

# KANSAS PLANNING



American Planning Association  
Kansas Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association

Winter 2012

## 2011 APA-KS Conference Wrap-Up

The 2011 Kansas Planning Conference was a great success! Many thanks to the Executive Committee, student volunteers, the City of Topeka, and the over 120 attendees who joined us in Topeka for a very full two days of sessions, mobile workshops, and a little murder mystery.

Over 80 percent of respondents to the conference evaluation survey were extremely satisfied or satisfied with the quality of the breakout sessions, which covered topics as diverse as public participation, reinventing suburbia, complete streets, and planning and health. Some conference session presentations are available in the Conference section of the Kansas Chapter website, [www.planning.org/chapters/kansas/conference/](http://www.planning.org/chapters/kansas/conference/). Don't forget to log your CM credits online!

At the Annual Business Meeting luncheon, Chapter members approved a change in the Chapter's bylaws that adjusts the Chapter's fiscal year to January 1 through December 31. This change should make budget planning easier for the

Executive Committee. Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting. The Chapter's bylaws are available in the Business section of the chapter website, [www.planning.org/chapters/kansas/business/](http://www.planning.org/chapters/kansas/business/).

Each year the conference honors excellence in plans, individuals, and organizations through the Kansas APA Awards. Below is a synopsis of those honored.

### **NEW HORIZON (INDIVIDUAL) | Matt Baker**

**Recognizing a student or student group that pushes the boundaries of planning in creative and innovative ways**

University of Kansas 2011 urban planning graduate, Matthew Baker, was honored with the New Horizon Award (individual) for his paper, "Geographic Equity and Light Rail Ballot Initiative Success – A Case Study in Kansas City". The selection committee described Matt's paper as representing what planners can do to analyze and address political issues in the real world.

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**Mark your calendars** for this year's APA-KS Conference, which is a cooperative effort with the Missouri Chapter and the Kansas City Section. The 2012 Bi-State Planning Conference will be held October 10-12 at the Marriott Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, MO.  
See you there!

# President's Message

Sara Copeland, AICP

Happy New Year! The Executive Committee joins me in wishing you and your community all the best as you begin another year of Making Great Communities Happen.

This is the time of year when nearly everyone is making some kind of new year's resolution. Whether you are a resolution maker or a resolution breaker, I hope you will consider one of the following resolutions for 2012:

**Share Your Knowledge with Others** There are a number of ways we can share our knowledge with others, whether we are experienced professionals mentoring a student or planning commissioners taking a new planner under their wings. Write a Kansas Planning newsletter article, employ a student intern, or pass an interesting news item along to a colleague. Sharing knowledge isn't just an ethical obligation, it's a way to strengthen our profession .

**Try Something New** Since joining Twitter at the urging of my sister (a public relations professional), I have found a

great deal of interesting and thought-provoking planning-related reading online. Whether you jump into Twitter or try something else, broadening your horizons is a great way to make sure 2012 isn't just a repeat of 2011.

**Make Professional Development a Priority** APA-Kansas is starting to plan our 2012 Spring Symposium, and we are already at work with the Kansas City Section on the Bi-State Planning Conference, set for Kansas City in October. Plan to join us at both of these great events!

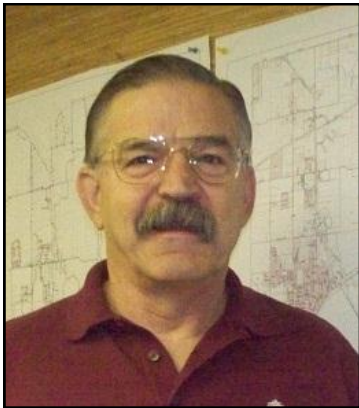
**Get Involved** APA-Kansas is always happy to welcome new people on one of our committees. In addition, this summer we will be holding elections for officers, who will serve from Oct., 2012 through Sept., 2014. You will hear more about elections later in the spring.

Whatever your resolution, 2012 will bring new challenges and opportunities. Resolve to make the best of them!

