



35 YEARS OF LEGENDARY LEADERSHIP

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

KANSAS AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LEADERSHIP, INC.

LEAD LEGENDARY

Dear KARL Friends and Family,

For each annual report, we strive to identify a single word or phrase to summarize the past year and the outlook ahead. With over 35 years of KARL history, many words have been used, expressing excitement, challenges, turning points, growth, and inspiration. This year, one word rises above the rest: legendary.

From our early roots, KARL was designed to equip leaders with the vision, courage, and resilience to serve Kansas agriculture and rural communities. I continually watch our Associates, Fellows, Board Members, friends, and staff not just live up to that mission, but elevate it. You show the world what it means to lead legendary.

This year, we witnessed extraordinary moments:

- Launch of the first-ever KARL directory
- Inaugural Irsik Match success, fueling excitement for our first-ever comprehensive campaign
- Broader use of our Impact Report with donors, friends, and future applicants
- Expansion of impact reporting across KARL communication channels
- Memorable events, gatherings, and seminars made possible by sponsors, the KARL network, and dedicated staff

As we close out 2025, I am filled with excitement. We look forward to the remaining seminars with Class XVII, including our International Seminar to Brazil, recruiting and inducting the next class of leaders, celebrating the ongoing impact of our KARL network, exploring Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia on our Fellow's 2026 KARL Tour to the Baltic States, and continuing to strengthen the foundation of KARL for generations to come.

To all of you who walk alongside us, thank you. Your belief in the power of legendary leadership fuels this organization each and every day.

Thank you for being an essential part of the KARL legacy and helping us continue to shape Kansas' future through service and leadership.

With gratitude,

Jill Zimmerman
President
Class V





OVER THE YEARS

1991 – 1993

"KARL helped give me the courage and desire to work in state and national organizations."

– Fellow, Class I

1995 – 1997

"KARL improved my ability to ask questions and challenge other's ideas."

– Fellow, Class III

1999 – 2001

"With KARL's help, I was able to discern when I should engage."

– Fellow, Class V

2003 – 2005

"Because of KARL, I am very familiar with problems in small communities."

– Fellow, Class VII

2007 – 2009

"I don't know that there would be a HitchPin without KARL – it broadened my horizons and gave me the perspective to build something for Kansas agriculture."

– Trevor McKeeman, Class IX

2011 – 2013

"KARL allowed me to get out of the "bubble" of my farm and community, opening my eyes to the similar struggles that we as rural agriculturalists have in the USA and around the world."

– Fellow, Class XI

2015 – 2017

"After KARL, I began serving on the local hospital board for the last six years and board chair for the last three."

– Fellow, Class XIII

2019 – 2022

"KARL provides a means by which leaders can learn from and support each other."

– Fellow, Class XV

2024 – 2026

"By stepping beyond my comfort zone, I not only gained leadership skills, I discovered a renewed sense of purpose, confidence, and possibility."

– Marsha Boswell, Class XVII

1993 – 1995

"KARL led me to help lead a total revamp of our County Economic Development group."

– Fellow, Class II

1997 – 1999

"Some leaders push from behind, some lead up front, and some quietly guide with wisdom. KARL showed me the value of every kind of leadership."

– Brian Dunn, Class IV

2001 – 2003

"I certainly learned much more about my home state and expanded my network through KARL."

– Fellow, Class VI

2005 – 2007

"KARL will take you out of your comfort zone, but it makes you grow up so much. You take a string and it's not very strong. But you take that string and make it into a rope and into a net – now you've got strength."

– Gary Millershaski, Class VIII

2009 – 2011

"One of the things most influential for me in the KARL program was understanding how the traits and challenges of Kansas communities are unique and how we can work collectively to make them stronger."

– Christy Hopkins, Class X

2013 – 2015

"The KARL program is a tremendous asset not only to the participants themselves, but to every small community in Kansas."

– Fellow, Class XII

2017 – 2019

"I am a firm believer in the KARL experience and network being the reason that I am where I am today on the salary scale and in my business."

– Fellow, Class XIV

2022 – 2024

"The program allowed us to understand topics from multiple perspectives and opened thought processes across different political leanings."

