

# KDA Monthly

NEWS AND NOTES FOR THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TEAM • MAY 2017

*Strengths Insight of the Month:*

## Strengths in the Workplace

### WHY DO WE TALK ABOUT STRENGTHS SO MUCH?

Employees who receive strength-based development realize an increase of as much as

**24%** 

in their workplace engagement

**ORGANIZATIONS WITH HIGHLY ENGAGED WORKFORCES OUTPERFORM THEIR PEERS BY 147%**



### LET'S COMBAT THIS TREND BY USING OUR STRENGTHS

70% of employees in the United States reported that they are NOT ENGAGED in their position.



*According to Gallup Polls*

## Coming Up:



- May 29 ..... Memorial Day (office closed)  
June 22..... KDA All-Agency BBQ  
July 4..... Independence Day (office closed)  
August 24 .... Kansas Agricultural Growth Summit

## H.R. CORNER

### Bulletins:

Visit HR Bulletins at [agriculture.ks.gov/HR](http://agriculture.ks.gov/HR) for updates including:

- [2018 Designated Holidays](#)
- [Biometric Screening Dates](#)
- [Benefit-Wise, the KPERS Newsletter](#)
- [KPERS Notes and Updates](#)
- [Health Quest Newsletter](#)

## SAVE THE DATE

The KDA All-Agency BBQ will take place on **Thursday, June 22, from 11:20-1:30**, at six locations: Topeka, Garden City, Stafford, Iola, Stockton, and Manhattan.

RSVP will come soon, so watch for the email in early June. Please do reply so the coordinators can plan. Bring a lawn chair and yard/lawn games! Regional sites will take a group photo, and the Manhattan site will do program/division photos upon request.



## Department Comings and Goings

Please help us welcome these new KDA staff members.

**Shelli Hornberger** ..... Food Safety and Lodging

**Martin Koch** ..... Water Structures

**Hayleigh Passauer** ..... Meat and Poultry

**Clare Sweeney** ..... Meat and Poultry

This employee is changing jobs at KDA:

**Taylor Fry** ..... from intern to Ag Marketing

On military leave:

**Justin Koehn** ..... Water Appropriation

This employee is no longer at KDA:

**Misty Palmer** ..... Fiscal



If you have items you would like to include in the next issue, please send them to [Heather.Lansdowne@ks.gov](mailto:Heather.Lansdowne@ks.gov)

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## IT TIP



The last month has seen two significant security threats to internet users worldwide, which is a good reminder to be extremely cautious to avoid viruses or hacking threats. Here are some key tips:

- Never open attachments (unless you're confident you know what it contains).
- Don't open links in emails from unknown sources.
- Back up your data. Save your files on a shared drive, rather than on your desktop.
- Use quality passwords and change them often. (Yes, we've mentioned this before!)

If you have IT questions or problems please give Shawn, Greg or Le a call at 785-564-6740 or email them at [kda.servicedesk@ks.gov](mailto:kda.servicedesk@ks.gov) today.

## KDA Internship Program

The summer of 2017 will be a memorable one for 16 students who will spend it as interns at Kansas Department of Agriculture! Some are continuing internships or employment which started during the 2016–17 school year, but most are new faces to the agency, so keep an eye out and welcome them to KDA.

KDA interns function as part of the Governor's Internship Program, which also includes professional development opportunities and field day experiences with interns working across other state agencies. KDA interns will give a presentation at the end of the summer demonstrating their work during their internship.

Programs are challenged to provide an internship experience which goes beyond a typical student employee, instead offering a higher level of responsibility and opportunity to apply the student's skills in the government agency. Interns at KDA take on independent projects and develop a portfolio of work that gives them a step up toward their careers. This summer, for example, three interns will be working with Kansas feedlots and dairies to develop biosecurity plans for their facilities, which is a critical part of the state's animal disease response efforts.

### KDA Summer 2017 Interns:

Legal: [Alex Sheppard](#) and Beth Reichenberger

Economist: Allison Nickelson and Peter Oppelt

Ag Marketing: [Caitlyn Maloney](#), Eryn Carter, Kory Loden

Emergency Management: [Callahan Grund](#), Jake Carlson

DWR Stockton Field Office: [Jessica Collins](#)

Communications: [Kyler Langvardt](#), Taylor Harrelson

Information Technology: [Mitch Gehrt](#)

Dairy and Feed Safety: [Riley Jones](#)

Weights and Measures: [Tristan Parks](#)

DWR Topeka Field Office: [Wes Moots](#)

## TRIVIA!

In honor of nearing the end of the legislative session:

How many days was the longest legislative session in Kansas history?

Email your guesses to [Heather.Lansdowne@ks.gov](mailto:Heather.Lansdowne@ks.gov)

Winner will receive a glamorous Communications Team prize package



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## Employee of the Quarter Recognition:

### Food Safety and Lodging: Penny Andrasek, Sarah Pennington, Ralph Sunley

**Penny** works as an inspector with the food safety and lodging program out of her home office in Scott City. She has been with KDA since 2011.

