

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



K-State Research and Extension develops and delivers practical, research-based solutions to challenges faced by all Kansans, which includes the Grand Challenges:

- Global Food Systems
- Water and Natural Resources
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

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Grand Challenge: Community Vitality

Title: Strategic Planning

Why is this issue important? Civic groups and other non-profits are the life blood of communities large and small alike. Strategic planning has benefits whether an organization is being newly formed or if they have been around for decades. A good plan attracts people and resources by systematically prioritizing critical issues and actions. The process enables people to work together more effectively for a common purpose.

How did Extension address this issue? Over the last year, District Director Cade Rensink facilitated the development of strategic plans for two local community groups, one state-level conservation organization and one area educational entity. He worked collaboratively with the boards to assess trends, identify external factors, articulate a vision, create goals, and prioritize objectives.



Additionally, this spring Cade contributed to the Macro Social Work Practice & Theory course at K-State Salina by providing exercises and activities which illustrated the various parts of the strategic planning process. Students chose case-study agencies to identify and frame important issues with and designed specific plans of action to propose to the class as if they were the Board of Directors of their chosen agency.

What was the impact?

Amongst the four organizations,

- 11 distinct priorities were identified with specific objectives and measures outlined for each
- 14 collaborative partnerships have been cultivated
- 23 passionate volunteers stepped into new leadership roles
- over \$300,000 of capacity has already been built to carry out operational and project-related goals.

The Social Work students:

- are now equipped with necessary skills to engage in both the planning process and the plan itself, and can recognize how both are important.
- have a greater appreciation for the significance of accountability in measuring and reporting results for the organizations they will work with in the future.