– Danielle Kaminski, Class XVI

SOURCE: Impact Report Interviews & Survey



WHY KARL?



MEGAN ANGUIANO
Topeka
Kansas Livestock Association

"To strengthen community and inspire leaders to ensure the livestock industry thrives for generations to come."



COURTNEY BERAN
Clafin
USD 112-Central Plains
Jr./Sr. High School

"To make an impact."



RYAN BOGGS
Buhler
RCB Bank

"To take on what's been done and improve on our foundation."



MARSHA BOSWELL
Manhattan
Kansas Wheat Commission/
KS Assoc. of Wheat Growers

"To improve the future of farming by sharing farmers' stories with consumers and decision-makers."



DENA BUNNEL
Manhattan
Kansas State University

"To contribute to the solutions to hard problems that can make this world better for all in it."



TYLER CRAMER
Cheney
Bayer Crop Science
- Channel Seed

"Do what I have to today, so I can do what I want to tomorrow."



COLLEEN EBERLE
Cawker City
Self Employed -
Eberle Studios

"To honor the influence of those who came before me by leaving a legacy of impact, stories, and opportunities that my children and their children will cherish."



RYAN GILLILAND
Topeka
Federal Home Loan
Bank of Topeka

"To see how far we can go."



CLINTON GLASER
Salina
Smoky Hill Appraisal

"To provide value to Kansas through reliable and trustworthy real estate appraisal and valuation services."



NICHOLE GOULDIE
Inman
Nutrien Ag Solutions

"To give back to the people and places that shaped me, and to help ensure they remain strong for the next generation."



PAIGE HARDING
Dodge City
Kennedy Berkley, PA

"To provide others with the same, amazing small town experience that I was blessed with."



KALEB HORNE
Baldwin City
Frontier Farm Credit

"To make a difference by inspiring curiosity, bringing people together, and helping others do their best."



ADAM JIMISON
Manhattan
KSU Foundation

"To better the world through the betterment of Kansas."



JUSTINE JOHNS
Minneapolis
K-State Extension

"To serve today so they can thrive tomorrow."



EDIE LANZA
Manhattan
Martinez Media &
Marketing Group

"To empower others to be at their best."



JOSE LARA
Liberal
Shelter Insurance

"To create a network from all areas of Kansas to better the state and each region."



MOLLEA LIGHTNER
Dodge City
Dodge City/Ford County
Development Corporation

"To strengthen communities by ensuring all can engage, contribute, and thrive."



JANAE MCKINNEY
Manhattan
Kansas State University

"To make a difference."



**MADLINE
(MADDY) MEIER**
Goessel
Kansas Grain Sorghum

"To give back by investing in others, just as I was invested in before."



BAILEY MILLER
Phillipsburg
Farm Service Agency

"To support farmers and ranchers in my rural community, so future generations can flourish."



LAUREN MOYLAN
Manhattan
Showboat Media Co.

"I'm committed to leading with faith and creativity to strengthen the future of agriculture and empower the next generation to grow with purpose, resilience, and integrity."



JENNY NIBLOCK
Colby
Citizens Health

"Why I do what I do is to improve the quality of life of those living in rural Kansas."



MIKE PARSONS
Russell
Russell County Economic Development & CVB

"To have a meaningful impact that strengthens our community today and inspires growth for the next generation."



TREVOR PEDERSON
Hiawatha
Pederson Seed

"To learn and grow with everyone."



JERROD PREBYL
Oketo
Self Employed

"To see if it can be done."



AUBRIE SCHAEFER
Hanover
Hanover Hospital

"I'm committed to the well-being of my family, my patients, and my hometown."



LISA SCHEMM
Sharon Springs
Arrow S Farms, Inc.

"We are enhancing production, embracing heritage and leaving a legacy."



LUCAS SIMMER
Overland Park
Livestock Marketing Association

"I do what I do because its what should be done, what I want to do, or both."



JULIANA WHISMAN
Anthony
The Arts Center, Inc.

"The arts and the connections I've developed through creative experiences have been so valuable to me...I want to do my part to provide these things for others."

Recruiting Class XVIII

We're looking for aspiring rural and agriculture leaders to be part of our next KARL class!

