

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Osborne County Community Foundation
An Affiliate of the Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation

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C F

A NOTE FROM
THE CHAIR

Taking OCCF to new heights



Ginger Howell (Alton) serves as the current president of the OCCF board. She joined the board in 2022 and is an active community volunteer who brings a breadth of knowledge and experience to the position. This has been Ginger's first of a two-year term as chair. She is passionate about community development and the future of rural Kansas.

As chair of the Osborne County Community Foundation, I'm proud of the growth we've experienced over the past year. From new funds that address critical community needs to impactful grants that foster education, recreation, and development, OCCF is making a difference.

This past year we had the opportunity to hire a full-time director through a grant provided by the Dane G. Hansen Foundation. In addition, we have maintained a part-time administrative position. These changes represent a significant shift that allows OCCF to be working full-time for our communities.

In just a few months we have seen the significant impact of these efforts and looking ahead, the opportunities for Osborne County are limitless. By working

together, we can continue building a brighter future, supporting our local communities, and creating a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Our impact is largely demonstrated through grants that benefit our communities. The grant process is one that often results in common questions. For example, applicants often wonder how they can make their grant requests stand out from the rest. It is important to keep the following information in mind.

Is the applicant eligible for a grant?

First, is the organization a non-profit, government or religious entity?

For church requests OCCF can only fund projects that will contribute to the upkeep of the building and improvement of areas and programs that are utilized for the community.

If your organization is non-profit based, but does not have an official 501(c)(3) status you can apply through a non-profit entity that is an official 501(c)(3) (with their consent). One example of this is Alton PRIDE; they apply for grants through the Bull City Community Foundation.

Does the completion of the project/event create a large impact on Osborne County and is it sustainable?

OCCF loves to see grant requests that can impact Osborne County for generations to come. It is important that the project/event is sustainable, so having a specific plan to fund future maintenance/needs will create a stronger grant request.

Have there been other fund-raising efforts to show community support?

This is not required, but does speak loudly. Some foundations require that at least 30% of the funds for a project be derived from other sources. This can include in-kind

donations such as free labor or donations of supplies. OCCF does not make this a requirement, however a grant request that has followed this rule of thumb will be more competitive than others.

Is the total dollar amount being requested within the realm of possibility for OCCF to fund?

Each year OCCF has a distribution of five percent of our endowed community fund for grants. The more the fund grows through interest and continued individual donations, the more OCCF can distribute each year.

There are four grant cycles, one each quarter, and OCCF typically receives 12 to 20 requests per cycle. This means during each grant round OCCF can distribute around \$26,000 dollars between those requests.

Our Osborne Community Endowed fund balance is currently over \$2 million and fluctuates with the market. This means that in 2025 we should have approximately \$65,000 to grant out to our community. In addition, Dane G Hansen gives us \$40,000 amount to grant. The estimated total we can grant in 2025 will be \$105,000.

Keep in mind that it is especially important to donate in February during Match Month, as during that time the Dane G. Hansen Foundation is matching contributions when OCCF hits the donation goals. This multiplies the impact of individual donations and helps grow the funds available for grants.

It is the incredible support of the Osborne County community that makes OCCF successful. Thank you for supporting our efforts in 2024. We are looking forward to an even greater impact in the years to come.

ABOUT THE
FOUNDATION
EST. 2017

OCCF is affiliated with the Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation in Bird City, KS. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a board of 10 representing the Osborne County communities of Alton, Downs, Natoma, Osborne, and Portis.

OCCF is within the Dane G. Hansen Foundation region and benefits from their future-focused initiatives.

Board member Cheryl Goheen has represented Downs on the OCCF board since 2017. She is a founding board member of the organization and served as president in 2023. Her second term concluded in 2024.

