



July 28, 2021

Thank you for submitting a nomination for Jody Hoener.

Overview

Thank you for your 2021 Community Star Nomination. Here is a copy of the nomination for your records. If you have any questions, please reach out to NRHD Community Star Project Coordinator, Brea Corsaro at bcorsaro@powerofrural.org.

Your Information

Allie Utley

Student

Allen Community College

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Community Star Nominee: (Individual)

Jody Hoener

President and CEO

Healthy Bourbon County Action Team

Fort Scott, Kansas

jhoener@hbcacat.org

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Have Questions? Contact:

powerofrural.org | nosorh.org | bcorsaro@powerofrural.org



Which best describes the organization your nominee is associated with?

Rural Community Coalition

Please describe your connection to the individual or organization you are nominating.

Jody has been a rural health and economic development leader throughout the state of Kansas for well over a decade. In a male-dominated workspace in the deeply traditional roots of the prairie, Jody has defined herself as a go-getter who isn't afraid to speak up about the injustices that come before her.

As a young woman who has also found her calling in public service, Jody has been the ideal role model for me as I look to find my own voice and passion in a field that has been honed by Jody for several years.

Please explain the individual's or organization's connection to or interaction with their State Office of Rural Health.

I do not know the Healthy Bourbon Action Committee's connection to our State Office of Rural Health.

The Community Star Recognition Program is designed to honor those whose contributions are making a difference in rural through collaboration, education, innovation, and communication. What do you believe to be your nominee's "star" qualities? Provide examples of how your nominee demonstrates these qualities in their work and service.



It was 2018 when the Bourbon County, Kansas Commissioners unanimously agreed on a vision: a community that would aggressively seek to address the high mill levy, lower county valuation, and population decline by a renewed focus on Economic Development.

Their most recent Kansas Association of Research Report shows Bourbon County's valuation per capita ranking at a low 102 out of 105 Kansas counties. According to data from Wichita State University's Center for Economic Development Business and Research, Bourbon County was expected to see a 16% decline in population by 2044.

That's when they found Jody Hoener, a Community Health and Access Leader, and Bourbon County resident already making change. In her role with Mercy Health Systems, she was responsible for the creation of their Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, while also leading multiple community-wide initiatives to develop and implement policy, systems, and environmental supports where people work, eat, and play to address identified priorities in CHNA. She advocates for and obtains buy-in from internal leadership and key external stakeholders and development teams, new hospital departments, and several service lines. Jody was already championing population health initiatives throughout several cross-sector partnerships, and she was ready to take on her new role.

After creating a master, nonmotorized transportation plan, which was later adopted by the city commission, she began generating support for the local cycling community and even created the county's own rural bike share

program. This is a free program that allows people to borrow bikes to explore the streets and trails of their community. Unlike commercial bike-share systems in large cities, which require a large up-front investment in GPS-enabled bikes, docking stations, and payment systems, the new Bourbon County bike share uses a simpler model that features sturdy single-speed cruiser bicycles, and a user-friendly way to check out bikes. As a cherry on top, Jody brought in Peerless Products, the county's largest employer, to powder coat the bikes and bike racks that were placed around their communities.

However, Jody was just getting started.

She then joined the Healthy Bourbon Action team, an association created to coordinate community efforts, where she spearheaded several notable events. These events and projects include a "Buy and Eat Meet-and-Greet," a social event where food chain buyers can meet local agribusinesses and small farmer suppliers. This engaged five food retail establishments and nine restaurants within their community who are now promoting and providing locally produced foods within their businesses.

Along the lines of transportation, Jody also leads the charge in creating a Tri-County alternative transportation plan and committee made up of Allen, Bourbon, and Crawford Counties; the first regional active transportation plan of its time.



In addition, she has also collaborated with the City of Fort Scott, Fort Scott Community College, Peerless Products Inc., Landmark National Bank, USD 234, USD 235, and Bourbon County and establishments to implement the Workwell KS policy and environmental changes. This means that these locations have implemented a health worksite wellness policy and supportive environmental changes like tobacco-free workplaces, access to workout equipment, standing desks, walking breaks, and more.

Bourbon County now ranks 90 out of 102 on the County Health Rankings, an 11% decrease in the short time Jody has been actively working on behalf of the community, full-time. Aside from her day job, she now has been the entrepreneurial spirit behind several small businesses around town and has earned herself a board position on the Kansas Governor's Council On Fitness.

The 2021 Community Star Selection Committee will review and evaluate nominations, making recommendations for which stories to include in this year's book and other NRHD activities based on the following merits. Please review these and select all that apply to your nominee.

Cultivates a vital, innovative rural health landscape and infrastructure. ,
 Develops leadership capacity to grow rural population health and health equity. , Builds capacity for rural data-driven program planning and decision making. , Contributes to rural health innovation, education, collaboration, and communication.

Describe in as much detail as possible, examples of your nominee's work and accomplishments that correspond with your selections to the question above.

1. Created Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan

2. Lead a multiple community-wide initiative to develop and implement policy, systems, and environmental supports where people work, eat, and play to address identified priorities in CHNA.

3. created a master, nonmotorized transportation plan

4. Welcomed a free rural bike share program that allows people to borrow bikes to explore the streets and trails of their community. This uses a simple model that features sturdy single-speed cruiser bicycles, and a user-friendly way to check out bikes. As a cherry on top, Jody brought in Peerless Products, the county's largest employer, to powder coat the bikes and bike racks that were placed around their communities.

5. Spearheaded several notable events which includes a "Buy and Eat Meet-and-Greet," a social event where food chain buyers can meet local agribusinesses and small farmer suppliers. This engaged five food retail establishments and nine restaurants within their community who are now promoting and providing locally produced foods within their businesses.

6. Collaborated with the City of Fort Scott, Fort Scott Community College, Peerless Products Inc., Landmark National Bank, USD 234, USD 235, and Bourbon County and establishments to implement the Workwell KS policy and environmental changes. This means that these locations have implemented a health worksite wellness policy and supportive

environmental changes like tobacco-free workplaces, access to workout equipment, standing desks, walking breaks, and more.

7. Currently leads the charge in creating a Tri-County alternative transportation plan and committee made up of Allen, Bourbon, and Crawford Counties; the first regional active transportation plan of its time.

I can confirm that the individual or organization is making a difference in rural through collaboration, education, innovation, and communication, and is located, working, or volunteering in a designated rural area.

Yes

I can confirm that I have notified the nominee of their nomination, and the nomination will be accepted.

Yes

How did you learn about the 2021 Community Star Recognition Program?

Email