1st Quarter 2024



CAPPINGS The Official Newsletter of the Kansas Honey Producers Association www.kansashoneyproducers.org

Promoting Mankind's Most Beneficial Insect - The Honey Bee!

Special points of interest:

- Legislative Update
- President's Corner
- **Regional News**
- Extracting More \$\$\$
- Spring Conference

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We often get tunnel vision thinking about our own beekeeping or just meeting with our local club to talk about bees and we forget about national issues. Beekeeping continues to evolve and change with scientific breakthroughs, government oversite, or lack thereof.

The State legislature is now in session. Thus far, very little is having an effect on beekeepers. The two political parties are currently discussing the food sales tax with the idea of stopping all food tax this year, instead of just dropping it to 2%. The KHPA is in conversation with the AG Dept. regarding what the capabilities are in using their lab to help Kansas beekeepers. We presented a group of questions to see about the lab's capabilities. Imagine being able to find out if the pollen the bees had for winter

was of poor quality. Might it have caused their death instead of mites? Perhaps we had the capability to test comb and find out that one of the frames had a high level of pesticide, giving us greater insight into the need for foundation replacement. We could look at bacterial diseases, possibly viral issues, and change our course of beekeeping. This would be much better than jumping on social media and having 12 different unknown experts advise us about checking a mite load. This type of information will be needed in the future for beekeeping. Having the answers and not guessing what happened will help us in our beekeeping practice. We will continue to explore options with our AG department as we move into 2024.

On the National level, our two organizations have been busy trying to navigate some dark storms ahead and are watching other issues that may need some guidance. Canada is still working with their government to once again open their border to the U.S. to allow bee packages into Canada. For our hobbyists, this might limit the number of packages available to them. However, there are signs that smaller beekeeping operations are making nucs and will have them available locally although nucs would be available at a later date than bee packages. Only time will tell as the Canadian beekeepers work through the governmental red tape.

The AHPA has been busy with the "Hive Act". They are working on a national definition of "HONEY". There seems to be a new alternative product every

The Legislative Update 2024 by Jim Kellie

I

day stating it is honey, like the example of almond milk, soy milk, etc. for milk products. We would like the name of honey not to be used in this manner. The definition and regulations are being negotiated and hammered out this year.

The last issue is changes at the U.S. agencies. Honey bees have long been under regulation of the EPA. This is where all our approvals have come for treatments of American foul brood, European foul brood, along with approval of treatments for varroa mites. The FDA is now wanting to take over this task. There are some concerns; such as, the FDA does not even have an entomologist on staff. Regulations will be much stricter for new treatments and will take twice as long for tests to be run. There will be few, if any, companies that will be interested in making new products for such a small agricultural group. The cost to go through the hoops of red tape will be more than the investment return. The odds of the FDA to understand beekeeping and knowing how quickly things can take a turn for the worse in beekeeping certainly looks alarming for the industry. In the wings is the threat of the Tropilaelaps mite. It will most likely make its way into the U.S. in the distant future as it spreads across continents. This mite is many times worse than varroa. How the FDA might handle this is a cause for worry. Charlie Linder is part of an ABF committee that is watching/working on this issue. I would highly recommend you read his article in the January issue of "American Bee Journal". In addition, Charlie was interviewed on "Beekeeping Today" podcast (S6 E31 January 15). I invite you to give it a listen. He does a much better job communicating about these national issues. See you at the Spring meeting. Keep warm and check those bees for honey stores when the weather permits.

Name Tags



If you would like a name tag like the one in the photo, please make a check out to the Kansas Honey Producers for \$10 and mail it to Kristi Sanderson, 1252 E Frontier Ln., Olathe, KS 66062. Include how you want your name to be printed and what town you want on the tag. These are nice name tags with a magnetic fastener. If your order is received by mid-February, I will have them at the meeting in March.

Reminder—The Kansas State Fair is September 6-15. Volunteers will be needed starting on September 3rd.

Kristi Sanderson, 2nd Vice President

KHPA Constitution Changes/ Treasurer Changes

We will be making amendments to our constitution to align policy and procedure. These were posted in detail in the 3rd Quarter Cappings and are available for review on our website.