Help us find outstanding leaders that meet the following criteria:

- Commitment to Kansas agriculture and rural communities
- Awareness of local, national, and international issues
- Track record of leadership in organizations or their community
- Be a citizen of the U.S./resident of Kansas for at least one year at time of application
- Approval from employer*

**If self-employed, applicant must provide evidence that their KARL participation will not adversely affect their business or operations.*

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS/NOMINATIONS

**JANUARY 1 –
APRIL 1**



**Nominate someone
or apply today!**

karlprogram.com/apply-nominate



Class XVII touring the Tyson Fresh Meats Teaching Center, where plant leaders shared insights into how Tyson invests in its people.



While visiting USDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the class engaged with agency leaders and celebrated the vital connection between policy and farmers.



Goodland Seminar: Alan Townsend welcomes the group to 21st Century Bean, a farmer-owned cooperative selling more than \$20 million of dry edible beans across the U.S.

Year 1 SEMINARS

Building on a strong foundation, Class XVII continued their Year One experience exploring Garden City, Goodland-Atwood, Topeka, Leavenworth/Kansas City. Year One culminated in Washington, D.C. and Gettysburg, where national dialogue and historic lessons set the stage for ongoing growth in Year Two.



Kansas City and Leavenworth Seminar: Class XVII tours the United States Army Command & General Staff College (CGSC). The CGSC provides masters-level instruction to U.S. Army officers and other military services across the globe.



D.C./Gettysburg Seminar: Experiencing the Gettysburg Leadership Program, the group explored the battlefield, museum exhibits, and the historic Cyclorama painting of Pickett's Charge.



Neosho Gardens

CLASS XVII GENESIS 2.0

Genesis 2.0 launched Class XVII's second year with reflection, history, and forward-looking dialogue in the Flint Hills. From ranch-side conversations and community insights in Council Grove to lessons on entrepreneurship and philanthropy, participants explored what drives leadership and rural vitality. The class heard from Russell Plaschka, previewed the upcoming tour to Brazil, and visited Neosho Gardens.

The seminar also featured Talk-5KARL presentations where classmates reflected on the use of their Clifton Strengths both personally and professionally throughout the summer.

Year 2 SEMINARS

1&2 Domestic Study Tour

Marysville, KS & Lincoln, NE
November 2025

3 Navigating Change

Pittsburg
December 2025

4 Economies of Kansas/Global Leadership

Wichita
January 2026

5 Energy, Water, & Natural Resources

Hays
February 2026

6 International Study Tour

Brazil
March 2026



Class XVII on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, beginning a full day of policy discussions and trade insights with national leaders.



FROM THE

Board Chair

You know those moments where you live outside of yourself? You see the world changing around you and are taken back to memories that altered your perspective. I experienced those types of moments at the end of my KARL experience. Class VI taught me several things that still impact me today both personally and professionally. Now, serving as board chair has culminated in a similar state of reflection; knowing I will look back on this opportunity to serve KARL with pride and honor. And what a time to be part of this life-changing organization.

This past year has been defined by momentum and legendary leadership. This momentum continues to build through the dedication of the KARL team, the commitment of our board, and the tireless work of our committees. Each seminar, each initiative, and each milestone has reminded me of the power of collective leadership. Together, we are shaping not only the future of KARL, but also the future of Kansas agriculture and rural communities.

What strikes me most is how the KARL impact continues to ripple outward. Associates return to their communities with renewed vision, Fellows take on new leadership roles, and conversations started in seminars evolve into real change across the state. KARL's impact is not confined to two years of seminars. It grows, multiples, and strengthens Kansas for generations. It is legendary.

Legendary leadership does not happen overnight; it is built through consistency, service, and the willingness to invest in others. In many ways, KARL gives us those rare moments of living outside ourselves as we see the bigger picture, recognize the responsibility we carry, and choose to lead with courage. These moments are what makes this program impactful, and what makes serving as board chair such an honor.

With gratitude,

Barry Purdy
Class VI
KARL Board Chair



LEGENDARY LEADERSHIP ON DISPLAY

KARL featured monthly in Kansas Farmer

This year, KARL launched an exciting new partnership with Kansas Farmer magazine through the creation of the Legendary KARL Leadership Column. Each month, a KARL Associate shares a firsthand perspective on leadership, agriculture, and rural community issues. These reports not only highlight the experiences of Associates as they move through the KARL program but also showcase the broader impact KARL has across Kansas.