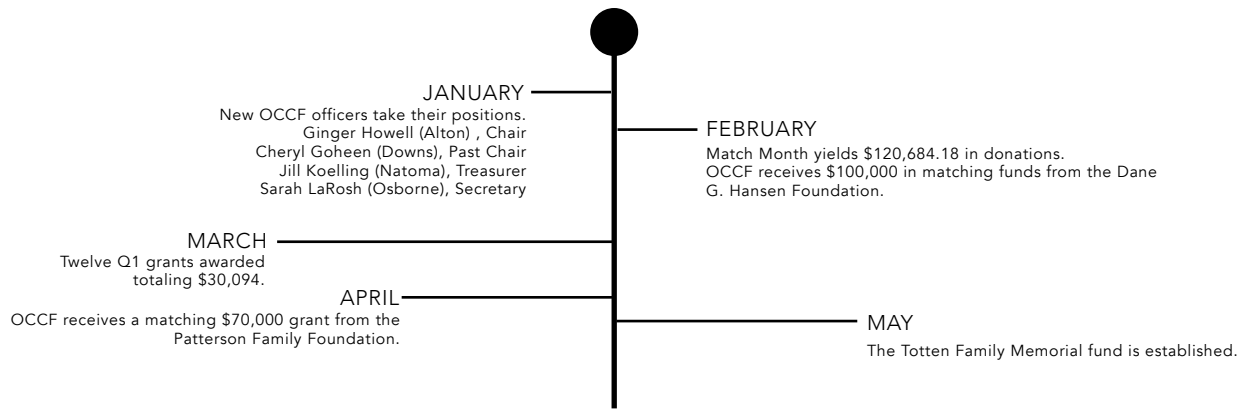
"Serving on the board has been an incredible honor to work alongside a dedicated team committed to the growth and prosperity of our county. Together, we've worked to create a thriving foundation and it has been a privilege to contribute to its continued success."
CHERYL GOHEEN

4

GRANT CYCLES

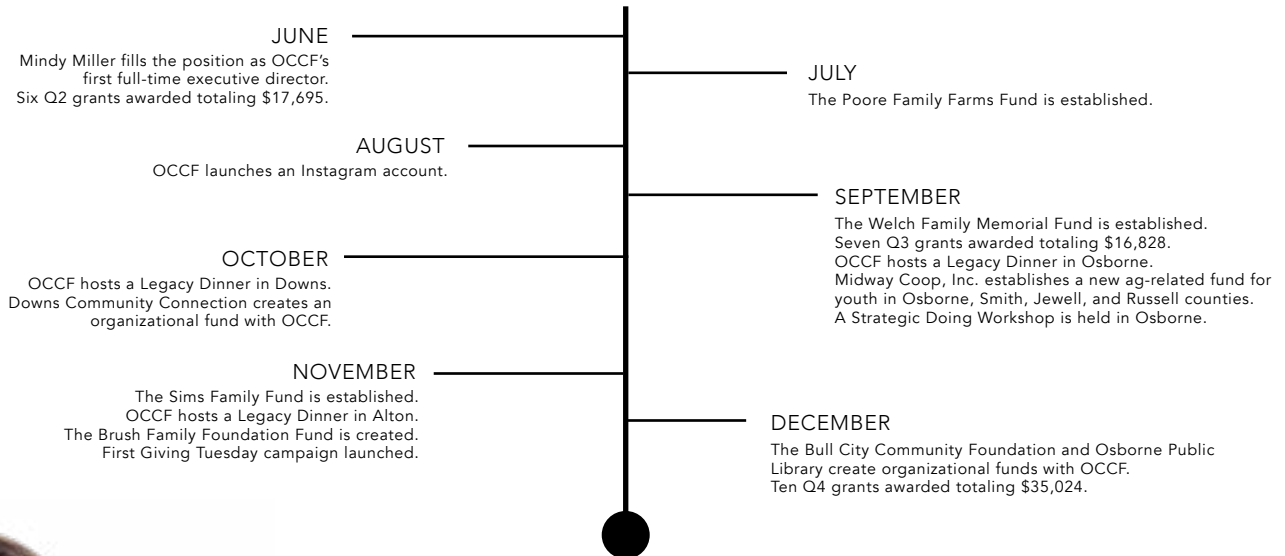


\$99,641
GRANTS FUNDS
AWARDED IN 2024



2024

MILESTONES



59

NEW DONORS
IN 2024

\$2,179,335.16
ENDOWED ASSETS
SINCE 2017



Sarah LaRosh, a founding member of OCCF, concludes her second three-year term on the OCCF board in 2024. She has represented the Osborne community and served as both president and secretary during her tenure.