We will be voting upon the changes during our March business meeting.

Sondra Koehn has assumed the job of treasurer for our association. Please contact her with questions about meeting enrollment or membership. Robert Burns will continue to act as bookkeeper for our State Fair account.

Becky Tipton, President

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Becky Tipton

Everybody does something. I play with thousands of stinging insects and try to encourage other people to do the same. I make messes with beeswax and try to show others how to fill their neat and tidy spaces with project equipment and trays of curing soap. I grow stuff. Most of the stuff I grow is in hopes that the stinging insects will find it, collect the nectar, and make honey. As my sisters have asked, "Why?" Why do we do what we do? The answer, immense personal satisfaction, and tasty honey.

The KHPA board and particularly Greg Swob and the program planning committee have been busy searching out people and topics to meet your needs, the beekeepers across Kansas. I have rarely worked with a more positive and dedicated group, either professionally or avocationally. The Kansas Honey Producers is a very friendly, energetic group, dedicated to the betterment of bees. We see so many great Kansas beekeepers not benefiting financially from their work with KHPA but benefiting through the knowledge gained and the reward of bettering our environment. If this sounds appealing to you, join us in March in Salina. The

weather may be iffy, but the quality of the meeting will not disappoint.

The Honey industry lost a tremendously valuable partner this fall. Kim Flottum, author of *The Backyard Beekeeper* and editor of our favorite, *Bee Culture* magazine for many, many years passed away. Kim had wit and wisdom and was a great partner with Jim Tew for their weekly podcast, *Honey Bee Obscura*. I recommend all these sources of information for novice beekeepers and those with decades of experience. To quote another great, beekeeping is an ever-expanding bubble and just about the time you think you've got it, you realize there is a whole new element to explore and understand. When people like Kim die, I feel

like we have lost an encyclopedia of knowledge. Kim was all that and more. As the winter winds howl, snow drifts around the door, and the bees snuggle around their queen in anticipation of longer days to come, read, listen, learn, and share. Make the world a little kinder and gentler and even a little smarter. Plan your own learning journey for 2024 and hopefully, include some time with the Kansas Honey Producers.



News from Northeast Kansas

During the first week in January, approximately twenty beekeepers from Northeast Kansas traveled to the North American Honey Bee Expo (NAHBE) in Louisville, Kentucky. Beekeepers.com, from Lenexa, had a vendor booth at the Expo. Their experienced sales crew included KHPA members Cheryl Burkhead and Robert Burns. Cecil Sweeney and Joli Winer were also vendors at the Expo. They took the opportunity to reduce Cecil's library of beekeeping books and magazines while Joli focused on selling her collection of honey pots and jewelry. Matthew Brandes, NEKBA Program Chair, attended and was able to catch up with acquaintances from around the country, make a few purchases, and listen to some of the thirty-three speakers giving presentations. Matthew is already planning to attend next year's Expo.

We, in this corner of the state, can look forward to plenty of nectar producing blooms this spring. Overall, Northeast Kansas has moved out of abnormally dry conditions thanks to recent rains and snowfall. January temperatures did drop low enough to challenge the newly updated USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map <u>https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/</u> The southern half of Northeast Kansas has been reclassified up to Zone 6b (-5 to 0 degrees Fahrenheit winter temperatures possible). The northern half of Northeast Kansas has been upgraded to 6a (-10 to -5 degrees Fahrenheit winter temperatures possible). Record lows were set as nighttime temperatures in some parts of the southern portion of NE KS dropped to -12 during the second week of January. However, the cold temperature didn't seem to bother the Chief's fans who attended the game at GEHA Field at Arrowhead against the Miami Dolphins on January 14th.

Becky and Steve Tipton will be offering their free beekeeping classes at the Shawnee North Community Center in Topeka, KS. The classes meet once a month and will run from February 21, 2024 through October. Registration is required through the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department.

Kristi Sanderson is leading a group of NEKBA volunteers who will be holding beekeeping classes. This year the more experienced class will be first; "Year 2 & Beyond" on Saturday, January 27, 2024. The Beginning Beekeeping class will be taking place on Saturday, February 24th and Sunday, February 25th. All classes will be held in Lawrence, KS, at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, in the Flory Building. To learn more and to register visit <u>www.nekba.org</u>.