We are grateful for this partnership with Kansas Farmer magazine and the opportunity it provides to celebrate the people and progress of KARL.



Sign up for the digital Kansas Farmer here!

IN MEMORIAM



KEVIN DWYER

February 15, 1959 – May 16, 2025
Lyons, KS
Class III Fellow (1995-1997)



DENISE KOBUSZEWSKI

February 17, 1950 – August 31, 2025
Irving, TX
Class I Fellow (1991-1993)



JARET MOYER

September 17, 1969 – September 5, 2025
Emporia, KS
Class III Fellow (1995-1997)



RAYMOND "TED" WARY

September 7, 1935 – October 15, 2024
Columbus, KS
Board of Directors 1998-2003

LEGENDARY IMPACT

Strengthening Our Rural Communities

"When I think about KARL, I think about rural. KARL really opened my eyes to what is going on in small communities and across our state and country. Communities need better engagement to succeed. Before KARL, I don't think I fully saw the challenges facing rural areas. And if I did, I would argue that while I wanted to do good, I didn't know where to start.

We have such a unique opportunity to get engaged in our communities. If you have an idea, there is nothing stopping you. That could be running for city council, seeking another elected position, or starting a leadership program. But many people, like me prior to KARL, don't know how to execute their ideas. That is where an experience like KARL opens your eyes and teaches you how to take the first steps toward execution.

As a result of KARL, I helped start Russell County Leadership. We graduated Class Three this past June and announced Class Four. As more community members complete the program, the impacts become clear. A member from the first class credits Russell County Leadership for inspiring a new career move. Another used the program to build a network after moving into town. I'm proud to expose people to the value of investing in themselves, and even prouder to see the results."

ANDREW OCHAMPAUGH
Class XV



Russell County Leadership's first Linking with Leadership Breakfast brought together members from all four Classes.



A dynamic discussion on culture, leadership, and workforce development united Britt Hedlund with Harper Industries' Melissa Bergkamp, Luke Thornton, and Tim Penner.

Developing Our Team at Harper Industries

"Through KARL, I gained an appreciation for the way people approach things differently. Across every seminar, people would come at things differently than me both in their questions and the way they would lead – observant vs. vocal. This perspective has influenced our hiring practices at Harper. We use additional tools to look beyond a resume and better understand who an applicant really is and how they think. Our goal is not only to hire great people but to help them grow. Knowing firsthand the development that comes from KARL, we are passionate about a Harper Industries associate applying each time."

LUKE THORNTON
Class XI



"Luke encouraged me to apply for KARL. At the time, I was the marketing manager at Harper Industries leading a small team, and my goal was simply to become a better active listener and leader. In KARL, we often talked about the 'right seat on the bus'. Everyone sees themselves as a leader, but you come to realize there are leaders from the front and leaders from behind. I once thought I was more effective at the front, but I've since learned the power of leading from the back. This shift has made me a stronger leader. I'm more confident in bold conversations, more intentional about empowering others, and more effective in guiding the much larger team I now manage at Harper Industries."

MELISSA BERGKAMP
Class XIV



TOGETHER *We Thrive*

INVESTING IN RURAL LEADERSHIP

KARL is classified as a 501(c)3 organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Please consult your professional advisors on how donating a gift to KARL fits your circumstances.

Your generous support helps us develop legendary leaders. Annual gifts remain essential to KARL's success and are counted toward our new audacious goal in our first-ever comprehensive campaign, Together We Thrive.

WAYS TO GIVE

CASH GIFTS

This is one of the easiest ways to support KARL and its mission. We accept cash, checks, money orders, and electronic fund transfers. Make checks payable to KARL, Inc.

NON-CASH GIFTS

Consider securities such as stocks, bonds and mutual funds, oil, gas and mineral interests, and real estate. Appreciated assets can lead to paying large capital gains tax. By transferring a portion of the assets to a trust, you could receive a charitable deduction and income for the rest of your life.