## Meet a Kansas Planner

Don E. Slone, AICP, CFM

Planning Director and Floodplain Manager, Bonner Springs, KS



Don began his college career in the School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in 1973 after a four-year tour in the United States Navy as an Aviation Ordnanceman. After three years at the University of Arkansas, he once again joined the Navy.

In 1980, he was selected to attend the University of Kansas (KU) in an officer program where he completed the first of two degrees from KU, a Bachelor's of Environmental Design degree from the School of Architecture and Urban Design in May, 1982. After KU, Don then began his flight training in Pensacola, Florida at the Aviation Officer Candidate School (AOCS) and became a Naval Flight Officer (RIO) in 1984. He flew the Navy's F-14 Tomcat on and off the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga, CV-60 and completed combat flight operations during Desert Shield/Desert Storm

in 1990-1991. Don amassed almost 2,000 hours in a variety of tactical aircraft, along with 445 arrested landings. Don retired from the Navy in 1994 after a naval career that spanned over 22 years and returned to Lawrence, Kansas where he began his graduate degree program in urban planning in 1995. Don graduated in May, 1997 from the University of Kansas with a Master of Urban Planning.

Don became a planner primarily because of the skills obtained from his undergraduate degree in Environmental Design that gave him the tools required to not only design buildings, but also review plans and construction documents. The exact planning required for precise navigation, map reading and target identification that were required for high speed, low-altitude aerial reconnaissance flights, as well as fighter escort missions, also sparked his planning interest.

Don is a member of APA-Kansas and the Kansas Association for Floodplain Management (KAFM). Don served as Regional One Director for KAFM from 2006-2011 and was elected Chairman in September, 2011.

# Ottawa's Urban Growth Area Rezonings – Communication Lessons

Sam Davis, Wynndee Lee, AICP, and Tom Yahl, AICP

Negotiations to develop an interlocal agreement for zoning and development authority, between Franklin County and the City of Ottawa, began in 2001. The agreement was then adopted and implemented in 2006 after a new comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations were adopted that included language for agricultural and rural areas. The urban growth boundary, established by the interlocal agreement, varied from ½ to 2 miles away from the city limits and contained approximately 373 individual parcels that would need to be re-zoned from county to city zoning. Rather than simply adopt a map, it was determined that a better process would be rezoning individual tracts. When local development stalled due to the economic recession, the perfect opportunity arose to begin the re-zoning process. The first phase of this process began in 2009 in the southwest corner of the city and then worked clockwise around the perimeter. The entire process should take about 26 phases to complete. As of December, 2011, we are at phase 24.

At first, rezone notifications followed a standard template of mailing the owner a letter describing the rezone, a map of the property/parcel, a copy of the current county zoning and a copy of the recommended city zoning. While questions were to be expected, some of the same questions kept coming up. To try and preemptively answer common questions, mailers began including a FAQ sheet. This helped to a degree, but staff was always ready to answer any questions residents might have, whether by phone, in person, or even in special meetings with various groups.

While each phase generally followed the same format, staff gave as much individual attention as possible to each parcel. Many concerns of the residents could be mitigated before the rezone request went before the planning commission, but staff had to ensure that they were prepared to answer any question that might arise in the public forum. By far the most common concern residents had were whether (1) the City is annexing the property and (2) the rezone was going to increase regulations and

raise taxes. It is understandable for rural residents to be concerned and ask questions about the rezone request. To alleviate concerns, it is imperative that staff be as open and transparent as possible about the process.

While it is preferable to have all parcels in a given legal notice go before the governing board at one time, it has not been an issue for the city to grant a continuance on the public hearing component to ensure residents are fully aware of what is being changed and how it affects them. Once again, we always stress that the current use of the property is not going to be affected, only the development authority.

