

# Way We Worked exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art & History

*Way We Worked exhibit: a collection of over 300 photographs from 1937 and today featuring hundreds of friends, families and neighbors across Thomas County*

COLBY, Kan. (Feb. 7, 2013) Featuring over 300 photographs from 1937 and today, the Way We Worked exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby showcases long-standing businesses of Thomas County as they have changed through time, helps those remember companies that have long-since been closed and welcomes new-age services of the 21st century.

Most importantly, the exhibit, will be on display until Wednesday, Feb. 27, highlights the faces of our community and memorializes our families' legacies.

What started as the brainchild of a Farmers and Merchants Bank president in 1937 in celebration of their 50th anniversary, the photos of today were inspired by a \$2,000 grant and the museum's participation in the Kansas Humanities Council's Way We Worked in Kansas initiative to research and document local community stories of work.

By combining the two efforts to capture life of Thomas County, the Prairie Museum offers this collection of photographs spanning over 75 years.

The black and white nostalgic photos of 1937 were captured by local photographer and Sod Town founder, Verney Kear, who was commissioned by F&M Bank President August Lauterbach to travel the streets of Colby taking pictures of anyone willing to participate.

"Mr. Lauterbach realized the importance of documenting the businesses and the people who worked in them," said Taylor. "And, the album became a treasured collectible, a record of iconic photographs that continues to serve as a historically accurate educational tool for local historians and academics."

Then in 1974, the album of about 190 photos was donated to the museum by the new bank president, C.M. "Mose" Miller, which later fostered the inspiration for the Way We Worked exhibit and the museum's participation in the state-wide initiative.

To complete the large-scale project, the museum partnered with the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau to once again document business –men and –women throughout the county and, "now, more than 300 photos are on display as a priceless collection of community history," said Taylor.

"The collection documents the working community of 2012," explained Taylor. "It has been used in various ways over the years and today is the inspiration for our participation in the Way We Worked initiative. The exhibit and its complete collection of photographs, names and businesses will continue to serve as a resource for years into the future."

In September and October 2012, local photographers Michelle Morris

and Laura Norris photographed over 120 businesses, including Horlacher Jewelers, Farmers and Merchants Bank and the Colby Free Press, which were all photographed in 1937 and again last fall.

People have become appreciative of the collection and on Thursday, Feb. 7, the Prairie Museum welcomed almost 150 people who attended the exhibit's opening. People were able to compare businesses over time. Many have changed their location, their name or their owner. There are new businesses; and there are staples of service which continue to succeed such as agricultural service-based companies, beauty shops and salons and fuel stations. But, the photos of today also share how the world has modernized and changed over the past 75 years.

The Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby is inviting the public to an open house reception to celebrate an exhibit collaboration spanning over 75 years and featuring hundreds of familiar faces and businesses throughout Thomas County.

The exhibit highlights many businesses that have changed their location, their name or their owner, as well as new businesses. Agricultural service-based companies, beauty shops and fuel stations are a few of the staples that have continued to succeed through time. But, the photos of today also share how the world has modernized and changed over 75 years.

"We are so thankful for the many businesses and individuals who came together to make this exhibit possible," said Taylor. "We are especially appreciative of the Kansas Humanities Council for allowing us the opportunity to participate, research and document community stories of work as part of their Way We Worked in Kansas initiative."

"The \$2,000 grant we received from the council played a pivotal role in our ability to coordinate this local project and display the exhibit here at the museum. Their financial support is also assisting us in developing a new agricultural exhibit, called High and Dry: Farming in Western Kansas, that will open later this year inside the Cooper Barn."

Taylor added that people who didn't get a chance to sign up in the fall still have an opportunity to include their business in the master archive of photos. Those who are interested can do so by sending a photo, either a professional or amateur picture, to the museum at no cost for inclusion. Include the name of the business and who is photographed in the picture, too.

For information and to view the 1937 collection of photographs, visit [www.prairiemusuem.org](http://www.prairiemusuem.org). Contact the museum at [praiem@st-tel.net](mailto:praiem@st-tel.net) or (785) 460-4590 for questions. No reservation is necessary for this free, open house exhibit opening.

**Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
**Sat. - Sun. 1 to 5 p.m.**  
**Adults \$8, Seniors \$6, Children \$2**  
**Thomas County Residents, Half-Off**

**1905 S. Franklin, Colby**  
[praiemuseum.org](http://praiemuseum.org)



**THE PRAIRIE MUSEUM**  
OF ART+HISTORY