"This is one entity that actively works to empower, encourage, strengthen and reconcile the entire county. I have seen people work together for the greater good and that has been the biggest accomplishment of OCCF since the beginning."

SARAH LAROSH

MISSION

Help people invest in meaningful ways to make a difference in the community by building permanent endowment funds and meeting charitable community needs.

35
GRANTS
AWARDED



■ BUILDING COMMUNITY

Board member Carol Noel (Portis) engages with community members of all ages at the Osborne County Fair, sharing the mission of the Osborne County Community Foundation and inspiring conversations about making a difference in our community.

Board: Future focus takes priority

The Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) has long been a cornerstone of charitable giving and community growth in Osborne County. Our goal is to connect generosity with community needs, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

We are always searching for ways to make a positive impact in Osborne County and support grassroots efforts.

HEATHER HANCOCK
BOARD MEMBER (DOWNS)

Through our grants, partnerships, and donor-supported funds, OCCF plays an active role in addressing local needs and fostering positive change. Whether it is supporting youth programs, enhancing public spaces, or investing in education and the arts, our work reflects the values and aspirations of Osborne County residents.

This year, OCCF has been particularly active in engaging the community. From hosting events like the farm-to-table legacy dinners that celebrated local agriculture and philanthropy, to connecting with local organizations and awarding grants for projects that strengthen our communities, we are here to make a difference.

Partnering for Progress

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. OCCF works hand-in-hand with donors, local organizations, and professional advisors to ensure that charitable contributions make the greatest impact. Together, we have funded projects that improve quality of life, enhance infrastructure, and create opportunities for all residents.

One example is the recently established Sims Family Fund, which supports cherished community traditions and spaces like the Sanders Ball Complex and Christmas decorations in Osborne. This fund showcases how one family's vision could create a ripple effect of positivity and progress across the entire community.

Making Giving Easy

We know that giving back should be as meaningful and seamless as possible. OCCF offers various ways to give, from legacy gifts and IRA distributions to donations of grain and stock. Our goal is to empower donors to support the causes they care about while enjoying tax benefits and peace of mind.

For those who wish to establish their own charitable fund, OCCF provides personalized support, ensuring each donor's philanthropic goals align with the needs of Osborne County.

Strengthening Our Future

As OCCF looks to the future, we are committed to expanding our reach and impact. With the support of generous donors, dedicated volunteers, and a growing network of community partners, we are building a stronger, more vibrant Osborne County.

This fall, OCCF hosted its 2024 Legacy Dinner Series, a special series of farm-to-table events held in Osborne, Downs, and Alton. The dinners brought community

members together to celebrate local agriculture, connect with neighbors, and learn about the transformative power of philanthropy. Each event highlighted our mission of supporting Osborne County through charitable giving, and attendees were treated to locally sourced meals that underscored the richness of the region.



A highlight of the series was the opportunity to hear from Betsy Wearing, Coordinator of Programs, Communications, and New Initiatives at the Dane G. Hansen Foundation. Betsy shared valuable insights into the intergenerational transfer of wealth, a pressing topic for rural communities like ours. She emphasized the importance of planning for the future, encouraging families to consider how their legacy could support the causes and communities they care about most.

Her message resonated deeply, sparking conversations among attendees about the ways philanthropy can preserve our community values and ensure a thriving future for Osborne County.

At the October Legacy Dinner in Downs Betsy Wearing of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation shared how intergeneration wealth transfer can benefit OCCF in the near future by leveraging OCCF endowed funds and estate gifts. The farm-to-table meal featured homegrown produce provided by the Downs Community Garden, another project that has benefitted from OCCF grants.

