. Sessions will resume in March. Information about attending and a class schedule will be available at the club's website.

NEKBA is also hosting their annual Beginning Beekeeping and Year 2 and Beyond classes in February and March. The Beginner's class will be repeated three times in different counties around the region. There will be only one session for the Year 2 and Beyond. Kristi Sanderson is the beekeeping class event coordinator. Class details, registration, and locations can be found at www.nekba.org/class.html.

Jo Patrick, Northeast Region Representative

Southeast Region

Two local beekeeping clubs have been busy preparing and instructing Beginner Beekeeping classes. The Cherokee County Beekeepers hosted a day long class for beginners and experienced beekeepers, on February 7, 2026. The Montgomery County Beekeepers Association will be hosting a day-long event on February 28, 2026. The course will be held at St. Andrews Catholic Church, 414 E. Myrtle Street in Independence, Ks. Pre-registration is requested by February 26, 2026. For more information, please contact Jason Elmore (620)249-4864 or Cheryl Haley (918)977-1502.

Rhonda Heston, Southeast Area Representative

North Central Region

The new year is off to a great start. Thanks to all the beekeepers who came together at the Rolling Hills Zoo, in Salina, on Sunday, January 11th to talk bees. Several new beekeepers joined 15 experienced keepers to refresh skills and share ideas. Cards were passed out with the meeting schedule for 2026. The group will meet on May 17th, July 12th, and Sept 20th at the Rolling Hills Zoo. We also meet during KHPA meetings in March and November. Greg Swob talked about different sources for acquiring bees and had a hive to demonstrate his method to install a bee package. Jennie Nichols shared a recipe for making sugar patties which we are probably all feeding by now. Suzanne Hokett had been making swarm traps, she brought one to share, tips and tricks for trapping swarms were discussed by the group. It's early but State Fair entries were discussed, August will be here before you know it. Nikki Bowman will be continuing to conduct open apiaries at the Manhattan Zoo during the spring and summer. Reach out to Nikki if you'd like to be a part of this free, get-into-a-hive experience. She can be reached through email at nikkibfarm@gmail.com.

It's a blessing to meet so many people who share a hobby but have their own talents to put their spin on it. And the best way to get acquainted with all of these talented people is to get together! Plan to join us in 2026 to talk bees.

Jennie Nichols/Suzanne Hokett, North Central Region Representatives



Suzanne Hokett's Swarm Trap

Western Region

Lessons from the Hives

The Cluster

Winterizing hives for yet another year is complete. In anticipation of crazy weather extremes, we experience in NW Kansas we've made some modifications, again. The

goal? To keep the cluster of winter bees warm, dry, healthy, well nourished, and comfortable when the weather swings from sunny and 60 degrees to a blustery, windy, 2 degrees in the same week.

That essential cluster of winter bees is like a circle of family and friends. “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Working together creates a combined effect greater than individual efforts, synergy! A healthy circle provides stability, warmth and nourishment.

Comparing a cluster of bees to a circle of friends and family I can’t help but also recognize that when someone consumes more than they contribute, when misconduct impairs the best interest of the whole, it might be time to let them go – like drones are pushed out of the warmth of the hive in fall.

What have I learned from the hives? It’s impossible to control the NW Kansas weather but I can make modifications to provide comfort. And...tending to the wellbeing of a cluster of winter bees and nurturing a close circle of family and friends is well worth the time and effort.

Breathe and Just BEE

Brenda Mazanec, Western Region Representative

South Central Region

Most of the winter months have been warm and dry until the recent storm that came through and dropped snow on us all. We are thankful for the moisture and can only wait to see if the bees survived the multiple days below freezing. But as many beekeepers know, as this cold weather is testing our bees, the most we can do is prepare for the spring that is around the corner. Prepare frames, build boxes, and try our hand at making new bee products.

Wichita Beekeeping Alliance is rolling out their beekeeping meetings and topics on their Facebook Page starting the end of February and South Central Beekeepers group will host the first meeting of the year as well. Many people are gaining more interest into beekeeping and asking the essential questions of where to start. Even schools and 4H clubs are asking for presenters to talk about bees and their importance. Having that interest is reviving for some as they know this is an opportunity to share what we love... Bee Talk. As we start to warm up, be the advocate our bees need, and let us all prepare for a spring of growth.

Zach Cooper, South Central Area Representative



**Congratulations to all the winners
at the Kansas State Fair 2025!
Hope to see you in 2026!**



2025 Honey Show Results

Art Design in Beeswax

1st Stepheni Phillips-Hutchinson
2nd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe

Beeswax

1st Stepheni Phillips-Hutchinson
2nd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe
3rd Zach Cooper-Wellington

Beeswax Candles

1st Stepheni Phillips-Hutchinson
2nd Joli Winer-Spring Hill
3rd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe

Chunk Honey

1st Susan Lane-Auburn
2nd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe
3rd Jim Putnam-Lawrence

Cut Comb

1st Joli Winer-Spring Hill
2nd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe
3rd Susan Lane-Auburn

Section Comb Honey

1st no award
2nd Zach Cooper-Wellington
3rd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe

Crystallized/Creamed Honey

1st Kristi Sanderson

Extracted Honey, Light

1st Susan Lane-Auburn
2nd Mary Lombardo-Roeland Park
3rd Jim Putnam-Lawrence

Extracted Honey, Dark

1st Susan Lane-Auburn
2nd Stepheni Phillips-Hutchinson
3rd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe

Frame of Honey

1st Stepheni Phillips-Hutchinson
2nd Susan Lane-Auburn
3rd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe

Honey Gift Package

1st Joli Winer-Spring Hill
2nd Kristi Sanderson-Olathe
3rd Zach Cooper-Wellington

Black Label

Samatha Bell-Topeka

Sweepstakes

Stepheni Phillips-Hutchinson

Judges Choice

Susan Lane (chunk honey) -Auburn

Youth Division

Extracted Honey, Light

1st Phillip Sieg-Overland Park
2nd Bailey Kruse-Spring Hill

Extracted Honey, Dark

1st Prairie Hills Middle School-Hutchinson

Frame of Honey

1st Bailey Kruse-Spring Hill
2nd Prairie Hills Middle School-Hutchinson

Honey Gift Package

1st no award
2nd Bailey Kruse-Spring Hill

Youth Sweepstakes

Bailey Kruse-Spring Hill



Kansas Honey Producer's Association
Cappings Newsletter
S. Koehn
P.O. Box 171
Galva, KS 67443

Address Service Requested

2026 Kansas Honey Producer's Association Membership Application

Name _____ ,
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone# _____
E-mail Address _____

Membership Kansas Honey Producer's Association per calendar year \$25.00 _____
Additional family members wanting voting rights \$1.00 per person \$1.00 _____
Additional family member's names:

WW _____

Youth Membership (Age 18 or younger) \$12.50 Each \$12.50 _____
Donation Amount (optional) _____
Total Due _____

Make checks payable to: KHPA, Kansas Honey Producer's Association or pay online at
www.kansashoneyproducers.org

Mail to: Sondra Koehn, P.O. Box 171, Galva, Kansas 67443, Phone#972-849-4408 or
email skoehn@live.com

The Kansas Honey Producer's Association is a non-profit IRC 501(c)5 agricultural-educational organization, run by dedicated volunteers, and supported primarily by membership dues. The IRC status means that the association is a tax-exempt organization. While donations are always welcome, they are not tax deductible as a charitable contribution. However, membership dues and subscriptions may be deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses.