

# the Homesteader

**Mission Statement (Adopted 2018):** The Ellis County Historical Society Museum collects, preserves, and exhibits Ellis County History for the surrounding community and its visitors.

## YOU ARE OUR STORY

When this newsletter reaches your mailbox, the summer of 2023 will be in its waning weeks. The accomplishments of this summer are the collaboration and hard work of so many of YOU who have come to offer a helping hand. Our Volga German ancestors would say, "Viele Haende, machen ein schnelles Ende," which means "Many hands, make an end to the work in a hurry." We continue to be amazed and inspired by YOU. Each of you, through a measure of time, treasure and talent sustain and grow our Society. We have survived the worst, we have come back from the brink... all THANKS TO YOU! Whenever you come, whatever you give/do, we are grateful that you partner with us to save our past's future!

## THANK YOU!



The Werth Wealth Management team continued its tradition of donating two hours of bank holiday time to ECHS. They epitomize with hearts and working hands the core of service. And they make it look so easy! Their smiling faces are a joy to watch as the plow through work that would take our staff many many hours to complete.

Continued on page 3



### 2023 ECHS BOARD

#### President

Priscilla Hunt

#### Vice President

Alex Herman

#### Secretary

Donna Maskus

#### Treasurer

Cheryl Stramel

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OPEN

#### TRUSTEES

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Greg Atkins

Mary Kay Schippers

Marco Macias

Brad Ricke

Linda Glassman

#### ECHS STAFF

#### Executive Director

Amanda Rupp

#### Curator

Adam Conkey

#### Administrative Assistant

Cynthia Stone

#### Archives/Research Assistant

Patty Nicholas

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Ending August 31**  
**NOTORIOUS Exhibit**

**TUESDAY, September 12th,**  
**100 W 7th, Hays —6–8 pm**  
**Volunteer Work Night**

**THURSDAY, September 14th**  
**100 W 7th, Hays —6:30 pm**  
**Humanities Kansas Speaker**

Derrick Doty will present  
“Kansas Music History.”

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY,**  
**Sept. 29-30 Oktoberfest**

Visit our booth and tell us the cookie prize code words from the Spitzbuben article in this newsletter (page 5) and we will enter you into our drawing for 2 dozen Spitzbuben Cookies.

**Insights into the Religious**  
**Life of the German Russians**  
**(Catholic and Lutheran)**  
**Display panels from**  
**Dr. Olga Litzenberger —**  
**Dates TBA**

-----**TENTATIVE!!**-----

**THURSDAY, October 19th,**  
**100 W 7th, Hays —6:30 pm**  
**Humanities Kansas Speaker**  
Jim Hoy will present “Kansas Legends and Folktales.”

**THURSDAY, November 9th,**  
**100 W 7th, Hays —6:30 pm**  
**Humanities Kansas Speaker**

Leo Oliva will present  
“Railroaded: The Industry  
that Shaped Kansas.”

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

I’m not exactly sure how the time gets away from me so fast but here it is again, newsletter time, and I have so many things to share I’m not sure if it will even fit on the page.

As most of the exciting news will be shared on the following pages I will focus on the two conventions EHCS is involved with every year (or will be from now on). I mentioned the Kansas Museum Association Annual Conference and grants from last November in a previous newsletter but it’s worth mentioning again. This year’s theme is “Great Plains Passages,” and it will be held in Hays. We have been making plans for tours, welcome night receptions and break-out session speakers. I feel we are now in a good place to share our progress with other museums in the state and I am excited to hear feedback from others in our field. So here is our notice, there will be no regular office hours the first week of November as we will be “out to conference.”

The second event is an international conference hosted all over the United States and will once again be held in Hays in 2026. This August I attended the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) convention in Greeley Colorado, and let me tell you, they all know about Ellis County Kansas! There were a variety of topics presented and one session even focused on our famous five scouts that picked out this new “homeland” on the plains of western Kansas, who notably set out two years before the other groups made their way to the other states.

During the conference I had the pleasure to meet Dr. Olga Litzenberger, who is an author, professor and a key researcher for the **Bavarian Cultural Center of the Germans from Russia**. Her presentation (in German, with a translator) *Insights into the Religious Life of the German Russians*, is of particular interest to our VG members, therefore I am working to bring the display panels that review her paper to ECHS for a small exhibit this coming fall. Litzenberger’s team has visited and photographed most all of the early settlements (or what remains of them) of the Germans who lived in Russia and offers 3D tours of many sites of both Catholic and Lutheran importance.

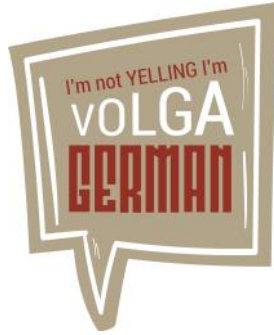


The Sunflower Chapter of AHSGR is made up of Hays and surrounding area Volga German descendants and it is great organization for ECHS to partner with for many activities/events. Along with myself, Jerry Braun (ECHS Trustee) and Cynthia Stone (ECHS Admin. Asst.) sit on the Sunflower Chapter Board. Planning for 2026 will begin soon, not only for the AHSGR convention but for the Sesquicentennial Celebrations of the Volga Germans settling in Ellis County. This 150th anniversary deserves a year long party.

**Pictured with me, Sunflower Board members Norman Pipkin and Jerry Braun. It was well known that Ellis County brought the fun!**



Stop in or go online to check out some of the new store merchandise!!



Durable vinyl decal stickers, great for water bottles! Varying sizes. Be like all the cool kids and get yours ASAP!



**These aprons are going like hot cakes. You know you need one or you know someone who does.**

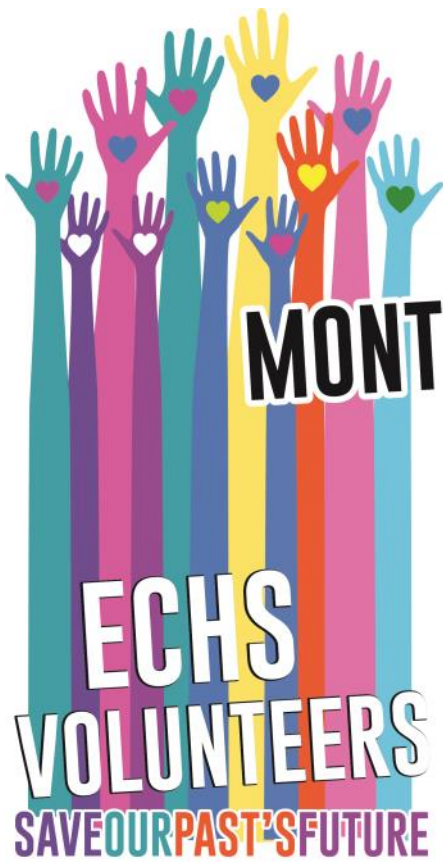


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In June of 2022 Werth Wealth Management used their muscles to move artifacts inside without AC and became our first Ambassador level sponsor. This June they sweated outside prepping the garden area at Boot Hill for new landscaping and pledged to the Brick-by-Brick campaign. They continue to lead with action and contributions.







6 PM - 8 PM  
CORNER OF 7TH & MAIN  
DOWNTOWN HAYS

2nd Tuesdays of the Month!