Funday planning meetings have begun. Joli Winer has requested volunteers to help with all facets of the planning. Save the date for Saturday, June 1, 2024. This year sounds like something you will not want to miss. Speakers will include Jennifer Tsuruda, Blake Shook, Judy Wu-Smart, Autumn Smart and Rogan Tokach. You may remember Rogan was a KHPA scholarship student. Watch for updates and registration as they are posted on NEKBA's website, <u>www.nekba.org</u>.

The NEKBA open apiary plans to expand from four colonies to ten in 2024. Updates on dates and times for equipment assembly, educational sessions, and a call for mentoring volunteers will be posted on the NEKBA Facebook page. The goal is to hold at least two mentoring sessions a month. The apiary is located at Pendleton's Country Market, 1446 E 1850 Rd. in Lawrence.

Jo Patrick, Northeastern Region Representative

North Central Region News

Hello Bee Friends!

Many Kansas beekeepers find themselves in the part of beekeeping where you trust what you've done for the bees and you wait to see what the outcome is. Beekeepers are eager for a nice day to look in their hives, but remember that opening the hive breaks those important propolis seals, and there isn't much we can do for our bees at this point other than maybe add some emergency winter feed and clear the entrances. Mostly, we trust our beekeeping and our bees, and wait for these deep winter days to pass.

I attended the American Beekeeping Federation conference this month, and while not coordinated, a repeating theme was "We're all in this together." While we may manage our hives individually, what is happening in the bee world takes a group effort to manage.

Dr. Samuel Ramsey discussed how the Tropilaelaps mites may be in Asia now, but they are being found in Ukraine, and Canadian beekeepers order queens from Ukraine. We all need to be ready for when, not if, these mites show up in the U.S.

Dr. Judy Wu-Smart taught us how to advocate for bees and pollinators when presented with the opportunity to speak to legislators; whether it be in regard to pesticides, habitat, or adulterated honey.

Many of the speakers stressed the importance of connecting with and learning from other beekeepers. A beginning beekeeper will need a mentor to help get started, but even the most experienced "Master"-level beekeepers need to stay on top of the latest peer-reviewed studies to find issues and possible solutions that recent research provides. Bee clubs, bee publications, and conferences are a great way to keep up with the latest issues affecting bees, so we can be more knowledgeable when we finally get to open our hives again in Spring.

Nikki Bowman, North Central Region Representative

News from Western Kansas

We are in need of a Western region representative. If you are interested, reside in this area, and are a beekeeper, let us know by contacting one of our officers.

South Central Region News

Greetings from snowy south central Kansas! Hopefully all the bees are keeping cozy in their clusters. It's a good time to be building and repairing equipment and purchasing bees and supplies. We have some beekeeping classes going on in Wichita and Hutchinson. It's good to see people excited about beekeeping!

Stepheni Phillips, South Central Region Representative

Southeast Kansas Area Happenings

Cold rainy day here today, in the mid 30's after below 0 last week. The weather folk tell us that our area should be in the 50's by the end of the week and into the low 60's the first week of February. The girls will be flying, so this would be a good time to check on food stores in the hives. Let's keep those girls fed, so they will be ready early this Spring.

• Montgomery County Beekeepers Association ("MBCA"), Independence.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 6:00pm at Independence Community College West. January meeting was held on 1/11 with the introduction of the slate of Officers, including Emmalee Hoggat, President. *MCBA* will be offering a Beginning Beekeeping Class on February 24th. All Newbees and seasoned beekeepers are invited.

- Cherokee County Area Beekeepers ("CCAB"), Columbus. Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Kansas State University Building on the Cherokee County Fairgrounds. CCAB will be offering a Beginning Beekeeping Class on February 3rd. Other events are in the planning stage, so stay tuned.
- Heartland Beekeepers Association of Southeast Kansas ("HBASEK"), Pittsburg. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00pm at the Bert Harris Agriculture Center in Pittsburg. AJ Johnson made a presentation on Hives for Heroes about swarm catching.

