Sowing Seeds of Possibility

It’s spring again, though it has been playing hard-to-get this year. On behalf of the entire Sunflower Bank family, I want to contribute the seeds of perennial pride and optimism to our community gardens.

As community bankers who are deeply involved in shaping the future of our communities through volunteerism and civic engagement, we see the deep roots of these great places.

While we know the future lies in the hands of today’s youth, that future is shaped by the great leaders of today who tend, prune and cultivate the future. With economic hardship around the country in the daily news, we believe the resilience demonstrated in our communities reflects the discipline that comes from a cultivation mindset that looks toward our future.

The possibilities are endless, and so, we tend our community gardens – planting both for today’s pleasure and tomorrow’s necessities.

Mollie Carter, President and CEO
Sunflower Bank, N.A.
Student-athlete summit convenes in Wichita

Keynote speakers Jackie Stiles, former Claffin, Kan., Missouri State and WNBA star, and Rob Miller, director of the NAIA's Champions of Character, spoke to general sessions of the students. Stiles highlighted persistence and work ethic, while Miller delivered a dynamic message about sportsmanship.

The conference featured a new curriculum in its second year, and also incorporated portions of the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame's Nazi Olympics exhibit – a Smithsonian traveling display highlighting the pivotal 1936 games in Berlin, Germany.

The KYLA relies on a team of Sunflower Bank volunteers and an undergraduate and graduate staff of students at Fort Hays State University to facilitate the event. This spring's crew included Pfeifer, John Hanley (Salina), Angie Huggard (McPherson), Jack Dennis (Hays), Desirée Fries (Hays), Jordan Baltazor (Salina) and Crystal Hervey (Wichita). The fall Topeka conference will take place November.

Pancake flippin’ in the San Luis Valley

On Valentine’s Day, Monte Vista employees braved the cold (15 below!) and several inches of snow on the ground, at 5:30 a.m. to cook breakfast for 200 hungry attendees at the annual San Luis Valley Ag Conference.

Cold and snow didn’t deter the local farmers, ranchers and businesses from participating in the annual event, featuring production and management strategies, the latest local and regional research information and an opportunity to gather information on other new products and important issues.

Every morning, local businesses volunteered to feed the hungry attendees breakfast – quite a chore in the bitter cold!

Valentine’s lunch a real treat for Hays seniors

Sunflower Bank Hays’ Volunteer Committee went to Cedar View Assisted Living Center on February 14 for a Valentine’s Day visit and to serve lunch to the 44 residents.

Each resident received a written Valentine’s card, snow globe, and a big smile to brighten their day. All were compliments of Sunflower Bank Hays.

Musical entertainment was provided by 95-year-old resident impresario Viola Yost. Yost played the piano while all the residents enjoyed their three-course meal served by the Volunteer Committee: Bridget Stenzel, Miranda Watkins, Leah Dinkel, Clayton Hoffman and Jayci Peter.

Colorful red hats were found throughout the dining room, as many residents are members of the “Red Hat Ladies” club.

The residents and Sunflower Bank employees agreed it was a wonderful experience for all.

Volunteer winners in Dodge City

Dave Wetmore, president of Sunflower Bank Dodge City, was named Co-Volunteer of the year for 2007 at Dodge City’s Carnegie Center for the Performing Arts, along with Mona Ackerman (below).

The Carnegie Center is one of 1,679 public libraries constructed in the U.S. through the assistance of steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. Today, the two-story brick building continues a tradition of education and community service as a gallery for traveling exhibits and local art.

The Carnegie Center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Marta Ferreiro, meanwhile, earned the Ambassador of the Year award in 2007, given by the Dodge City Chamber.

Ferreiro, a loan officer at Sunflower Bank, participated in monthly meetings, Dodge City days, and membership events.

Lost in a book

Sunflower Bank employees purchased the books for the school; additions to the Holy Family library. The group also enthralled students by reading several stories. Pictured, Hays employees read aloud to a group of students.