**Sarah** is an inspector with the food safety and lodging program, working in the KC metro area. She has been with KDA just over one year.

**Ralph** has been with food safety and lodging just over 8 years, and works as an inspector out of his home office in Great Bend.

### Animal Health: Tyler Brewington

**Tyler** began working at KDA when she was a student at K-State, and became a full-time employee as a program specialist with the animal facilities inspection program. She leads the program's online license renewal system and has worked on planning the Small Animal Seminar.

### DWR: Leonard Bristow, Rebecca Hageman, Justin Koehn, Tyler Smith, Armando Zarco

**Leonard** has been with DWR for nearly 28 years. He is a water structures engineer working out of the Stockton Field Office, conducting dam safety inspections, dam construction inspections, permits for modifications and new dam construction and safety inspection report reviews.

**Rebecca** is the administrative assistant in the Stockton Field Office. She handles office responsibilities, including open records requests, and is the first point of contact for customers calling or visiting the office.

**Justin** is an environmental scientist

with water appropriation, coordinating water use reports and working directly with customers. He has worked on the development of the online water use reporting program and assisted with the Water Rights Conservation Program.

**Tyler** is an environmental associate in the Topeka Field Office. He has worked on several large meter orders and many compliance investigations.

**Armando** is a water conservation specialist in the Garden City Field Office. He has been with KDA for under a year, but has been instrumental in coordinating Water Conservation Area meetings and working with stakeholders in the region.

### Office of the Secretary: Jennifer Brunkow, Kayla Stansbury

**Jennifer** covers the front desk for KDA, so she is the public face of the agency both for phone calls and for visitors to the building, making customer service her priority. She also serves as the building manager, scheduling rooms and vehicles and handling building issues.

**Kayla** is the executive secretary for the Office of the Secretary, serving as the hub for the executive team. She provides critical support for staff throughout the agency, and customer service to stakeholders and organizations who work with KDA.

### Admin: Bob Buss, Diana Clifford

**Bob** is the lead software developer for the information technology team. He helps create software solutions that improve the productivity for various KDA programs.

**Diana** is an accountant in fiscal, and works for KDA administration as well as all of DWR: water services management,

water appropriations and water structures. She has been with KDA for over two years, following more than 7 years with KDWPT.

### Marketing: Taylor Harms

**Taylor** has worked in the marketing, advocacy and outreach program, focused on several special projects. She has been a key component of the American Royal relocation project, serving as a liaison and coordinating the information gathering process.

### Meat & Poultry: Krista Moore

**Krista** is the meat and poultry inspection office manager, and oversees all aspects of meat and poultry when the program manager is unavailable. She has worked on several projects, including troubleshooting and maintaining an application for the program.

### Conservation: Cindy Woofter

**Cindy** is an administrative specialist in the division of conservation, who has been actively involved in the conservation district activities initiative and the Reclamation and Ag Liming Information System development, and has made several other contributions in the DOC.



# SPOTLIGHT

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## KDA Spotlight: Room 124

Who's the busiest contributor to KDA's mission? You could make a good argument that it's a *what*, not a *who*: Room 124. Every day, the large conference room on the first floor is buzzing with activity as it is used by an incredibly broad scope of organizations serving agriculture in the state of Kansas. Whether it's used as one big room or split into two smaller conference areas (or even 3 or 4!) the room has become a vital part of the service KDA provides to the agriculture industry in the state.

Nearly everyone in the agency has participated in agency activities in Room 124, whether as part of a regional staff meeting, a program training session, the animal disease response exercise, or even the annual holiday party. The large space has been critical to KDA's ability to keep these large staff activities in-house, rather than requiring a separate facility.

In addition, KDA has led a wide variety of ag industry programs and events here in the building, thanks to this high-quality meeting space. Many of the events have been organizations that are key stakeholders for KDA program areas, including Kansas Beef Council, K-State Agriculture Educators, Kansas Forestry Service, Kansas FFA Association, K-State Research and Extension and state water meetings, to name a few. One of Room 124's workplace highlights was hosting the presentation of a Huck Boyd Institute Lifetime Achievement Award to Senator Bob Dole in 2016.

This facility has allowed KDA to keep an open door in outreach, and created an atmosphere of transparency and open communication with the agriculture industry. Thanks, Room 124!



*Room 124 during the holiday party in December.*

## Room 124 is fulfilling the KDA Mission by hosting:

- Serving farmers → Kansas Corn, Kansas Soybean
- Ranchers → K-State Cattleman's Association
- Agribusinesses → Manhattan Chamber After Hours
- Consumers/customers → Local Food & Farm Task Force
- Encouraging economic growth → Governor's Council of Economic Advisors
- Advocating for the ag industry → Kansas Farm Bureau meetings, MASDA
- Helping to ensure a safe food supply → Animal Disease Response Training
- Protecting natural resources → State water meetings
- Promoting public health and safety → K-State Research & Extension agent training
- Protecting animal health → Animal disease response exercises
- Providing consumer protection → Food Safety Task Force