A Beginning Beekeeping Clinic was held in November. HBASEK will be celebrating their 10-year club birthday in June. Watch for more details. Stay warm and know that Spring will be here soon.

Rhonda Heston, Southeast Region Representative

The Kansas Honey Producers, Third Thursday, Extracting More \$\$\$ from Your Hives, Making and Selling Nucs Presented by Kristi Sanderson on Thursday, February 15th, 7 pm Central.

Kristi has been making and selling nucs for many years and she will share her tips and tricks with us.

Upcoming programs:

March 21, 2024, 7 pm CST - To be Determined.

April 18, 2024, 7 pm CST – To be Determined.

May 16, 2024, 7pm CST - Collecting Pollen and Preparing it for Sale, presented by John Speckman

To register for the meeting and to get the link, go to our website at

<u>www.kansashoneyproducers.org</u> and click on Extracting More \$\$\$ button-it will send you to a Zoom program to register and you will immediately get the Zoom link in your email. If you have registered before, you still may have to register again to get the link.

If you have something that you would like to share with the group or have an idea for a future program, please call or text Joli at 913-593-3562 or email <u>heartlandhoneyks@gmail.com</u>

Beekeeping Tips

There are only a few things that are hard and fast rules in beekeeping. Bees are living beings and have the needs of every living thing; food, water, and shelter. How that is accomplished can vary greatly and is dependent upon the environment in which they are growing. Bees in the southern United States need no fewer resources than the bees in the north, they just have different flowering seasons in which

to gather their nectar. Here is my list of nearly hard and fast beekeeping tips. I—**Beekeeping is regional.** Trust information that is supported by experts in your area. Get in-

volved with local beekeeping groups to glean that regional information.

2—Follow the science. If simple will work, the bee scientists will have tried it and you will know from controlled experiments that the procedure in a valid choice. They don't keep the good stuff secret.

3—**Learning is never ending.** The old guys may have been doing it that way for 50 years, but most things have changed in 50 years and so has beekeeping. The environment in which the bees find themselves is fraught with many more perils than ever before; fungicides, pesticides, mites, beetles, weird weather and more. Keep learning to be the best bee steward you can be. The more you know, the more you realize there is to learn.

4—Immerse yourself in bees. Particularly in the first years of beekeeping, those girls have a LOT to teach you. Read all you can, go to classes, go to meetings, study, and most importantly, OBSERVE what the bees are doing in the hive, around the hive, at the water bowl, on the flowers.... everywhere you

can. Beekeeping is not for those who what to "Let them be."

5—**Don't buy used equipment!** As one of my favorite beeks says, I bought every problem I ever had. There are a few exceptions to this rule. If you know the person selling very, very well and they have unimpeachable ethics, you could probably take the chance. But some of the worst bee diseases are carried on old equipment and no amount of bleach water, blow-torch scorching, or new foundation

will eliminate the disease spores. If you can't afford new equipment, keep fewer hives until you can. 6—**Plan ahead.** Keep records. Don't procrastinate. Using the phrase "I'll remember," is more and

more unlikely to be accurate the older we get. Write it down.

7—Know the difference between a bee buddy and a mentor. A mentor is a proven, educated, experienced beekeeper. A bee buddy is someone who has had bees a few years, may know more than you, and is fun to talk to about bees (you can both make other people tired of hearing about bees but can enjoy each other's company). Trust the mentor, verify whatever the bee buddy might suggest before you put it into action. Warning! There are quite a few people calling themselves mentors who are really bee buddies.

8—Avoid fad beekeeping. You can buy a Flow Hive for very little money now, used. They were not the great invention everyone hoped. Use Langstroth equipment. Once you have learned beekeeping,

experiment with whatever you'd like to try. Each experiment will probably teach you something. 9—**Treat for mites.** Don't want to use chemicals? That's possible, but you are going to have to know and understand the mite cycle and how to manage their numbers or your bees will die. You cannot ignore mites.

IO—**Learn what's blooming** and what's within flying distance of your hives. Flowering plants and bees evolved together. You need them, they need you.