Moreover, staff may also frame the discussion by stating that the rezoning process is looking 10-30 years to the future, but also noting that it is entirely plausible that development could come sooner to that area if someone were so inclined to do so. Finally, it can be brought full circle by reinforcing the notion that even if the city were not involved, the county would still have authority on zoning and other similar decisions. In some circumstances, city zoning regulations are more flexible in allowed development. For example, in county commercial zoning, used car sale lots require a special use permit, but in city commercial zoning, it is allowed per the zoning classification. Another option is to distinguish how the city is taking the time to individually assess each parcel and work with the landowner, instead of simply adopting a new zoning map without any public comment or input.

Overall, the experience has been challenging, yet rewarding. While that seems like a cliché with a process such as this, it has allowed our department to enhance communication strategies and help foster a sense of partnership with residents. While there are occasional difficulties and frustrations, the long-term payoff of having a more transparent and managed growth strategy is more than worth it. These lessons and strategies learned, especially in the improvement of communication, will be carried over to future rezonings in or outside the city limits.

# 2011 APA-KS Conference Awards

*continued from pg. 1*

## **NEW HORIZON (GROUP) | Kansas State Student Planning Association**

The New Horizon Award (group) was awarded to the K-State Student Planning Association for their BOXhattan project. The student group introduced kids to planning by helping them design their own “box city”. The committee commented that it was “a very innovative approach for getting young people to think about city planning”.

## **PIONEER AWARD (RURAL) | City of Greensburg, KS Recognizes creativity and innovation in using planning to meet a community need or solve a public problem**

The Pioneer Award (rural) went to the City of Greensburg for their Sustainable Land Development Code, submitted by Michael Gurnee. Greensburg is a small town with limited staff and resources, but it embraces new ideas. The result is that Greensburg incorporated about 225 sustainable items in their development code and added other concepts from their national award-winning Sustainable Comprehensive Plan.

## **PIONEER AWARD (URBAN) | City of Overland Park, KS**

The City of Overland Park received the Pioneer Award (urban) for the Overland Park Downtown Form-Based Code. This implementation tool truly is a “pioneering” effort and will lead the way to further innovation in code development. The process to develop the form-based code provided an open and transparent process for public participation. The code implements a significant part of the 2008 Pioneer Award-winning Vision Metcalf Plan.

## **PIONEER AWARD (URBAN) | Wichita-Sedgwick County**

*Project Downtown: The Master Plan for Wichita* was awarded the second urban Pioneer Award. Mayor Brewer called the unanimous council vote to adopt this plan “a monumental vote” to “begin a new chapter for Downtown Wichita... A chapter in which

Downtown becomes a place that enables people to live, work, shop, play, and learn... all within a short walk of each other”. Over \$75 million in new development projects have been announced since adoption of the plan.

## **SOD BUSTER | J.P. Lefmann**

**Recognizes an individual, appointed official, or an elected official who has advanced or promoted the cause and understanding of planning in the public arena**

Having just been reappointed to serve on the Southwest Consolidated Zoning Board for his 50th consecutive year, J.P. Lefmann received the 2011 Sod Buster Award. Lefmann has also served as the township representative to the Johnson County Planning Commission. Following in the footsteps of his father, Lefmann has served as the publicly-elected McCamish Township Clerk since 1966.

In the nomination letter, J.P. Lefmann was described as “...a well-respected member of the community whose actions and credibility have advanced the cause of planning by setting an example of citizen involvement as well as serving as an excellent role model for other appointed [officials]... His participation in zoning actions has always been thoughtful, balanced, and in the best interest of all of Johnson County.”

## **Suggest a Great Place in America**

The American Planning Association needs your help in suggesting places that are great and merit such designation. Suggest your favorite streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces across America, whether they are in your own city or town, in a place you've visited, or in a place you otherwise know about.

Suggestions received between Feb. 25, 2011, and Feb. 23, 2012, will be considered for Great Places in America designation in 2012.

See this link for the suggestion form and other information on the Great Places initiative:

<http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/suggestion/suggestiondetails.htm>.