Student-athlete summit convenes in Wichita

Sunflower Bank, The Kansas Youth Leadership Academy and the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame teamed up in March for the second year of Leadership On & Off the Field – a unique two-day workshop for high-school student-athletes.

Students from schools throughout Kansas, from Hugoton to Asheville, met at the Hall of Fame and the Warren Theater in Old Town Wichita. Nearly 200 students broke into five teams, participating in various workshop competitions and competing against one another – emphasizing the value of sportsmanship and leadership and how to transfer the two skills into life off the field.

“The conference is a unique experience not only for young people, but for the community, the coaches, and the volunteers,” said Sunflower Bank’s Becky Pfeifer, a facilitator for the event. “Encouraging young people to be the best leader they can be is extremely important, and I’m glad to be a part of it.”

Sunflower Bank employees braved the employees read aloud to a group of students.

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Lost in a book

Sunflower Bank Hays’ volunteer committee delivered a block of books for the Holy Family Elementary School on March 26.

Sunflower Bank and the Heart of Colorado

Currently in Fremont County, there are 132 children placed in foster care. Heart of Colorado CASA is the voice for these children locally. Twenty caring volunteers have been trained to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children.

Sunflower Bank is committed to the improvement of the Fremont County community by providing funds to train volunteers and for program costs for the CASA program. “As a community bank, we’re focused on creating the best Fremont County we can,” said Larry Stringari, president of Sunflower Bank Canon City. “CASA’s mission is vital, and we’re proud to play a role in improving the lives of children.”

Kayak recreation park – coming soon to Cañon?

Sunflower Bank made a $1,000 donation to help a community effort seeking to build a whitewater kayak recreation park in Cañon City. In conjunction with the restoration of the Arkansas River near Centennial Park, Sunflower Bank joined a diverse and enthusiastic group of individuals with a common goal – to make this project a reality.

The benefits of the park are economical, ecological and educational. A major portion of this project will be river restoration and beautification. Concrete and metal debris will be replaced by terraced river-banks and grass while various other aesthetic, riparian and safety improvements will be incorporated in the design. The park will be a safe place for the community to learn paddling and river safety.

All enhancements made to the river will be for the public’s enjoyment and will be designed to accommodate the entire spectrum of boating enthusiasts. The stream enhancements will attract fish to the area. Hikers, bikers, walkers and spectators will also be able to enjoy the park. Increased access will allow for greater educational opportunities along the river as well. Pictured are Ken Berry and Shad Johnson along with the committee members.

Head of backpack company returns to Kansas roots

Lynda Jamison and Becca Maxwell, served as Great Bend Chamber Ambassadors at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development’s Annual Banquet on Feb. 9.

Keynote speaker Skip Yowell, a 1964 Great Bend High School graduate, founded Jansport in the 1960s, and told the company’s story to the banquet audience. Skip and three friends began Jansport in the late 1960s, and told the company’s story to the banquet audience. Skip and three friends began Jansport in Seattle, climbing to the pinnacle of business with their flexible-framed backpack company, now the world’s leading backpack manufacturer. Skip also promoted his book, The Hippie Guide to Climbing the Corporate Ladder and Other Mountains.

Jamison and Maxwell assisted Skip for his book signing that evening as outgoing board members for his two-hour business seminar on Feb 8 on behalf of the Chamber and Economic Development.

David Thill, former Great Bend President, and Maxwell also were recognized with awards that evening as outgoing board members for the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development.
Three student achievers earn top Community Ambassador prizes

Sunflower Bank’s annual Community Ambassadors program culminated across its Kansas and Colorado markets with the selection of three grand-prize $1000 college scholarship winners.

High school seniors Tanner Brock of Dodge City, Amanda Easley, Junction City, and Laura Fritze, Andover, each earned a $1000 scholarship – the result of a final, contemplative essay and exemplary participation throughout each student’s respective Community Ambassadors programs. More than 150 select students served as Sunflower Bank Community Ambassadors throughout Sunflower’s 17 markets, taking part in an interactive, educational scholarship program featuring backgrounds in local business, government and leadership development – and designed to encourage high school seniors to consider their hometown communities as viable destinations for their futures.