# MONTHLY WORK NIGHT

UPCOMING DATES:

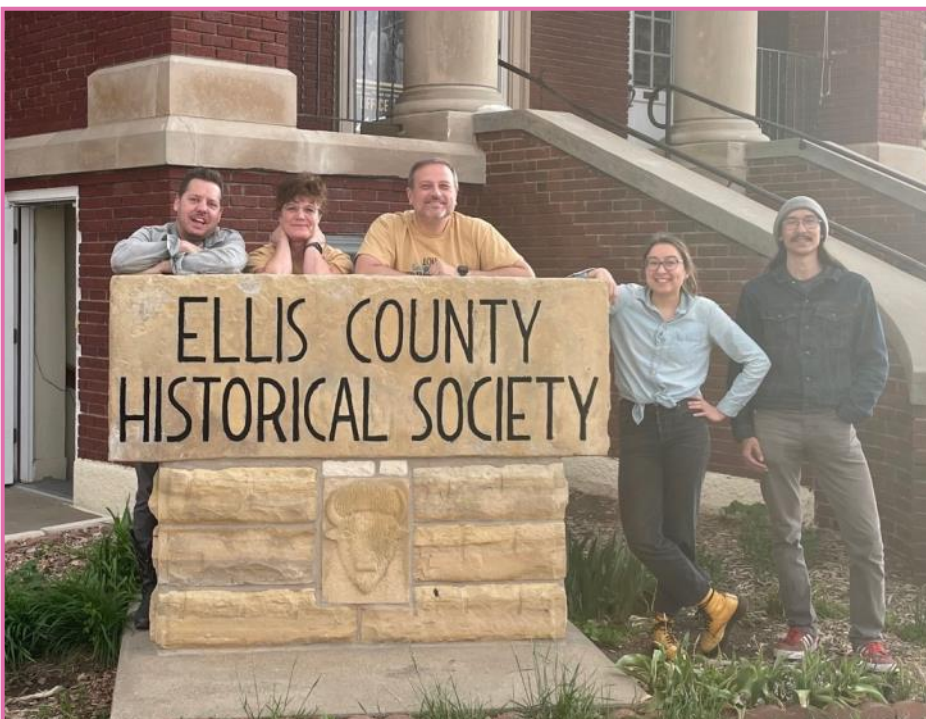
Sept.. 12th

Oct .10th

Nov. 14th

Join us on our regular monthly work nights or volunteer for ongoing projects whenever best suits your schedule. There are tasks to do in all ability range. Weekly, in July and August, interns Jeanne and Alivia visited two retirement communities for onsite volunteer work sessions. Residents help sort and process HDN negatives and reminisced about the 'good old days.' One task at a time our volunteers make a HUGE difference!

TOUCH UP SIGN PAINTING... Adam Conkey, Cheryl Stramel, Jerry Braun, Kate Pardee, Noah Pardee



FOLDING NEWSLETTERS... The gang.



HEAVY LIFING.... Brother and Sister team Kate and Noah Pardee



ONGOING PROJECTS... Susie Windholz volunteers her time on an almost daily basis to help us clean and store photograph negatives.

Celebrating the  
Exultation of the Holy Cross



**Sunday, September 24, 2023**

**3:00 pm MASS**

**Holy Cross  
Church**

**Pfeifer, KS**

One scheduled mass per year is still celebrated at this magnificent church that towers above the valley, and YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!

The bells will ring, the choir will sing and you are guaranteed to awe at the faith and determination of the Volga German immigrants who built the "2 cents church" over 100 years ago.

Refreshment reception is provided following the mass.

Our sincere condolences to the families of our members who have passed since the last newsletter.

**Stan "Bud" Dalton**

**Donald Waldschmidt**

## Spitzbuben...the rest of the story

What we consider the "cookie of the gods"—spitzbuben—has a story you may not have heard. Our own Donna Maskus and Cheryl Stramel and crew make these packets of gold for our Oktoberfest booth and we sell out the first day. This year we are going to make more, more, more and ... we expect to sell out the first day. The German word spitzbuben means "naughty boy" and the cookie is traditionally made with a face on the front designated by holes which show the delicious jam filling in the middle. To discover the other story you must imagine yourself in Russia 260 years ago with the first German settlers on the Volga River.

