

Celebrations and Tours in the 51st District Legislative Update #14

The Fourth of July is a time of big celebrations in the 51st District, and I hope you enjoyed watching fireworks and attending BBQ's as much as we did. I join with all who are proud of the fireworks and all the events that Wamego folks provide in hosting visitors to our community. Every year seems more spectacular than the last. My Intern Mary Sabatini, a senior in political science at KSU, walked in the parade with us. I want to publicly thank her for all of her help this session. You will hear her name in Kansas politics in the future, I predict.

Legislator's spouses play an important supportive role while the legislature is in session. Since the 50's there has been a Legislative Spouses organization. While the legislators are in session the Legislative Spouses meet twice each week to learn from guest speakers, go on tours, recognize the Capitol staff, sell commemorative pins of the Kansas seal, and give to charities.

Each year since I have been in office my wife, Linda, has organized tours for this organization to visit many historical and beautiful locations in the 51st District and beyond. This year the group spent a day touring Kansas State University. Linda worked closely with Dr. Susan Peterson, Assistant to the President and Director of Governmental Relations and others at KSU, along with Beverly Corbet, spouse of Representative Ken Corbet and VP of the Legislative Spouses, to plan a big day long tour. The group was greeted by Dean John Buckwalter and Human Ecology faculty at Justin Hall for a tour of the college's vast historical clothing collection. Lunch was provided in the beautiful new business school. They spent the afternoon touring Anderson Hall, McCain Auditorium, and the Beach Museum of Art, guided by Liz Seaton. The day was completed with a trip to the Call Hall Dairy Bar for ice cream.

Another day trip this year included a visit to the Alma Creamery, the Volland Store, hosted by Abby Amick, and a luncheon hosted by Bev Corbet and Linda at the Prairie Fire Winery. Owner Bob DesRuisseaux, led the wine tasting and took

the group on a hike to the crest of the vineyard hill for a panoramic view of the Flint Hills.

Past tours included the Morris and Michelle Crisler home, where Michelle Crisler spoke to the group about the Mitchell family role in the Underground Railroad and Maude Mitchell's involvement in the area and importance as a recognized Kansas artist. Learning about the Underground Railroad and Maude Mitchell continued with a visit to the Wamego Historical Museum. Toto's Tacoz was the lunch, and from there the group strolled downtown Wamego exploring the Wamego Library, and many of the local businesses including Daylight Donuts, Iron Clad, and the Oz Winery. The day ended at our home hiking trails to the shore of the Kansas River.

The group has also gone on day trips of St Marys, and visited most of the old country churches in the District. That outing included a tour of The Columbian Theatre and lunch at the Friendship House.

Linda has plans underway for tours in the coming year to promote our region to legislative families from all over the state. I am sure they return on future visits and share their experiences with others. Explore your beautiful Kansas, and include a visit to the Flint Hills region.

Sympathies and prayers go out for the family of my friend Representative Jan Pauls, Hutchinson, who died on July 6. Jan, whose legal knowledge was remarkable, was very respected by her colleagues in both parties. Ron Pauls, was always with her for support, and we pray for him at this difficult time.

With kind regards,
Ron Highland
Representative for District 51