“We’re honored to work with so many eager and enthusiastic students, and we’re also pleased to facilitate learning within our communities,” said Mollie Carter, President & CEO of Sunflower Bank. “All our ambassadors exhibit a passion for their hometowns and communities – and that spirit will help them in college and in their future careers.” Facilitated locally in each of Sunflower Bank’s 17 markets, many Community Ambassador sessions featured discussions with prominent community leaders, and discussion groups about local community development. The ambassadors attended sessions each month throughout the school year, culminating with April and May graduation ceremonies in most locations.

“A student from one of the Great Bend sessions wowed me with his financial management skills. These students are bright and willing to participate. They are the future of rural Kansas.”

Amanda Easley is a senior at Junction City High School and will attend the University of Kansas in the fall and pursue a degree in nursing. Laura Fritze, a senior at Andover High School, will attend Kansas State University and Tanner Brock, a senior at Dodge City High School, will attend the University of Kansas in the fall.

Grand Prize Winners

Tanner Brock
Dodge City
$1,000
Amanda Easley
Junction City
$1,000
Laura Fritze
Wichita
$1,000

Community Ambassadors

“Journeying with these students. Their enthusiasm was refreshing. When our session in Ellinwood came to an end, one of the students wanted to know when we could open the business we were working on,” said Karmi Green, Prairie Enterprise Facilitator for Barton County and speaker at a Great Bend session (left).

Wichita

Josh Helmer
$500
Adrianna Lussaud
$250
Dara Strathman
$1,000

McPherson

Amber Loewen
$500
Nicole Ferguson
$250

Russell

Rena Detinich
$500
Margaret Griffl e
$250
Shane Scott
$500
Kathryn Jones
$250

Salina

Elissa Stein
$1,000
Megan Rubl
$500

Ellinwood

Mallory Sauer
$1,000
Katie Linden
$500
Kate Clawson
$250

Great Bend

Tanner Brock
Dodge City
$1,000
Amanda Easley
Junction City
$1,000
Laura Fritze
Wichita
$1,000

Dodge City

Mallory Sauer
$1,000
Katie Lindeman
$500
Katie Clawson
$250

Manhattan

Thomas Runnemore
$1,000
Bethany Murray
$500
Kate Zapletal
$250

Hays

Layne Krizek
$250

Great Bend

Katie Linden
$500

Dale Gottschalk and Judy Parks award an Ambassador graduate.

Osborne Ambassadors hard at work.

Great Bend Ambassadors work together.
school, plans to study at the University of Kansas. In all, 55 students earned scholarships from Sunflower Bank.

The Community Ambassadors Scholarship Program also awarded three local scholarships within a Community Ambassadors class—a $1,000 scholarship, a $500 scholarship and a $250 scholarship. In their respective communities, Fritze and Brock earned a $1000 scholarship as the top participant in their class and Esley earned a $500 scholarship. Scholarship winners and all ambassadors are listed below, with some winners pictured at bottom left.

Salina Ambassadors graduated April 28.

2008 Participants

Cañon City
Alicia Hayhurst
Ashley Adrian
Ashley Barnes
Jamie Lynn
Hernandez
Jessica Zepillo
Kathryn Kaufman
Kelsey Lugu
Matthew Labonte
Melissa Rutter
Stephanie Dewitt

Colby
Courtney Res
Justin Shields
Laura Dougherty
Paige Stephens
Stephanie Albers
Todd Ziegelmeier

Dodge City
Christopher Wright
Elizabeth Stephens
Kathryn Jones
Shane Scott
Tanner Brock

Ellinwood
Baily Zimmerman
Katelin Clawson
Katie Sieker
Mallory Sauer

Great Bend
Alex Keenan
Beth Schneider
Jared Boone
Luis Reza
Paige Blevins
Phillip Kuhn
Ryan Bealer
Zach Bealer

