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Webinar to focus on how trails can fuel tourism
K-State Research and Extension First Friday e-Call set for Aug. 5

TOPEKA, Kan. – When a community develops public trails, it's not only making an investment in the health and well-being of its citizens, but also improving the appeal and vitality of the community itself – to residents and visitors alike.

How trails can be tools for driving tourism is the topic of the next K-State Research and Extension First Friday e-Call, scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Aug. 5. The webinar, "Using Trails to Bring Visitors to Town," will feature a panel of experts led by Sunflower Foundation Senior Program Officer Elizabeth Stewart Burger, who spearheads the foundation's trails program.

Since 2005, the foundation has been partnering with communities, nonprofit organizations, and schools to help build, expand, enhance, and connect trails across Kansas. Burger will share lessons she has learned from trail towns she has worked with that have effectively turned their trails into tourist attractions.

A trio of panelists will join Burger, including:

- Mike Scanlon, Osawatomie City Manager, who will share his experiences using trails and the outdoors to promote small rural towns. In Osawatomie, he has helped the community establish the eastern trailhead of the 119-mile Flint Hills Nature Trail, which is the seventh-longest rail-trail in American and the longest trail in Kansas. Called "Mile Zero" of the Flint Hills Trail, the eastern trailhead draws trail enthusiasts from around northeast Kansas and beyond.
- Lelan Dains, director of Visit Emporia, is the owner of the Emporia-based bicycle shop Gravel City Adventure & Supply Co., as well as the former event manager for the world's premiere gravel race, Unbound Gravel. He will encourage participants to think outside the box when using trails to encourage tourism. As found of Emporia Spanish Speakers, a nonprofit dedicated to learning about Spanish language and culture, Dains also will speak to how embracing diversity can help communities further broaden their tourism bases.
- Gabriella Talavera, of Prairie Village, is an intern at Sunflower Foundation and a senior community health major at the University of Kansas. She has provided organizational support for the foundation's Trail Champion Cohort program and Powered by Trails: Day of Learning @ The Powerhouse event. She will discuss the benefits of harnessing the power of young people and social media when promoting trails.

One-time registration is required for the webinar and can be completed at <https://tinyurl.com/y9pjybxv>. For more information on the trails webinar and the First Friday e-call series, contact K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality Specialist Nancy Knopp Daniels at nkdaniels@ksu.edu, or visit <https://tinyurl.com/kd6nptyw>.

K-State Research and Extension's First Friday e-Calls are designed to increase awareness of the experts, education, and economic resources available to help small businesses and entrepreneurs and to share innovations in community development.

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ABOUT SUNFLOWER FOUNDATION

Sunflower Foundation was established in 2000 as a statewide health philanthropy with a mission to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of all Kansans. The foundation believes that a thriving, sustainable nonprofit sector contributes to healthy communities, and we are committed to investing in mission-aligned nonprofits through grants, education, advocacy, collaborative learning, and capacity building. To learn more, visit the [Sunflower Foundation website](#).