Empress Catherine's ambassadors enticed the German pheasants with tales of a vast Russian "promised land". To the war weary, starving, and oppressed emigrants it sounded like the perfect escape from poverty to freedom. But in reality what was promised was not delivered. Sure they could settle anywhere... as long as it was in the designated region of the Volga River. Sure they could pick any trade...as long as they farmed the land they were given. And there was no shelter when they arrived with a harsh winter ahead. What lay before them would be many years of disease, drought, crop failure, and plagues. But for those who had survived the long and difficult journey to Russia there was no turning back. And oh yes... there were bands of thieves on the east bank of the Volga and wild tribes descended from Genghis Khan on the west. (The cookie prize code words are "forest thief")

According to author Fred C. Koch in "The Volga Germans In Russia And The Americas. From 1763 to the Present":

"Armed raiders would swoop down upon a family at field work and seize its horses...stealing horses became the primary objective of the thieves...a farm operation was crippled without draft animals...the settlers were developing a breed of stock superior to the Kalmuck and Kirghiz ponies raised by the regional tribes, making them high prized booty."

"In sheer desperation the colonists of two or more villages would organize an armed punitive party from time to time to strike against the discovered forest or ravine stronghold of a bandit group. One colonist wrote: 'For half a century, as often as it was felt necessary, expeditions were made against these "forest-thieves", and I can remember clearly in my childhood when the entire male population of our village, armed with every type of weapon, would mount horses and suddenly set out on a surprise raid to catch *Spitzbuben* (thieves).'"

"In later years individual Tatar and Kalmuck natives became so open and frank about the prevailing system of horse stealing that they would approach colonists in their fields or at their doorsteps and advise them in broken but understandable German: 'I Spitzbub. Give bread, give meat. I hunger; then your horse not be stolen.'"

Say what?!! So the cookies we love have a sullied past and it begs the question... did these gangs of horse thieves just come for the cookies? You won't have to steal any horses to get your Spitzbuben at our Oktoberfest booth!



# BRICK-BY-BRICK

## Excited to finally share the news...

The 2023 Phase 2 plans for the Brick Church renovation are currently on schedule with the ADA-accessible basement bathroom completed. The exterior accessibility along with a curator lab renovation is scheduled for fall and winter 2023. The HVAC system, desperately needed for the protection of our artifacts and archives, is on order and will be installed in conjunction with each floor's remodel.

None of this would have been possible without our community's belief in both our mission and our ability to – once again – achieve our mission.

Chief among those impressed with the current leadership and direction at ECHS is the Board of the Schmidt Foundation. It is an immense honor to announce ECHS' receipt of **\$350,000 from the Schmidt Foundation**. These funds are part of a substantial grant payable over the next five years. The impact of this gift cannot be overstated.

This is capital expenditure money that will not only help with the work in the Brick Church, but will help renovate the Victorian-era House and the Stone Church. It is a monumental gift which will fuel our future expansion plans at our ECHS Hays campus.



Pictured: Amanda Rupp (ECHS) and Gary Shorman (Schmidt Foundation)

## and the opportunity to help us double down!

### PHASE 2 Fundraising

*We are close but our 2023 financial goal for the Phase 2 renovation has not yet been fully met.*

Every gift is welcome and gratefully appreciated. Gifts of \$5000 or more will be memorialized on a plaque in our remodeled Museum lobby, scheduled for our final phase, Phase 3 in 2024.

Early this summer Darrell Seibel challenged ECHS to raise funds by individual donations. He generously pledged a gift of \$18,000 with the stipulation that it be matched.

Accepting the challenge, ECHS upped the ante and collaborated with the Glassman Corp for an additional \$7,000 that in total set our match goal at \$25,000!

Off to a powerful start, personal solicitation gathered about \$12,000 almost immediately. Throughout July more donations have been rolling in and as of the print date of this newsletter we are only a few thousand dollars short of the total \$25,000 match!!

I believe with this appeal we will reach the match in record time. Over the past two years I have been blown away by the support the society has received from it's members time and time again. You know the value of history and are dedicated to helping us save our past's future.