# BOXhattan: K-State Builds Planning into Elementary Education

Jessi Preussner and Huston John Gibson, PhD

For National Planning Month in October (2011), the K-State Student Planning Association (SPA) celebrated by teaching students at Bluemont Elementary in Manhattan, KS about city planning. On October 20th, six members of SPA (Lauren Garrott, Jonathan Knight, Madhuri Kulkarni, Jessi Preussner, Eva Steinman and Eric Wencil) visited Ms. Molly Emert’s fifth grade class and constructed a box city, appropriately named “BOXhattan.”

The fifth graders first learned what planners might help plan, such as community parks, downtown shopping areas, and school facilities. Pertinent to the daily curriculum, the group explained how math is used in the planning process. To accomplish this, SPA member Deanne Petersen created four separate story-based problems, typical to what planners might face, for the group to discuss and work through together. Problems included determining a budget to build a park, how many schools are needed for the number of children in a town, and the percentage of buildings in a town that are commercial.

Next, the fifth graders brainstormed what they wanted to see built in BOXhattan. The students had many ideas, including schools, a shopping mall, and amusement parks. Once they collectively decided what they wanted in their town, they individually went to the “building department” and applied for a permit. After all buildings were constructed, the

class systematically placed the buildings on a pre-arranged canvas consisting of roads and natural features. Together, the aim was to determine the appropriate use and most logical locations of the land and buildings, such as placing businesses near roadways and houses near the school.

Once BOXhattan was developed, the class divided into smaller groups and mapped the city using a grid. This component not only served as a secondary lesson in map making and map reading, but was also a great way to show the importance of teamwork in planning projects.

Through this event, SPA educated kids about city planning, demonstrated how scholastic subjects such as math play out in the field, and helped students learn to successfully work with maps and in teams. This was the first time SPA has implemented BOXhattan in a classroom. Last April during Open House at K-State, SPA also put on a similar event for visitors. BOXhattanites are now busy planning for their next development!



Eric Wencil works on mapping BOXhattan with Bluemont fifth-graders. Photo by Eva Steinman.

# Flint Hills Receives Nearly \$2 million in Funding for a Sustainable Future

Ty Warner, AICP

The Flint Hills Regional Council has received \$1.98 million in planning funds from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The Flint Hills region competed with nearly 500 other applications from across the country in HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. Only 1 in 8 applications received funding nationwide.

A grant consortium of nearly 30 partners with a stake in the future sustainability of the Flint Hills joined in the application, including such diverse entities as the Flint Hills Tourism Coalition, Symphony in the Flint Hills, Kansas State University, Fort Riley, and the Kansas Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Wildlife, Parks & Tourism. The Flint Hills Regional Council served as lead applicant for the grant and will serve as the lead agency for its execution.

The response of the consortium partners was nothing short of inspiring, reflecting both a Kansas "can do" attitude and the readiness to rally around the unique asset that the Flint Hills represents for the state. A minimum of \$400,000 in local match commitments was required. The various partners responded by contributing over \$1 million toward the project, reflecting the overwhelming commitment on the part of these partners to ensure the future sustainability of the Flint Hills, as well as their readiness to put aside differences to preserve what they all value.

Branded "Sustainable Frontiers" to reflect the unique heritage of the Flint Hills region, the Plan will seek to address the three "frontiers" of national defense, economic sustainability, and natural & cultural resource preservation. The Plan will not only uncover a shared vision for the Flint Hills, but will also provide the modeling capability to help give local decision-makers the best information possible when considering the impacts of various choices on the region's future. It will seek to improve the resiliency of smaller communities in the Flint Hills, ensure the continued vitality of the region's growing areas, and also help sustain Fort Riley's training mission.

The success of the Plan will now depend on the entire region working together to sustain the very things that make the Flint Hills such a rich natural and cultural resource and a precious national treasure.

Though the current federal budget outlook looks to be the last time this federal grant program will be available, the awards to Kansas under the Sustainable Communities program bode very well for the state. The recent regional planning grant awards both to the Flint Hills Regional Council and the Regional Economic Area Partnership (Wichita) provide an opportunity to develop innovative models for rural planning that can be extended nationwide. These grants, together with the Challenge Grant awarded to the Mid-America Regional Council, are an acknowledgement of the strong collaborative planning work that has been fostered here in Kansas, and represent a unique opportunity for the future of planning in the Heartland.