Hays
Allison Klaus
Austin Buikle
Austin Drelling
Brogan Miller
Cade Scott
Caitlin Braun
Colleen Pennington
Jaelyn McLaren
Kaley Klaus
Layne Krizel
Molly Schmeidler
Sandi Nickel
Sarah Zerr

Junction City
 Amanda Easley
 Amy Kim
Braunn Sherbert

Brittany Lanning
Courtney Hallenbeck
Danielle Hoover
Erica Howard
James Dodin
Jonathan Colston
Kaitlyn Elder
Kevin Henderson
Margarita Meadows
Miranda Davis
Reema Ghandi
Toni Braucher

Manhattan
Austen Rupe
Austen Rupe
Bethany Murray
Dhihiya Ramsawamy
Jackie Carmichael Jr.
Katy Zapletal
Sam El-Hamoudhe
Sam Kenney
Sushu Wang
Thom Summers

McPherson
Amber Loewen
Amy Ruddie
Ashley Vogt
Caillan Nelson
Dara Strahman
Katie Colburn
Kaycie Sherar
Morgan Ashpole
Nicole Ferguson
Sabrina Hamilton
Sarah Gawith

Monte Vista
Alex Schmaderbeck
Cheyenne Dickey
Emily Hamilton
Joseph Malakoff
Kendra Lee
Martin Diaz
Sarah Keith
Ty Beiriger
Tylor Hagedorn
Wendy Ast

Osborne
Amberleigh Flowman
Lee Ann Michel
Mallory Boland
Maria Hyde
Megan Schellung

Sarah Waugh
Tana Spears
Tracey Mars
Zachery Cady

Pueblo
Amber S. Cordova
Ashley Solano
Austyn Miller
Brittney Montoya
Cassandra Casas
Elizabeth T. Chavez
Emily Wolter
Kaylene Archuleta
Keely Severance
Lindsey Reeves
Maleah M. Gregory
Tianyi Lu

Russell
Jaqueline McKune
Jessica Pratt
Jordan Harrison
Kyla Reimhardt
Margarita Caulfield
Rena Detriixie
Rex Soldan
Stephanie Nuss

Salina
Angela Larson
Audrey George
Austin Hoppock
Christopher Lohf
Cole Lilly
Elissa Stein
Kate Augustine
Kati Blue
Kelsey Young
Madeline Logan
Megan Robl
Nora Rindt
Rachel Groene
Scott Mitchell
Shawnee Smith
Tina Hoehling

SUNFLOWER Bank Hays and Victoria were among the Adopt-A-Team sponsors for the Kansas Special Olympics state basketball tournament held March 13-15 at Fort Hays State University.

The opening ceremonies began Thursday, March 13 and nearly 1200 athletes took part in their traditional march-in. Sunflower Bank was honored to escort the Solomon Valley ARC from Rooks County to their designated seating area.

At the end of the ceremony the athletes, along with Norbert Flax, a long-time volunteer referee at the tournament, recited the oath before the tournament began, “Let me win. And if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” Sunflower Bank employees attending the opening ceremony were: Cathy Braun, Jenna Braun, Debra Drelling, Mike Briney, Bridget Sienzel and Darlene Braun. Debbie Hofman, Kayla Martin and Darlene Braun also attended several Solomon Valley’s games on Friday and Saturday.

It was once again time for Hays Soroptimist International group’s annual melodrama – and this year the organization presented One Bad Apple, featuring a masquerading Baron Von Fritter from Germany, inspecting the Blossom Apple Farms and beginning a cavalcade of misadventures.

Seniors learn about fraud prevention, identity theft

A group of volunteers from the Great Bend Senior Companion organization gathered at the Highrise for lunch and a presentation given by Lynda Jamison, of Sunflower Bank.

Participants learned how to Deter, Detect and Defend against Fraud and Identity Theft and discussed real-life examples of scams which occurred to local people. The group learned that fraud can happen via the phone, Internet, mail or in person and anyone can be a target. The group had many questions and left with important information to protect themselves and the people they help every day against Fraud and Identity Theft.