If you can help us reach THIS goal by 4th quarter of 2023, please mark donations sent to our office as **"PHASE 2 MATCH"** so that we may appropriately tally all funds towards this drive.

## PLEASE EXCUSE MY TARDINESS

I have fallen behind on sending out quarterly reminders to renew your membership or sponsorship.

Would you be so kind and review your expiration date on the back of this issue.—If expired, renew today, we truly appreciate your support.

Operating Costs are of the utmost importance, Thank you.

### Interns Jeanne Payton and Alivia Sellens

Receive their participation certificates at the Nex-Gen Graduation.



**NG** NEX-GENERATION  
Round Up for Youth, Inc.

## Other Summer Highlights



### Heritage Market at Herzogfest

ECHS gave away lemonade, taught Durok, and sold our hilariously true t-shirts and aprons at our vendor booth Saturday morning. We wrapped up at noon with a belly full of swatzberries 'n dumplings, beans 'n noodles, and delicious gulushkies. Best flavor around, right Adam?

## VFW Breakfast September 10th, 7:30am—NOON

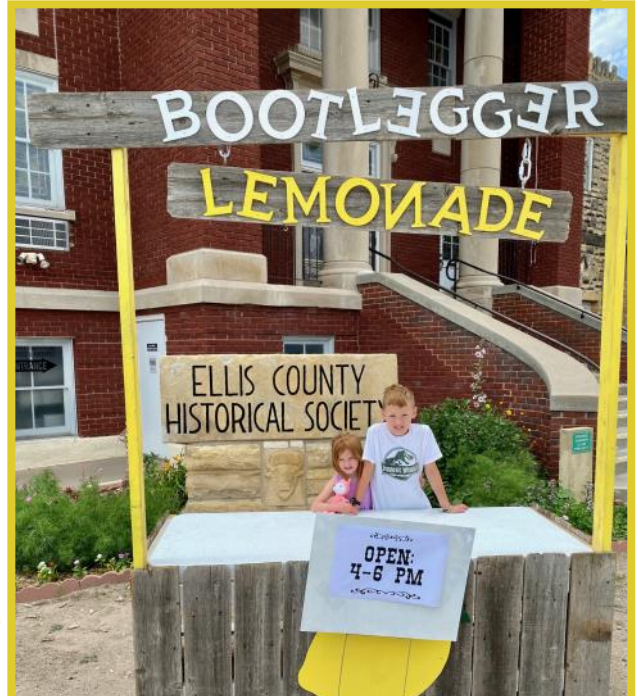


The local chapter of American Historical Society of Germans from Russia will hold their annual breakfast fundraiser at the Hays VFW Hall (22nd & Vine). **The chapter ONLY receives a portion of the tickets that are SOLD IN ADVANCE** and not the walk in day of purchases. If you plan to attend and would like to support this great organization you can purchase tickets at the St. Joseph Parish office (215 W 13th).



## BOOTLEGGER LEMONADE BENEFITS THE ARC

Even small hands can work for a great cause. Our youngest volunteers helped us to serve our signature bootlegger lemonade to benefit The Arc Park project. We offered drive thru service and a jello shot with worms to boot, pun intended.



Our stand was built by our own Brad Ricke.



Thank you to all of our customers who came out to support us!  
We earned "Best Stand Name" and had so much fun!

Proving you are never too young to volunteer, our crew was led by (from left):  
**Mack Atkins, Ivan Rupp, Amelia Rupp, Ancora Atkins**

The **Hays Garden Club** keeps our front entrance alive with beautiful flowers. We appreciate them!



If you have interest in helping with outdoor "Honey Do" projects, please call us 785-628-2624 and we will put you in contact with Brad Ricke, Committee Chair for Grounds & Maintenance.