OCCF is committed to building on the momentum generated by the Legacy Dinner Series. The conversations and connections formed at these events are the foundation for future partnerships, new funds, and initiatives that will benefit Osborne County for generations to come. For more information about starting a fund, contact an OCCF staff or board member.

OCCF BOARD MEMBERS

Ginger Howell (Alton), Chair
Cheryl Goheen (Downs), Past Chair
Sarah LaRosh (Osborne), Secretary
Jill Koelling (Natoma), Treasurer
Alyssa Carswell (Alton)
Heather Hancock (Downs)
Roger Hobrock (Natoma)
Savana LaRosh (Portis)
Carol Noel (Portis)
Nadine Sigle (Osborne)


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<https://www.instagram.com/occfks/>

OCCF introduces nine new funds in 2024

In 2024, the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) placed a spotlight on fund creation as a powerful way to support the needs and aspirations of Osborne County. Through the establishment of customized charitable funds, OCCF is helping individuals, families, and organizations make a lasting impact.

OCCF offers several types of funds to meet diverse philanthropic goals including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Organizational Funds** provide nonprofits with a reliable source of income to support their mission.
- **Field of Interest Funds** allow donors to focus their giving on specific areas they care about, such as education, youth programs, or the arts.
- **Designated Funds** ensure ongoing support for a specific project, organization, or cause meaningful to the donor.

Each fund is a testament to the donor vision for the future and strengthens our shared commitment to building a vibrant and resilient community.

In 2024 OCCF worked with donors to establish nine new endowed funds that will benefit Osborne County for perpetuity.

Bull City Community Foundation established an organizational fund to support future projects in Alton.

The Doug and Kay Brush family established a field of interest fund, the **Brush Family Foundation Fund**, to benefit the Downs community.

Downs Community Connection established an organizational fund that will create a stream of income for future projects in the Downs community.

Midway Coop designed a field of interest fund that will benefit ag programs, 4-H, and FFA in Osborne, Russell, Smith, and Jewell counties.

Osborne Public Library created an organizational fund that will benefit the community resource center for years to come.

The Emery Poore family created the **Poore Family Farm Fund**, a field of interest fund, to benefit youth at USD 392 in ag-related initiatives, including the Osborne FFA chapter.

Joe and Kathy Sims designated the **Sims Family Fund** to benefit Osborne's Sanders Ball Complex, Christmas decorations, and maintenance/improvement for the Sims Event Center.

Bonnie (Totten) West created the **Totten Family Memorial Fund** to honor her mother, Lola Totten, an educator in Osborne and Jewell Counties. The fund will benefit the math, science, and music programs at USD 392 and USD 107 Rock Hills.

The **Welch Family Memorial Fund** was created by Mike and Lorie Adams to directly benefit Alton's Centennial Garden and create a sustaining source of income for the project. The fund honors Lorie's mother, Marilyn Welch.

POORE FAMILY FARMS FUND

Poore farming legacy lives on

Emery Poore's deep connection to agriculture and his commitment to supporting future generations are celebrated through the creation of the Poore Family Farm Fund, an endowed field of interest fund established with the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF). This fund is dedicated to benefiting USD 392's agriculture programs, including its thriving FFA chapter, ensuring long-term support for initiatives that align with Emery's passion for farming and education.

FUND STORIES

Every fund created this year through the Osborne County Community Foundation tells a story of generosity, vision, and commitment to community growth. These stories inspire and demonstrate how individuals and families are shaping the future of Osborne County for generations to come.

FFA has been a cornerstone of the Poore family for generations. Emery was an active member of FFA during his youth, a tradition continued by his son, grandson, and great-grandchildren.

This deep-rooted connection to FFA highlights the Poore family's longstanding belief in the power of agriculture education to prepare students for future success.

USD 392's agriculture programs, including its FFA chapter, are instrumental in cultivating leadership, hands-on learning, and innovative thinking in young people. The Poore Family Farm Fund provides resources for classroom tools, leadership opportunities, and practical experiences that prepare students for careers in the agriculture industry.

