

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kansas Corps Tests Concept in Melvern, Kansas

Topeka, KS. – On April 19 the city of Melvern, Kansas, will be transformed. Vibrantly painted in black and gold, “power cat” purple, crimson and blue and the entire spectrum of colors in between, college students will proudly display their school colors. However, school pride will not be the primary objective of this day. Instead, these volunteers will unite in Melvern to build area hiking and biking trails.

Transcending rivalry and geographic boundaries approximately 80 college students from K-State, KU, WSU, FHSU, Butler Community College, Allen County Community College, Flint Hills Technical School and others will align as Kansans to support “Friends of the Trail” as part of a new statewide initiative, the Kansas Corps.

This initiative will link all types of higher education community service programs together to serve the public good, enhancing the quality of life in Kansas communities. The opportunity for Kansas college students to work together with “Friends of the Trail” will test the concept of the Kansas Corps.

“The opportunities created for the state of Kansas by an initiative such as Kansas Corps are exponential,” said Christine Downey-Schmidt, former State senator and current Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents. “College student volunteers are a great untapped resource and this program will create a windfall of benefits for all involved, including all Kansas communities.”

Kansas Corps will network college and university programs across the state, promoting service and volunteerism. The vision of Kansas Corps is to improve lives, strengthen neighborhoods and foster civic responsibility. Program benefits will be enjoyed by volunteers as well as those served.

With a single phone call, this group of college student volunteers from multiple campuses will be mobilized to provide disaster recovery, social services and/or community development assistance to any region of the state.

“In the course of this landmark day; Kansas Corps will embark on an unprecedented journey with the community of Melvern: we will foster rural economic gain, while building a community that is sustaining their own future. This project is the perfect union of community and college volunteers- each expanding through a sense of community, responsibility and volunteerism,” explained Dr. Curt Brungardt, director of FHSU’s Center for Civic Leadership and one of the program developers.

Hallmark to this effort is the alignment of many groups: “Friends of the Trail”, Westar Electric Green Team, Kansas Trails Council and PRIDE organization. Kansas Corps will complement these efforts linking Kansas’ College and University volunteer programs.

Many Kansas higher learning institutions have public service/volunteerism programs designed to match college students with local communities. Kansas Corp does not focus on creating a new public service and volunteer program, but rather links and builds upon established programs. A full proposal is under development for presentation to the Kansas Board of Regents.

To obtain more information or to get involved with this project, Kansas colleges and universities, non-profit organizations and state and governmental agencies can visit www.kansascorps.org or contact Dr. Curt Brungardt, Executive Director, Center for Civic Leadership, FHSU, cbrungar@fhsu.edu, 785-628-5592.

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