Pictured below are Lynda Jamison and many of the Great Bend Senior Companion volunteers.

‘Rotten to the Core’ in Hays

July Parks of Sunflower Bank played Old Maid Prudence Hewitt in the play on March 15 at TMP-Marian.

The 38th annual Kansas Special Olympics at FHSU

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boxes, additional drive-through lanes, a stand-alone ATM, and familiar Sunflower Bank personnel. The new bank was designed not only to conveniently appeal to Hays shoppers and consumers, but also as a measure of convenience for Western Kansas customers and the Ellis County area.

“We’re dedicated to the continued growth and service of Ellis County and Western Kansas,” said Dale Gottschalk, president – Sunflower Bank Hays, Victoria and Russell.

Not only did Hays’ sunflower bank north open at 48th and Vine, but the main office in Hays at 1010 e. 27th underwent a serious facelift in March. For nearly a month, customers and employees navigated through construction while a crew cleaned up and updated the inside of the bank. Now, the revamped, clean Hays Main office is open for business. Stop in anytime!

Beyond the rubble

The “Sunflower Haulers” – a walking team featuring Sunflower Bank Liberal’s Judy Vasquez, Vicki Bunger, Cindy Lovelace (team captain), Gail Walter, Karla Guevara and Nancy Weikle, representing the bank in Walk Kansas, a K-State Research and Extension Program.

The ongoing program requires each team member to walk at least 8 miles per week for 8 weeks. So far, so good, and each hopes to be hauling fast when spring draws to a close!

Introducing the Sunflower Haulers

A NOTHER BUSY spring came and went for Osborne’s talented staff, participating in various community endeavors.

On to state

Speaking of talent, the Osborne Lady Bulldogs basketball squad headed to state championship games again this year. While they didn’t finish first, the community was still very proud. Businesses were encouraged to send cards or tokens of appreciation to show support for the players and cheerleaders. The Sunflower Bank employees sent cards shaped like miniature jerseys wishing them well.

Good eggs

Easter approached and the gang looked forward to spending time with family. Children preschool age and up had an opportunity to attend the annual Chamber of Commerce sponsored Easter Egg Hunt. This year the bank crew stuffed over 100 eggs with candy and balloons to donate to the hunt. Children gathered on the court-house lawn and divided up by age group to search for the eggs and four children won special prizes by finding specially hidden ‘golden’ eggs.

Alumni connections

Also around Easter time, students old and new opened their mailboxes to find the alumni ‘Hi-Tide’ newsletter. Alumni members, including our very own Barb Brown, diligently worked to produce and distribute the paper keeping all alumni abreast of the recent activities, including some that the bank was involved in. As we head into summer, we’re looking forward to even more community activities.

Busy – and all too short – spring in Osborne!

Heart Walk for AHA

McPherson

Sunflower Bank employees raised money for the American Heart Association by participating in the AHA’s first annual Heart Walk in McPherson. Each and every employee raised money for this organization, many forming a team and walking on Saturday, February 16 from 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the McPherson High School roundhouse. The walk was a lot of fun, with entertainment on the gym floor during the event – and rewarding not only for the participants, but also for the American Heart Association, which raised more than $12,000.

Osborne in session, and winners below.
Another successful ABC program results in dollars for schools

Sunflower Bank wrapped up its seventh annual ABC: Be True to Your Schools campaign by donating $77,000 to area students and schools—the largest annual donation in the history of the program. In the past seven years, the bank has given more than $300,000 to participating area schools and students.

The program allows customers to earn money for their favorite school whenever they use their debit card. New customers also can request that Sunflower Bank match their incentive payment to a participating school of their choice.

Local students also had the chance to win cash—by turning in their report card in January or February. Select student winners in each Sunflower Bank market earned $10 for every A on their report card—and Sunflower Bank matched the student’s reward check with a donation to the student’s school. Nearly 200 students won money for their report cards in 2008—and many appeared on TV or on radio as a bonus (bottom left).