Purple Coneflower in the Flint Hills. Photo by Ty Warner, AICP.

# Kansas Airspace Awareness Tool

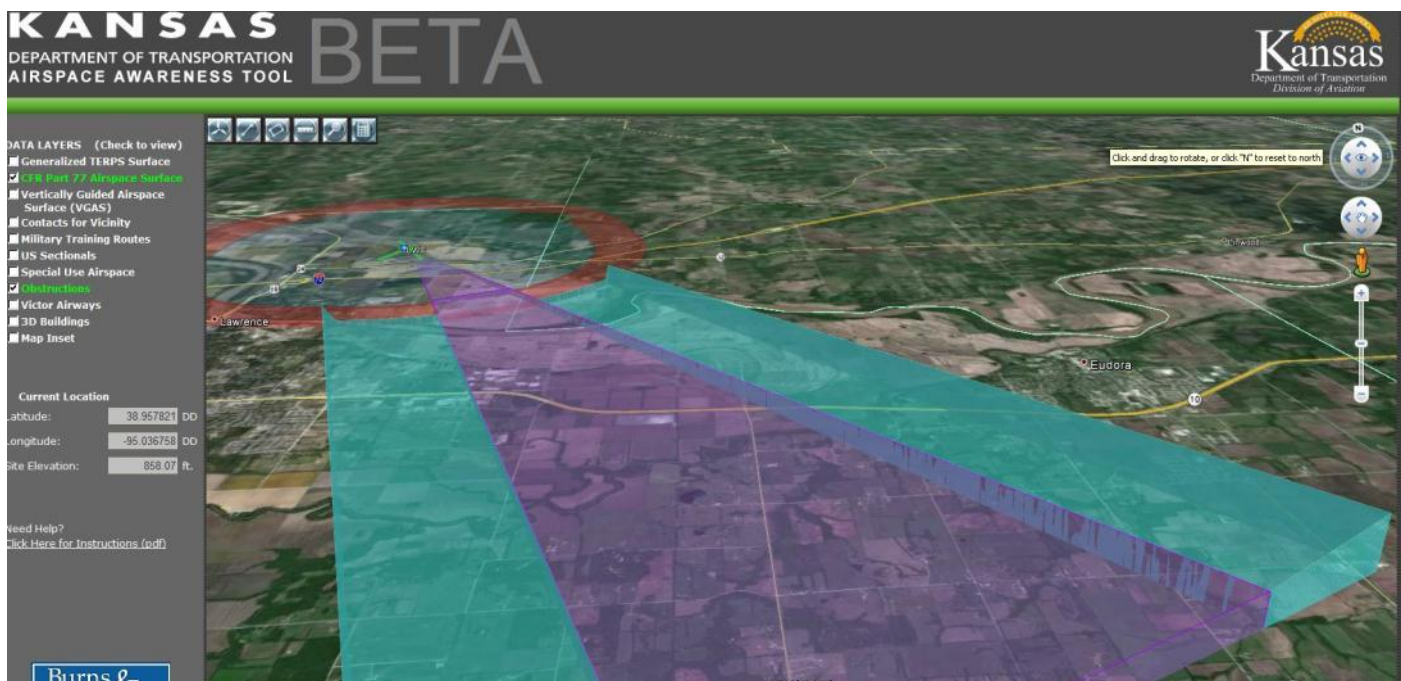
Jesse R. Romo

The Kansas Airspace Awareness Tool (KAAT) began as an idea scratched on a napkin. “We needed a product that could turn a concept - “imaginary airport surfaces” - into a tangible, understandable demonstration tool. We knew there was potential to produce a great product that explained a difficult concept to our airports, communities and developers across the state, but there was no model to follow,” said C. Edward Young, Director of Aviation for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT).

