Ellis County Historical Society recognized at state museum conference

Ellis County Historical Society continues to work towards goals set in the spring of 2021 when a new administration and expanded board took the helm. Much work has been happening behind the scenes but one important goal Executive Director, Amanda Rupp, has her focus on is being more visible and relevant in the community. Rupp understands how important this is for the society “especially during this time where our financials continue to only allow for a small part time staff…we cannot afford to forget about our community while we work on the laborious tasks of organizing and addressing building needs.” The board of directors has worked well with staff in creating a balance of priorities and abilities that fit within the society’s resources.

This November ECHS was recognized three fold at the Kansas Museum Association’s Annual Conference. Director Rupp received a scholarship to attend the conference in Topeka, which included travel expenses, helping their budget’s bottom line. During the 3-day conference Rupp accepted two other awards given by KMA. A project grant of $500 was awarded to purchase a photo negative scanner that is more user friendly than traditional tray loading models. Rupp explains that this model “will aid our volunteers who may have less dexterity or computer knowledge in the project of scanning the large collection of negatives from Hays Daily News.” KMA board also recognized Rupp with the award for Graphic Design for a project with a budget under $10,000. The artwork entered were the traveling display panels about the Volga German immigrants in Ellis County created for the 2021 Oktoberfest. Amanda shares that she is especially fond of this project because it showcased what a small museum can do on a tight budget, “We reutilized an accordion travel display that ECHS already had and just added new graphic panels (designed by Rupp) that told the same story that used to hang in the main gallery of the museum. I was not reinventing the wheel or rewriting it in this case, just displaying it in a more pleasing manner that we could take out to the public while the museum is closed.” The project total budget was significantly under the limit for the award category, costing the society under $800 to print and mount. Amanda says she thoroughly enjoyed the conference and is looking forward to next year’s conference which will be held in right here in Hays.