Kevin Veatch, USD 392's FFA advisor, highlighted the impact of the fund on student success. "The Poore Family Farm Fund ensures that students in our FFA program have access to valuable tools and opportunities," Veatch said. This fund helps us build strong, capable leaders for the agriculture industry."

As an endowed field of interest fund, the Poore Family Farm Fund ensures ongoing support for agriculture education and FFA programs at USD 392. Emery Poore's vision reflects

his understanding of the importance of investing in young people and the need to nurture the next generation of agriculturalists in Osborne County.

The fund not only enhances educational opportunities but also uplifts the entire Osborne community by fostering a connection between students, agriculture, and the land that sustains us. Whether funding tools for classroom projects, sponsoring FFA competitions, or supporting student-led initiatives, the Poore Family Farm Fund is a testament to Emery Poore's enduring generosity and commitment to the future.

Once a fund of this nature is established, contributions are welcome. Every donation, no matter the size, builds opportunities for young agriculturalists and strengthens the future of Osborne County. The greater the amount of the fund, the greater the grants and number of projects that can be beneficiaries each year.

Addison Poore (pictured below) has served as reporter and secretary for Osborne High School FFA chapter. Her brother, Zane, and cousin Donovan Holloway, (pictured to the right) are currently eighth grade members of the same chapter.



PHOTO: April Mick, The Portrait Place

FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS

Field of interest funds are a versatile and impactful way to address specific areas of need or opportunity within a community. Rather than focusing on a particular organization, these funds are established to support causes or fields that matter most to the donor, such as education, healthcare, the arts, youth programs, or environmental conservation.

When you create a field of interest fund with the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF), you define the focus area, and OCCF ensures that grants from your fund go to organizations or projects that align with your vision. These grants are awarded annually from the fund's earnings, keeping the principal intact for perpetual giving.

This type of fund is an excellent choice for those who want to address evolving community needs or invest in a specific cause while allowing flexibility to adapt as priorities change over time. With OCCF's expertise in identifying impactful initiatives and vetting grant applicants, donors can be confident that their fund will make a meaningful difference where it's needed most.

Field of interest funds offer a powerful way to channel your passions into long-lasting community impact, ensuring that the causes you care about today continue to thrive in the future.



USD 392 FFA members saw great success with their entries at the 2024 Kansas State Fair. Pictured are members Ben Schultz, Ethan Conrad, Zane Poore, Donovan Holloway, Kassi Kaser, Lainey Kendig, Kassidy Heller, and Addison Poore. PHOTO: Kevin Veatch

MIDWAY COOP AG FUND

Midway Coop establishes regional ag-related fund to benefit youth

Agriculture is the backbone of rural communities, and Midway Coop, Inc. is planting the seeds for future success with the creation of the Midway Coop Ag Fund. Established through the Osborne County Community Foundation, this new endowed fund is dedicated to empowering agricultural education and supporting vital

“We are proud to see the Midway Co-op Ag Fund take shape, as it has the potential to make a significant regional impact.”

CRAIG MANS
MIDWAY COOP GENERAL MANAGER

projects across Jewell, Osborne, Russell, and Smith Counties in Kansas. From modern equipment to hands-on training, this fund is cultivating opportunities that will shape the next generation of agricultural leaders.

The fund’s mission encompasses a wide range of support for agriculture. It provides resources to purchase modern equipment and supplies, enabling hands-on training opportunities and equipping students with the tools they need for success. Whether supporting an active agricultural project, FFA program, or 4-H club within the

company’s footprint, the Midway Coop Ag Fund ensures that vital resources are directed toward fostering growth and education in agriculture.

A distinctive feature of the Midway Coop Ag Fund is its focus on benefiting the education and development of students. The fund supports essential expenses, such as travel, mileage, meals, and meeting costs, ensuring students can participate fully in events and opportunities that expand their knowledge and skills in agriculture.

