

Facts to be updated for book on Kansas

By Ron Wilson

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Meet ERV. No, it's not short for Irving. ERV is an acronym for a creative project to explore, enjoy, and promote rural Kansas, led by the inimitable Marci Penner.

In the last two weeks we've learned about Marci Penner, author and founder of the Kansas Explorers Club, the Kansas Sampler Foundation, and the We Kan! initiative. Today, in the third and final installment of this series, we'll learn about Marci's latest creative idea.

One can say that Marci Penner wrote the book on rural Kansas tourism - and I mean that literally. In 2005, Marci published the "Kansas Guidebook for Explorers." This

432-page, coil-bound book sold more than 22,000 copies within a couple of years. The book included 3,597 entries describing eateries, unique shops and other attractions in 500 of the 627 incorporated cities in Kansas.

But of course, things change. Businesses come and go. It became clear that an updated book was needed. Yet as a practical matter, how could a person travel to do all the research necessary to produce an updated book?

The solution was ERV. That's an abbreviation for Explorer Research Voyage.

Midway Motors, a family-owned auto dealership in south central Kansas, is loaning the Kansas Sampler Foundation a 2012 GMC Terrain to drive around Kansas to conduct this research. Marci Penner, as director

of the Kansas Sampler Foundation, will lead the research, accompanied by her intrepid assistant Wendee LaPlant.

Marci and Wendee are setting out to drive ERV and explore rural Kansas during the next two years as research for the new guidebook. They anticipate traveling two to four days a week, visiting every one of the incorporated towns in Kansas. It is estimated that ERV will cover some 40,000 miles by the time the project is done.

No advance notice will be given about where Marci and Wendee will be visiting, although there will be posts for people who follow the trip on Facebook. ERV does not exactly travel incognito. His presence will be obvious when he rolls into your town. The car has the Kansas Sampler sunflower logo prominently

displayed on its side, along with the words Kansas Sampler Foundation and Explorer Research Voyage in huge print.

The ERV travels have already begun. For example, ERV has already been to the rural community of Windom, population 137 people. Now, that's rural.

The targeted publication date for the book is 2015, but Marci is not waiting for the book to roll off the presses. "Our desire is to help educate the public and support communities now rather than wait until the book comes out in 2015," Marci said on her website. "The Kansas Sampler Foundation will be blogging daily and using Facebook and Twitter to share what we see and do."

Of course, ERV is only one of a number of projects which the

Kansas Sampler Foundation has underway. For example, a project called "Rural Kansas: Come and Get It!" is designed to help the smaller communities collectively market and promote themselves. The state Travel and Tourism Division in what is now the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism provided a grant for the Kansas Sampler Foundation to lead this effort. A website has been created at www.getruralkansas.org. Summer classes are offered for communities that want to utilize the website. Training is offered to help people learn how to research their towns, how to write entries, how to populate the website, and how to create a Facebook page. More


than half of the communities that have taken summer classes in 2009 through 2011 are now online.

"The rock bottom reason to do this is to help keep rural communities viable," Marci said. "Every part of the plan is designed with that in mind."

For more information about ERV or rural Kansas: Come and Get It, go to www.kansassampler.org.

It's time to say goodbye to ERV - no, not your uncle Irving. The Explorer Research Voyage will be making a difference by visiting every corner of Kansas. We wish safe travels to Marci Penner and Wendee LaPlant.

So, remember to watch for ERV. He's coming to your town.



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HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE

Courtesy of the Goodland Police Department

The definition of **Child Abuse** is when physical injury, physical neglect, emotional injury or a sexual act is inflicted upon any child. The most important thing to reiterate to a victim of abuse is that they did not do anything wrong and that they are safe. If a victim comes to you and wants to report circumstances of abuse to you please respect the privacy of the child and ask limited questions. The reason for asking limited questions is because it is difficult for victims of abuse to tell their stories in the first place and sometimes after they have told one person they find it more difficult to retell the story to the most important people that need to hear it, such as investigators, etc. Let the child know that you will help them get to the people that can help them and follow through with that. The child needs to feel as though they can trust whomever they first report to.