SAFE ARTIFACTS

**We ask, you ANSWER!** We sent an appeal requesting help to purchase commercial grade dehumidifiers which are able to run 24/7 with hose drainage. Temperature and humidity control is the first defense of protection against mold and decay for our many treasured artifacts. These versatile units will fill the gap until our HVAC system can be upgraded later this fall. Because they are mobile, they will serve us in the future as we develop more storage space in various locations. THANK YOU to all of you who have swiftly answered this call! We have met our goal: three of the units have already been purchased and received AND two more are on order.

Gary & Patricia Albrecht, Brian Gribben, Lorena Kellogg, Kathleen Kucher, Patricia Phillips, Dan & Mary Kay Schippers, Gene & Cheryl Stramel, Mark Stoddard in Memory of Doris Markel Stoddard, Patsy Teller AND Heartland Community Foundation Grant spring 2023.



**Kansas MUSIC History**

Thursday | 7:00pm  
Sept. 14, 2023

**HUMANITIES KANSAS**

**SPEAKER:** Music Historian & Assistant at the Riley County Historical Museum.

**Derrick Doty**

Open to the public  
Free at:

**100 W 7th  
Hays, Kansas  
ECHS Museum**

What is it like to be a musician from Kansas and what can their music tell us about time and place? Using music and storytelling, this presentation explores informal music traditions, styles, and musicians from Territorial Kansas up through the age of the radio, and concludes with a demonstration of various instruments and music from early 19th and 20th century Kansas.

Watch us on Cottonwood Connections by Ed Lowry  
"Cultural Heritage of the High Plains"  
<https://youtu.be/ID3MYheToPM>



**FUN**  
for all  
ages!



## Durok NIGHT

*We sure had fun learning to play Durak with our own Master Teacher Jerry Braun and his sister Judy.*

**For all those who truly understand the value of history.**

# 2023 Capital Donors

As our plans begin to be realized our need for funds increases in correspondence. ECHS is blessed to have growing support throughout the community. Although general operating funds are in most need currently, these capital funds set the timeline and pace for accomplishing our larger goals. Unlike membership and sponsorship dues, these gifts are sometimes a one time donation and the money donated goes directly towards capital improvements, it is not put into our general operating budget.

**Anonymous 1**  
**Dennis Bieker**  
**Jack & Nancey Curtis**  
**J Randall Clinkscales**  
**ECHS Board of Trustees**  
**James & Teresa Feyerherm**  
**Glassman Corporation**  
**Ken & Diane Gottschalk**  
**Robert Herklotz**  
**Insurance Planning**  
**Joseph & Cheryl Jeter**

**William & Nancy Jeter**  
**Layton & Jerry Kaiser**  
**Kiwanis Club**  
**Gail Kuehl**  
**Harold G Kraus Family Trust**  
**Brian & Ann Lang**  
**Curtis & Renee Longpine**  
**Timothy & Linda Miller**  
**Stan & Joyce Newell**  
**Robert Pfeifer**  
**Melanie Roth**

**William Saba**  
**Gary & Mary Ann Shorman**  
**Brent & Sasha Schippers**  
**Dan & Mary Kay Schippers**  
**Cora Schulte**  
**Olen & Sharon Thompson**  
**Vitzum's Carpet**  
**Darrell & Barbara Werth**  
**Dick & Kay Werth**  
**Werth Wealth Management**  
**Robert & Susan Wolf**

**Our Apologies** to those who came out in July for the return of the Family Fun Day. We had scheduling conflicts with our volunteers and failed to get the word out that we had to cancel. So so sorry! But this water event will return in 2024, stay tuned!



For recent happenings or exciting news that did not make the newsletter...



# THANK YOU — SPONSORS

Sponsorship dues go directly to operating expenses of the society. Staff, utilities, insurances etc. are all an important part of regular business even for a non-profit. ECHS depends on public funding for a large portion of operating expenses but those are subsidized with private donations like memberships. A sponsorship is a membership at a higher level of support.