In less than two years, KDOT went from concept to product when they unveiled the tool in a soft-launch at the Eudora High School (EHS) in Eudora, KS in February, 2011. EHS had planned to erect a short wind turbine at its new football stadium to power its concession stands and field lights. The school never imagined that erecting a structure in Eudora would impact an airport that was several miles away. As it turned out, the turbine came close to Lawrence Municipal Airport’s airspace, but it did not encroach. The difficult concept of airport airspace was easily explained and demonstrated with the KAAT to EHS students and officials.

“The beauty of the tool is that it takes a well-know product like Google Earth and then uses GIS type functionality and data overlays to depict 3-D images of airport airspace,” said Young. The tool was created with developers in mind, allowing them to use latitude-longitude coordinates to plot their proposed structure (e.g. wind turbine, cell tower, light tower, etc..) and see if the location would impact a nearby airport. Since its release, the tool has also assisted local airport sponsors in explaining their airport airspace to their communities and has been utilized in local height and hazard ordinances.

In Kansas, there are approximately 139 public-use airports that in aggregate account for over \$10 billion in on-airport economic impact to the state economy, according to a study released by KDOT in 2010. In addition to the economic importance, airports across Kansas link people in rural areas to critical services such as air ambulances. For these reasons, and several others, KDOT is committed to protecting and preserving the state airport system. The Kansas Airspace Awareness Tool is available to the public at [www.ksdot.org/airspaceool](http://www.ksdot.org/airspaceool).



# Professional Development Officer Update

Lisa Koch, AICP

Happy New Year, Kansas Planners! The beginning of the year is an important time for AICP professional development, both for those that are already professionally certified and for those who are interested in taking the exam.

For those already certified, we are at the end of a two-year reporting cycle (depending on the year you were awarded AICP). While Kansas has had good compliance with Certification Maintenance (CM) credits, there are a few of you that have not logged all the credits necessary to maintain good standing with the AICP program. Just a reminder, all AICP certified planners must have 32 hours of CM hours logged every two years (including 1.5 hours of law and 1.5 hours of ethics) to maintain good standing. I will be in touch with those people that have logged fewer than 16 credits to try to find ways to get

them in good standing before the end of the grace period (April 30, 2012). One opportunity for collecting CM credits for free is to participate in the Planning Monthly Webcasts (<http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts>). For those that needs ethics credits, there is an ethics course being offered through the Planning Monthly Webcasts prior to the end of the grace period.

For those interested in taking the exam, the application period for the May testing cycle ends on January 24th. For more information, please go to the following website: <http://www.planning.org/certification/index.htm>.

Please let me know if you need any assistance with CM credits, AICP exam questions, or anything else. I can be reached at [kochls@pbworld.com](mailto:kochls@pbworld.com) or 913-754-5557.

Look for the Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association on LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/](http://www.linkedin.com/)), Facebook ([www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)), and Twitter ([twitter.com/APA\\_KS](https://twitter.com/APA_KS)).

## Save the Date

### “Urbanized” Film and Filmmaker Coming to KU on April 9th

Documentary filmmaker Gary Hustwit will be showing his new film “Urbanized” and answering your questions on Monday, April 9, at 7 p.m. on the University of Kansas (KU) campus (Woodruff Auditorium in the Kansas Union). In “Urbanized”, Hustwit looks at the design of cities around the world by talking to architects, planners and policymakers. Cities are not designed by one expert or artist, they are a collaboration among citizens, experts, builders and those who have no idea they are impacting city form. This documentary explores the future of cities by looking at urban design projects from around the world.

“Urbanized” is the third in a trilogy of documentaries about design. On February 6 at 7p.m. in Woodruff Auditorium, Hustwit’s first film, “Helvetica”, about the prevalence of Helvetica font, will air. His second film, “Objectified”, about industrial design, will be shown March 6 at 7 p.m. in the same location.

**All films are free and open to the public** thanks to KU’s School of Architecture, Design & Planning, School of Visual Arts, University Honors Program, Union Programs, Dept. of Design, Dept. of Film & Media Studies, and Dept. of Geography.

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