Becky Tipton, President

Scholarship News

Congratulations to the Leib 4H-Club, Edna KS—2023 KHPA Scholarship Recipients. Edna is located in Labette County in the southeast corner of the state. The county shares its southern border with Oklahoma. The area has always had honey producers; however, this is the first year the club will be offering honey bees/beekeeping as a 4-H project. According to club leader, Tracy Maxson, the group hopes not only to learn about bees and beekeeping, but to teach others about beekeeping as well. With no experience but a willingness to learn and do the hard work, this group of young people is excited to begin this new adventure. David Korver of Almont, KS, will be serving as the mentor for the club for the next two years.



Julie Cahoj, 3rd Vice President

If you were unable to make the Fall 2023 KHPA Conference, I must say you really missed out on an interesting meeting. Never judge a book by its cover as they say. Not one presentation was what I presumed it would be, according to the presenter's title. Every single one hit it out of the park with a unique view of those topics; informative, inspiring, and even frightening (pesticide issues discussed by Dr. Judy Wu Smart).

A huge THANK YOU to everyone who made the conference possible. Nikki Bowman, Jim Kellie, & Brian Withrow comprise the committee who select topics, find speakers, choose meals, etc. Without their help... well it just wouldn't be much of a meeting. The hotel staff are friendly and so accommodating with our every need. Next, I need to THANK everyone who gave a presentation, helped with Silent and Live Auctions to raise funds for the Grant Program or had any role in bringing the conference to life.

Dr. Frank Rinkevich, from the USDA Bee Lab at Baton Rouge, LA, gave us great messages- Amitraz Resistance, Varroa-resistant bee stock (their Pol-line will hopefully be commercially available soon), and Benefits of Propolis. Dr. Laura Stan, Fulbright Scholar from Romania, was working with KSU Ag Extension this summer. Her talk on propolis was spot-on. So many health- related propolis products are available in Europe to help cure or alleviate effects of various maladies. Dr. Judy Wu Smart joined us for: Varroa, Pesticide abuse, and the Great Plains Master Beekeeping program. Debbie and Richard Feyh of Feyh Seed Farms, Alma, KS, brought inspiring and informative messages on regenerative agriculture- building soil without extensive chemical use. They produce a huge variety of pollinator-friendly seed stock, ground covers, etc.

Some presentations really stood out, for me especially. Dr. Judy Wu Smart spoke about an issue that frankly scared the daylights out of me. How can toxic compounds be sold to unsuspecting land-owners as a 'soil enhancement' product when in fact it will potentially ruin water and soil health for decades if not forever? We always say, "know your beekeeper, know your honey." The same can be said of "soil enhancements". Debbie Feyh reminded us to keep in touch with the Creator and embrace the blessings or our earth. I often tell people at bee presentations that the honey bee is one of the greatest gifts from God to mankind because of what they do for us. Please visit their website: <u>www.goexperiencenature.com</u> for more inspiring stories.

Dr. Rinkevich is an energetic speaker who brought his topics alive with energy and conviction. Steve Tipton talked about Winter Preparation in a way that really brought it home. It was less of preparing for winter, as we should have already done all that. But more of a 'to do' list of winter activities in addition to preparing for it and the spring to come. Sondra Koehn gave us a tour of the new website and took suggestions for improvements. It will be a continually growing and evolving feature for you and any website visitor to utilize.

The auctions, especially those live ones, showed how KHPA members and guests really embrace what we do. THANK YOU all for your generosity – we may have set a record of fund-raising! This demonstrates the commitment of our members to the cause our industry represents.

Please join us, March 8 – 9, 2024 for education, fun, friendship, and camaraderie. We will keep updates on the website, <u>www.kansashoneyproducers.org</u> as we go. We have a great list of topic requests to work on and deliver to you next time around. THANK YOU ALL for making KHPA the great organization it is.

Greg Swob, 1st Vice President

Guest Speaker - Spring Conference



Dr. James Hung is a Bee Biologist currently serving as an Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of Oklahoma. He leads the native pollinator laboratory at the Oklahoma Biological Survey. His research focuses on the conservation of pollinators and pollen services in a rapidly changing environment. He has a passion for turning students and lay community members into fellow conservation champions through outreach education.