## AMBASSADOR

(\$1500+)

**LYLE NOORDHOEK**



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## Benefactor (\$1,000- \$1499)

**JEFF PINKNEY CPA, Inc.**

**HAYS LIONS CLUB**

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## Settler (\$500 to \$999)

**Bank of Hays**

**Emprise Bank**

**Kiwanis Club of Hays**

**Classic Quality Body Shop**

**Brian Gribben**

**Midwest Energy**

**Downing Nelson Oil**

**Insurance Planning**

**Patricia Phillips**

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## Homesteader (\$250 to \$499)

**Hays Conv & Visitors Bureau**

**Leona Madden**

**Daniel & Mary Kay Schippers**

**Hays Medical Center**

**Melanie Roth**

**Neal & Carolyn Younger**

**Danny & Sandy Jacobs**

**Andrew & Kathleen Rupp**

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## Pioneer (\$100 to \$249)

**John & Sybil Brauer**

**Roger & Nancy Harman**

**Colleen Ricke**

**Jerry Braun**

**John Vincent & Elizabeth Harris**

**Brent & Sasha Schippers**

**Glenn & Amy Braun**

**Christopher Janzen**

**Jared & Marli Schippers**

**Louis Caplan**

**Layton & Jerry Kaiser**

**Cora Schulte**

**Steve & Sherry Crow**

**JoAnn Koerner**

**Cynthia Goetz Stone**

**Standlee "Bud" Dalton**

**Lyn & Janis Lee**

**Gene & Cheryl Stramel**

**Thomas & Patricia Drees**

**Jim & Cherie Leiker**

**Sunflower Electric Power Corp**

**Marilyn Ebersole**

**Robert & Chris Luehrs**

**Patsy Teller**

**James & Teresa Feyerherm**

**Jack & Peggy McCullick**

**Glenn & Holly Unrein**

**Field Abstract & Title LLC**

**Tim & Linda Miller**

**Thomas & Barbara Wasinger**

**Allen Gosser Family\***

**Robert Pfeifer**

**Paul Wertenberger Construction**

**Lawrence & Eva Gould**

**JoAnn Scurlock & Richard Beal**

**Juti Winchester & Bob White**

**Gustin Appraisal LLC**

**Brad & Amanda Ricke**

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**Scout (\$75 to \$99)** Tom & Theresa Haas\* Jean Stramel Patricia Thibault Stephen & Joanne Tramel

*\* Big thank you to our recently joined/renewed at higher level sponsors.*

**Ellis County Historical Society**

**100 W 7th**

**Hays, KS 67601**

Phone: (785) 628-2624

director@echshays.org

Non-Profit Org
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Permit No. 27

Return Service Requested

**Your membership will expire on**

Your most current membership level is

**This agency is funded in part by  
the City of Hays and Ellis County Kansas.**

**New Family Membership Special \$15  
Gifted Membership from:**



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**CHOOSE ONE FROM THESE TWO COLUMNS:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$10<br>(ID required)<br>CODE 1130 | <input type="checkbox"/> SCOUT (\$75 - \$99)<br>CODE 1170         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$10<br>(65 and up)<br>CODE 1140    | <input type="checkbox"/> PIONEER (\$100 - \$249)<br>CODE 1175     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single \$15<br>CODE 1110                   | <input type="checkbox"/> HOMESTEADER (\$250-\$499)<br>CODE 1180   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25<br>CODE 1120                   | <input type="checkbox"/> SETTLER (\$500 - \$999)<br>CODE 1185     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime 500<br>(Single)<br>CODE 1150      | <input type="checkbox"/> BENEFACTOR (\$1,000-\$1499)<br>CODE 1190 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime \$500<br>(Couple)<br>CODE 1160    | <input type="checkbox"/> AMBASSADOR (\$1500+)<br>CODE 1192        |

***You are a person who understands  
the value of history. Thank you!***

NAME/BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to the ELLIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

----- **ENTER credit card information below** -----

Visa  Mastercard  American Express  Discover

Acc # \_\_\_\_\_ CVV# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_