Some of the most prominent and common indicators of physical abuse are any unexplained injuries such as:

Burns, bite marks, bruises, scars, broken bones, cuts, red marks or welts, abrasions, unusual bleeding or serious internal injuries.

Some of the most prominent and common behavioral indicators of physical abuse are:

Aggressive behavior, demanding behavior, appearing frightened of a parent or caregiver, very passive, withdrawn, verbally reporting the abuse, irritable, hyperactive or distractible, self injuring, suicidal remarks or behavior, running away from home, drug abuse or other illegal activities or severe depression.

It is very important to remember that having a bruise alone for example is not enough to stipulate that there is abuse in the home. When considering whether physical abuse is present in a certain situation it is very important to ask yourself these very important questions:

1. What other factors or evidence do I have?
2. Is the explanation given consistent with the physical evidence?
3. Are there apparent family or environmental stresses?

The definition of **Sexual Abuse** is any sexual act used for the sexual stimulation of the child, perpetrator or another person, such as indecent exposure, improper touching to penetration (sexual intercourse) that is carried out with a child. The perpetrator of sexual abuse is not always under the age of eighteen years of age. Sexual abuse can be committed by a person under the age of eighteen when that person is either much older than the victim, when the abuser is in a position of power or control over another child, or uses force or coercion. Both females and males can be the victims of sexual abuse.

The definition of **Emotional Abuse** is a consistent, chronic behavior by a parent or caregiver that has a harmful effect on a child. It involves a pattern of attitudes or acts that are detrimental to a child's development of a sound and healthy personality. Examples of emotional abuse would be as follows: Rejecting the child, ignoring the child, terrorizing the child by blaming them for things which they have no control over, isolating a child, corrupting the child, confusing a child by giving them contradictory messages leaving them unable to please the parent or caregiver, inconsistent or erratic threatening style of discipline.

The definition of **Physical Neglect** of a child means the failure or inattention on the part of the caregiver or parent to provide for that child's basic needs, such as food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision that results in harm of the child.

Kansas Child Fatalities Statistics from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services:

Over the last nine years (FY01-FY09) there have been 72 child fatalities due to abuse or neglect in Kansas. (FY01-8; FY02-6; FY03-6; FY04-10; FY05-10; FY06-5; FY07-8; FY08-12; FY09-7). The Kansas child fatality rate is considerably lower than the national rate at 1.00 per 100,000 children (FY09), compared to the national rate of 2.35. Consistent with national data, the majority of child deaths in Kansas over the last several years occur in children under the age of one (71 percent in Kansas FY09). National data shows 42.2 percent of child fatalities are children under the age of one. (2007 Child Maltreatment) Over the last few years, the greatest proportion of child deaths due to abuse or neglect involve the father as the perpetrator, (FY07 & 08-35 percent; FY09-57 percent). National data reflects mothers as the most frequent perpetrator of child abuse or neglect fatalities. Nationally, fathers are responsible for 16.3 percent of child fatalities.

The following information is taken from law enforcement literature provided by the Kansas Children's Service League and the Department of Children and Families. More information is available at their websites:

- <https://www.kcsli.org/>
- <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

The important thing to remember is that you are never alone. Never feel helpless if you are a victim of violence. There are many great resources available to you.

- Kansas Resources**
1. Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (785) 232-9784 www.kcsdv.org
 2. KBI - Kansas Offender Registration (800) 452-6727
 3. Kansas Department of Corrections Victim Services (888) 317-8204 www.dc.state.ks.us
 4. Kansas Attorney General Office (785) 296-2215 www.ksag.org
 5. Kansas Crime Victims Compensation Board (785) 296-2359
 6. Liberal Area Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Services (888) 417-7273 www.larcvds.org
 7. DoVCS of Grant County - Ulysses Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (620) 356-2608
 8. Family Crisis Services - Garden City (620) 275-5911
 9. NW KS Domestic and Sexual Violence Services - Hays (800) 794-4624
 10. Crisis Center of Dodge City (620) 225-6510 (866) 270-2270 www.crisiscenter.dc.org
 11. Family Crisis Center - Great Bend (866) 792-1885

- Kansas Hotlines**
1. Kansas Statewide Abuse Hotline 1-888-END-ABUSE (1-888-363-22873)
 2. Kansas Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Outline 1-800-922-5330

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