In his spare time, James enjoys being outdoors with his kids, cooking food with his wife, growing vegetables, photographing wildlife, and playing the violin in his church band.

Spring 2024 Kansas Honey Producers Association conference.

March 8 - 9 at Courtyard by Marriott – 3020 Riffle Dr. – Salina Kansas.

Block of Rooms have been set aside at \$119.00/night until March 3rd. Call to make your reservations – mention Kansas Honey Producers to get discounted room rates. 785-309-1300.

Thursday, March 7

8:00 PM- Executive Committee meets - general meeting room - open to all KHPA Members

Friday March 8

8:00 – 8:45 AM Registration and Silent Auction Set Up

8:45 – 9:00 AM Becky Tipton, President KHPA – Welcome & Announcements

9:00 – 9:45 Londa Nwadike – KSU Extension – Ks Food Safety Requirements (when is a state inspected food facility needed, etc.)

Break - Bid on Silent Auction Items - Visit the Vendors

10:00 - 10:45 - Dean Krehbiel - Salina Regional USDA Office - USDA Programs for Beekeepers

10:45 – 11:00 - Break

11:00 – 11:45 - Curt Hadley –Drift Watch—Bee Watch—Protecting your hives from chemical application through registration

11:45 - 1:00 PM Lunch - Bid on Silent Auction Items - Visit the Vendors

1:00 – 1:45 - Randy Oliver – The Latest in Varroa Management (live video)

1:45 – 2:00 – Break – Visit the Vendors and Bid on the Silent Auction Items

2:00 – 2:45 - Dr. James Hung – Univ. of Oklahoma - The Ecological Impacts of Honeybees on Natural Ecosystems and What This Means for Environmentally Responsible Beekeeping

Break - Silent Auction Ends at 3:00

3:00 – 3:45—Honey House Planning—KHPA members will share their Honey House designs.

Break

4:00 Area Regions Meet – Networking...

6:00 Dinner – Banquet – Special Guest Presentation – Fun

Note: Timeline and Topics subject to change

Saturday March 9

8:00 – 8:45 Registration and Silent Auction Set Up

8:45 – 9:00 Becky Tipton, Pres. KHPA – Welcome & Announcements

9:00 – 9:45 – Cut-outs and Swarm Removal—KHPA members will share tips & advice

Break—Visit the Vendors and Bid on Silent Auction Items

10:00 – 10:45 – Dr. James Hung – Univ. of Oklahoma - The Biology and Conservation of Native Bees of North America Break

11:00 – 11:45 – Matthew Brandes—Monitoring Your Beehives with Technology

11:45 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 - 1:45 - KHPA Business Meeting

Break

2:00 – 2:45 – DIY: Steve Tipton -homemade honey straws , * Nikki Bowman -Varroa mite testing/ counting

Break – Silent Auction ends at 3:00

3:00 – Open Panel Discussion – Handling Honey - Extraction to Point of Sale and other topics as you want discussed.

Adjournment. See you in November 2024!

Register and pay a	t KHPA Website: <u>www.kansas</u>	honeyproducers.org			
or mail this lower por	rtion with payment:				
Number Attending	X \$72.00 - Both days =\$	Lunch Friday & Saturday & Banquet			
Number Attending	X \$42.00 - Friday only \$	Lunch & Dinner included			
Number Attending	X \$30.00 – Saturday = \$	Lunch			
Ks Honey Producers Association annual dues (\$15) \$					
Donation	\$				
Total	\$ ==	========			
Names attending					
Submit to: KHPA – Attn. Sondra Koehn—P.O. Box 171, Galva, KS 67443, email: <u>skoehn@live.com</u>					

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

Address Service Requested

2024 Kansas Honey Producer's Association Membership Application

Name			
Address	State	Zip	— ≶Renew Online ≷
City Code		ζιρ	
Phone#	E-mail Address		
	Producer's Association per year (JanDec.) \$15.00 Panting voting rights \$1.00 per person \$1.00 Pames:		
Youth Membership (18 years Donation Amount	of age or under) \$7.50		
		Total Due	

Make checks payable to: KHPA or 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

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 (subscriptions). 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.