GIFTS OF GRAIN

Gift grain directly to KARL, which can offer a farm tax advantage while supporting our mission.

GIVE THROUGH AN IRA

Those age 70½ years or older who have a traditional IRA can give directly to KARL through a Qualified Charitable Distribution. Doing this strategically can support KARL and fulfill the Required Minimum Distribution and avoid taxation.

STEVE IRSIK MEMORIAL MATCH

"With every endeavor that Dad pursued, it was to add value to not only the bottom line, but the people that worked in the community. To add value to their lives. To add value to these small communities... to make something a little bit better for everyone." – MICHELE IRSIK-FLAX

The Steve Irsik Memorial Match reflects the belief that legendary leadership extends beyond personal success. It's about creating lasting value for others. Steve lived that truth every day, and through the generosity of his family, his legacy continues to fuel the future of Kansas agriculture and rural leadership.

In 2024, the Irsik family pledged to match up to \$25,000

in contributions annually for five years, doubling the impact of every gift and igniting new energy for KARL's mission. Each fall, every dollar you donate will be matched 1:1.

Your gift to the Steve Irsik Memorial Match doubles impact and carries forward the legacy of a man who believed in adding value to people, communities, and the future of Kansas.



If interested, please connect via the QR code or talk with a member of our team about contributing to the match.

MATCHING GIFTS

Check to see if your employer provides matching contributions. This can double or even triple your gift to KARL, making a greater impact!

MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE GIFTS

A gift to KARL, as an individual or by a group of people, is a great way to honor and respect those who make a difference in our lives.

PLANNED GIVING

Make a lasting impact through an estate gift, bequests through a will or trust, IRA, or life insurance policy. Utilizing gift models such as charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts

or charitable IRA rollover can provide valuable tax benefits to the donor while supporting KARL.

PLEDGE TO THE CAMPAIGN

In addition to your annual support, consider being among the first to make a multi-year pledge to the Together We Thrive Campaign. More details will be shared soon.

KARL LEGACY FELLOWSHIP

Let us know if you have included KARL in your estate plans so we can recognize you as part of the KARL Legacy Fellowship. You can also support other legacies like the Kings and Kingmakers Fund to honor the late Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh.

2025 FINANCIALS

We track expenses and costs to be as efficient as possible with funding. This chart shows how the overall budget is spent on the three expense categories.

PROGRAM EXPENSES

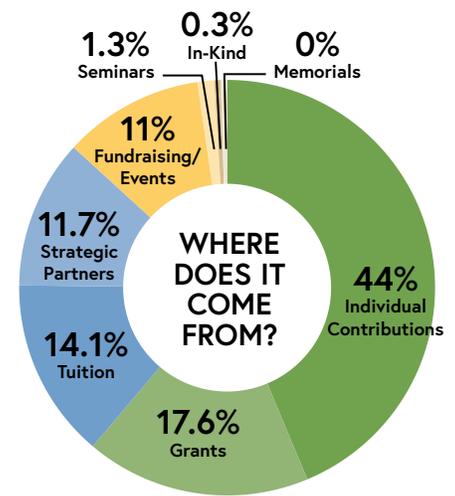
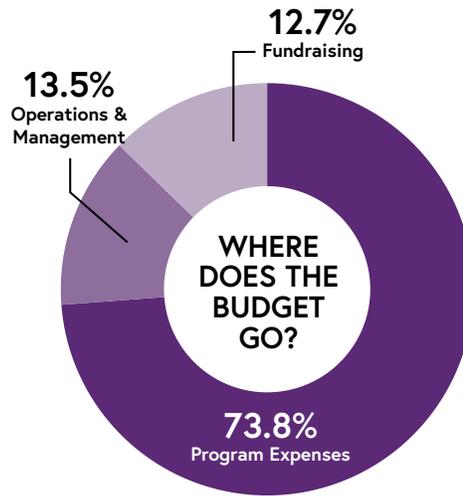
These class expenses include 12 in-state seminars, the D.C. and Gettysburg experience, and international travel.

OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

This includes staff and benefits, office management, and other costs associated with running the KARL office in Umberger Hall at Kansas State University.

FUNDRAISING

This includes printing and mailing costs, fees associated with online collection, and travel costs to meet with current and potential donors.



