

Harvest time hectic, but also dangerous

By Ron Wilson

Director

Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University

The combine moves through the soybean field, gathering the fall harvest. Harvest can be a hectic time on the farm, and it can also be a time when farm accidents happen. Safety on the farm should be a priority year-round, and one rural Kansas woman is helping lead an effort to encourage farm safety.

Erin Mark is the Kansas outreach coordinator for a program called Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. The mission of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids is to promote a safe farm environment so as to prevent health hazards, injuries, and fatalities to children and youth. Farm Safety 4 Just Kids is an independent organization doing educational programs across the nation.

The organization began in Iowa in 1987. An 11-year-old boy died in a grain wagon accident on his family's farm. In her grief, the boy's mother set out to launch an educational program so that no other farm family had to undergo such a loss. That effort became what is now known as Farm Safety 4 Just Kids.

The organization works through a network of state outreach coordinators. The coordinator in Kansas is Erin Mark. Her position is sponsored by Cargill.

Erin grew up in a family of custom harvesters from south central Kansas. Her dad followed the harvest each year from Texas almost up to Canada and was active in the U.S. Custom Harvesters Association.

One year at the custom harvesters' annual meeting, Erin saw a display for an organization called Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. The organization was having a photography contest, and Erin submitted a photo of her baby brother playing with a toy combine in a wheat field. That photo ended up on the organization's brochure.

Years later, while preparing to graduate from K-State with a degree in animal science, Erin learned that Farm Safety 4 Just Kids would be hiring a state outreach coordinator for Kansas. She applied and got the job. It sounds like it was meant to be.

Erin is now employed as a bio-science aide at the USDA research center in Manhattan and works for Farm Safety 4 Just Kids as a part-time position. During the course of a year, she will participate in more than 20 educational events to inform kids about farm safety. Those events might include fairs, festivals and field days.

She partners with groups such as schools, 4-H clubs, libraries, county farm bureaus, other farm groups, extension, businesses, and community organizations to do educational programs.

"We cover farm safety, but we also try to reach an urban audience," Erin said. "They need to know about ATV safety, for example."

In fact, a good friend of Erin's perished in a tragic ATV accident just recently. "It's so sad. It makes me want to work even harder," she said.

"If you need someone to come in and speak about farm safety, I'm your girl," she said. "Or, if you need resources sent to you so you can do your own safety program, we can do that too."

"We are a non-profit organization," Erin said. "There is no charge for me to come in and speak or to send information."

She emphasizes that the organization is not a regulatory agency but instead takes a constructive, educational approach: "We're here to help, not trying to hinder. We want to help people be safe and continue to enjoy the farm."

Erin knows the importance of farm and rural life firsthand. She went to school in the south central Kansas town of Norwich, population 543. That's rural, but there's more. Erin's family actually lived near the town of Rago, population 18 people. Now, that's rural.

Various types of safety information and resources are available on the organization's website, www.fs4jk.org.

The combine moves through the soybean field, gathering the fall harvest safely. Thanks to the efforts of Erin Mark and others, Farm Safety 4 Just Kids is making a difference by encouraging safe practices on the farm. We look forward to a harvest that yields both productivity and safety.

Trim here, trim there



One of the brick layers worked on getting the last few bricks to fit in the brick replacement project on Main Avenue between 12th and 13th. All of work was done and even the stripes for parking painted before the first day of school on Monday.
Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Lodge offering scholarship

The Goodland Masonic Lodge will be holding their essay contest for their annual \$500 scholarship and a chance for the winner to compete at the state level for scholarships.

The topic for the essay is "In marketing the State of Kansas to a national audience (trying to entice people to locate here), what would be the major focus of your campaign?"

Any junior or senior attending a Kansas tax-supported public high school is eligible. The essay needs to have from 300 to 500 words and must be submitted typewritten, double space, on a standard 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper with 12 point Arial font. There needs to be an original and one copy.

Each essay must have a title page gotten from their local lodge and be submitted by Nov. 1. A winner from

the local lodge is sent to the Grand Lodge in Topeka for judging in the state scholarships. The winner must enroll in a Kansas tax-supported accredited university, college, community college or vocational technical school to get the award.

At the state level the first place winner will receive \$4,000, the second place winner \$3,000, the third place winner \$2,000 and the fourth place winner \$1,000. Four honor-

able mention will be awarded \$500 each. Grand Lodge winners will be notified before March 1, 2013.

For information contact the Goodland Masonic Lodge #321, 519 Center, Box 393, Goodland or the Grand Lodge of Kansas, 320 SW 8th Avenue, Topeka, Kan. 66603-5518, telephone (785) 234-5518 or email jan@kansasmason.org.

Kansas Book Festival scheduled in September

The second annual Kansas Book Festival, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Mountain Time) on Saturday, Sept. 15, at the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka, will showcase current authors and books and will promote the importance of reading. It is free and open to the public.

"Our mission is to promote literacy and encourage a life-long love of reading," Kansas First Lady Mary Brownback said. "We believe that we achieved that in our first festival last September and are excited to see where this year's event takes us. We have a great lineup of locally and nationally known authors and illustrators that kids and adults will

enjoy."

More than 30 authors will take part in the festival, including local favorites such as Matthew Polly, Harriet Lerner and Thomas Fox Averill.

Candice Millard, author of the New York Times' bestseller "Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President," will be presenting.

Kansas City author and illustrator Shane Evans will attend; he has illustrated books for Shaquille O'Neal, Holly Robinson Peete and Taye Diggs and won the 2012 Coretta Scott King award for his book, "Underground."

One of the day's key presentations will be made by 91-year-old Chester Nez along with the help of his co-author. Nez is one of the original Navajo Code Talkers from World War II. The awards ceremony for the Kansas Notable Book winners will take place at noon.

Along with the author presentations there will be book signings, outdoor entertainment and activities for children of all ages.

To see the full list of authors or for event, sponsor or vendor information, visit www.kansasbookfestival.com.

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**Scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2012 at 7 p.m.
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Reader Recipes

Zucchini (watermelon) Pickles

- Ingredients
• 3 lbs. zucchini, peeled, chunked
• 4 tbsp. powdered or crystalized alum
• 3 quarts water
• ice cubes

Put chunk zucchini in large bowl. Heat the 3 quarts water to boiling adding the alum. Pour the alum water over the zucchini to cover. Then cover with the ice cubes and let stand 2 hours. DRAIN thoroughly. Meanwhile mix up syrup.

- SYRUP
• 8 cups sugar • 4 sticks cinnamon • 4 tsp. cloves (I put these in small cheesecloth bag)
• 4 cups cider vinegar • red or green cake coloring if desired

Bring syrup to boil-pour over drained zucchini and leave overnight. The next 2 mornings drain off the syrup, add 1/2 cup sugar, and heat to boiling and again pour over zucchini. On the third morning, add 1/2 cup sugar and pour into large pan and boil until zucchini is translucent (about 2.5-3 hours.) Pack into jars and seal. Put into hot water bath for 15 minutes, remove and enjoy!

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