McPherson’s sweet successes for causes

Sunflower Bank McPherson raised $2005 for Big Brothers Big Sisters of McPherson County by offering Hershey’s kisses in return for donations during the month of March—a sweet success!

Donovan Graber, Director of BBBS - McPherson County received the check from Susi Bocks, CSR. Chet Lang, President, led the pack by selling 1106 kisses!

Copy that: Machine donated to BBBS
Big Brothers Big Sisters McPherson received a Minolta copier from Sunflower Bank McPherson as a donation to their organization in the early part of March, to use in their newer facility.

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Busy bear has ‘egg-stra’ fun in spring

Salina First Kids flock to March Easter Egg Hunt
Bubba the Bear welcomed nearly 100 of his closest friends to one of his favorite events on Saturday, March 8—the annual Easter Egg Hunt at Kenwood Park.

First Kids braved the early March weather and the cold to root for eggs around the train and throughout Kenwood Park, and went home with Easter treats. Bubba, as always, was jazzed about his return from hibernation—just in time for the Easter Egg Hunt.

Bubba hunts eggs in Mac
Bubba high-tailed it down to McPherson on March 10, for the bank’s Easter Egg-stravaganza. First kids participated in a fun-filled afternoon that included the Easter Egg Hunt, treats and a basket give-away. Everyone who participated experienced a really good time—including Bubba!

New faces at Sunflower Bank!
Say hi to some of the new folks in your local Sunflower lobbies—here’s a few!

Brett Middleton, Great Bend President
Middleton, now president of Sunflower Bank’s Great Bend and Ellinwood locations, previously served as an assistant vice president and branch manager of Bank of the West’s Great Bend location since October 1999 and has worked in lending and finance for nearly 15 years.

Nick Malone, Monte Vista President
Born in Lutaur, Colo., Malone grew up on a small irrigated farm and graduated from Adams State College. Nick’s been in the banking industry since 1992 and an ag/commercial lender for 14 years, including the past 8 years spent as the a Vice President with Commerce Bank in Lakin, Kan. He’s been married to Mindy for almost 17 years and have 3 children, Megan, Dax, and Madison.

Donald Krieger, Monte Vista lender
Krieger is a native of Omaha, Neb., but raised in Sidney, Neb., home of Cabala’s Sporting Goods.

Don began his banking career in 1972 in Broomfield, Colo., most recently with First National Bank of the Rockies in Craig, Colo. He previously was a member of the Air Force and is an alumnus of Peru State College in Peru, Neb. He’s married to Beverly with five children, and five grandchildren.

Barbara Musick, South Fork Manager
Barbara moved to the San Luis Valley 10 years ago from Loveland, Colo., where she was a VP for Bank One. She has three grown children with families in Phoenix, Longmont, Colo., and Del Norte, Colo., and is an alumnus of Colorado State University.
Attention! First Ladies and Club Vogue! Bon Voyage, All Aboard, and enjoy your summers!

Did you know?

SUNFLOWER Bank is constantly in search of ways to promote healthy habits and activities in its communities. The healthier our citizens are, the better off the well-being of our entire community. Deb Hoffman and Ronan Sramek of Sunflower Bank Hays visited with Dr. Michael Hattan, an optometrist serving Hays and northwest Kansas about SEE TO LEARN® and Vision USA, essential eyecare programs promoting community health. SEE TO LEARN® is a 3-step preventive health program designed to ensure vision problems don’t affect a child’s ability to learn. The first step is to alert parents and educators about the importance of early childhood eye exams to detect vision problems before they hinder a child’s ability to learn. Warning signs of a vision problem include frequent rubbing, or blinking of eyes, poor reading, avoiding close work, frequent headaches and tilting of the head. The second step is a free vision assessment for any 3-year-old child in the community to detect vision conditions that require correction at this early age. Finally, the third step is a professional eye examination prior to entering kindergarten.

New Horizon in Russell

The New Horizon 4-H Club presented Sunflower Bank with a tray of cookies for our continued support with the 4-H Journal. Receiving the cookies from the club members is Becky Deatherage.