Source: 2025 Annual Audit Report, Shipley CPA, LLC

Investing in Kansas Leadership

The Program relies on multiple types of funding, with individual donors being the largest source of program funding. The chart is based on total Program revenue of \$691,099. FY 2025 resulted in investment income gain of \$41,536.

Kings and Kingmakers Fund Supports KARL's Sustainability Mission

Started in honor of our late, dear friend, Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, the KARL Kings & Kingmakers Fund supports our mission and sustainability to identify, prepare, and connect aspiring leaders to spark action that will positively impact agriculture and rural communities. Contact us for more details.

"As we have more and more opportunities to interact with the KARL community, we are struck by how much Barry's Kings and Kingmakers teachings have resonated with so many graduates and supporters of the program. We are gratified that those principles have been integrated into their professional and personal lives. KARL continues to stand as a strong testament to what can be achieved in leadership development for the benefit of agriculture and rural Kansas as a whole ... just what Barry envisioned it to be. We continue to staunchly support the KARL program and invite others to join us in that cause."

THE FLINCHBAUGH FAMILY
Cathy, James and Catie

THANK YOU SPONSORS

Our sponsors' multi-year strategic support makes it possible to continue our legacy of impact.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- ★ **Barry Purdy**, Chair, Wichita, *Class VI*
- ★ **John Thaemert**, Vice Chair, Sylvan Grove, *Class I*
- ★ **Greg Reno**, Treasurer, Cheney
- ★ **Aaron Harries**, Assistant Treasurer, Manhattan, *Class XI*
- ★ **Kim Baldwin**, Secretary, McPherson, *Class XV*
- ★ **Dr. Bill Brown**, Past Chair, Wamego

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- ★ **Curriculum:** Kim Baldwin
- ★ **Fellows & Friends Engagement:** Jancey Hall
- ★ **Fund Development:** John Thaemert
- ★ **Recruitment:** Kari West

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

- ★ **Dr. Vincent Amanor-Boadu**, *K-State Extension, Professor of Agriculture Economics*
- ★ **Mike Beam**, *Kansas Secretary of Agriculture*
- ★ **Dr. Gregg Hadley**, *K-State Extension, Assistant Vice President - Director for Extension*

DIRECTORS

- ★ **Luke Amend**, Whitewater, *Class XVI*
- ★ **Jeff Deeds**, Goodland, *Class III*
- ★ **Tim Flax**, Hays, *Class XIII*
- ★ **Chelsea Good**, Leawood, *Class XII*
- ★ **Jancey Hall**, Topeka, *Class XIV*
- ★ **Doug Hofbauer**, Manhattan
- ★ **Andrea Krauss**, Russell, *Class XVI*
- ★ **Dale Maneth**, Olmitz
- ★ **Bill Miller**, Council Grove
- ★ **David Murray**, Wichita
- ★ **Joe Newland**, Neodesha
- ★ **Cameron Peirce**, Hutchinson, *Class III*
- ★ **Don Schroeder**, Hesston, *Class I*
- ★ **Kari West**, Girard, *Class XVI*
- ★ **Donelle Wolters**, Atwood

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome Kari West and Cameron Peirce to the KARL Board of Directors!



KARI WEST



CAMERON PEIRCE

OUR MISSION:

KARL identifies, prepares, and connects leaders that will positively impact Kansas agriculture and rural communities.

WHY:

For agriculture and rural communities to be dynamic, well-informed leaders must emerge.

LEGENDARY SERVICE

We extend our sincere gratitude to Troy Dumler for his years of service as he retires from the KARL Board of Directors. We also thank Dr. Bill Brown for his dedicated leadership as Board Chair. While Bill will continue to serve on the board, we honor his time as chair and the steady guidance he has provided. Both Troy and Bill have made a lasting impact on KARL.



TROY DUMLER



DR. BILL BROWN

KARL STAFF



JILL ZIMMERMAN

President



FRANCES GRAVES

Leadership Program Manager & Facilitator



JANICE LIERZ

Office Manager

Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership, Inc.

10E Umberger Hall, 1612 Claflin Road
Manhattan, KS 66506

KARLprogram.com | KARL@ksu.edu