By empowering youth and community members, this fund plays a pivotal role in strengthening the region’s agricultural legacy. It aligns with Midway Coop’s vision to sustain and grow agriculture by providing robust support for both educational and practical initiatives. Donors who share like-minded goals are welcome to contribute to this fund at any time.

Through the establishment of this fund, Midway Coop underscores its dedication to cultivating a vibrant future for agriculture in the region. Partnering with the Osborne County Community Foundation ensures that critical resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact, creating lasting benefits for local communities and agricultural endeavors.

ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDS CAN BRING LONGEVITY TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Organizational funds offer a sustainable way to secure the future of school programs, providing a reliable stream of income for educational initiatives, extracurricular activities, and facility enhancements. By establishing an organizational fund with the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF), schools and related entities can safeguard the longevity of vital programs that benefit students and the community.

These endowed funds are designed to preserve the principal, with grants funded by the interest generated. This ensures that the financial support remains consistent year after year, creating stability for programs such as music, athletics, STEM initiatives, and arts education. Schools can rely on these funds to cover expenses for supplies, equipment upgrades, or even travel for competitions and special events.

Starting an organizational fund with OCCF comes with several advantages. The foundation provides professional fund management, ensuring funds are invested wisely and grow over time. Donors can easily contribute to the fund at any time, including through memorial gifts, annual donations, or estate plans, broadening the potential for community involvement. Additionally, these funds demonstrate a school’s commitment to long-term planning, attracting donors who value sustainability and impact.

For organizations looking to create a lasting legacy, an organizational fund with OCCF is a powerful tool to ensure future generations have access to high-quality programs and opportunities. It’s an investment in the success of students and the strength of the community.

Field of interest funds established in 2024 will begin producing grants in March 2025. To apply, visit www.osborneccf.org and note application deadlines.

Local families establish funds

DESIGNATED FUNDS

Designated funds are a meaningful way to ensure long-term support for specific organizations, projects, or causes that hold a special place in your heart. By establishing a designated fund with the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF), donors can create a permanent source of funding for the organizations or programs they care about most.

These endowed funds are designed to provide consistent financial support, with grants distributed annually from the fund's earnings. The principal remains intact, guaranteeing that the designated recipient benefits year after year. Whether you want to support a local school, library, community center, or other nonprofit, a designated fund ensures your gift has a lasting impact.

OCCF handles the administrative and investment responsibilities, giving donors peace of mind that their fund is professionally managed. Additionally, anyone can contribute to an existing designated fund, amplifying its impact over time.

Designated funds are an excellent option for individuals or families who want to honor a loved one, preserve a legacy, or simply make a difference for a cause they're passionate about. By planning today, you can make a perpetual impact on the organizations you value most, creating a brighter future for generations to come.

Generosity runs deep in Osborne County, and this year, local families have demonstrated their commitment to the community by establishing designated funds through the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF). These endowed funds will create lasting impact by supporting causes close to the families' hearts.

The Brush Family Foundation Fund

The Doug and Kay Brush family have a long history of supporting projects in Downs, and their legacy of giving continues with the establishment of the Brush Family Foundation Fund. This endowed fund will provide competitive grants for projects that benefit Downs and the greater Downs community, with priority given to initiatives directly impacting Downs. Beginning in March 2025, grants from the fund will enhance community life and address local needs, ensuring a brighter future for the area. "We are excited about the future opportunities this fund can bring to Downs, not just in the near future, but for perpetuity," said Heidi (Brush) Doane.

The Sims Family Fund

Joe and Kathy Sims have created the Sims Family Fund to support a range of community projects in Osborne. This fund will provide grants for maintaining and improving the Sanders Ball Complex, enhancing the city's Christmas

decorations and lighting, and supporting improvements to the Sims Event Center. The Sims's dedication to Osborne is evident in their efforts to establish this fund, which ensures continued investment in the community. Grants from the Sims Family Fund will be awarded through a competitive process, open to local nonprofits and public entities.

"I love working with local families to establish funds that will benefit our communities and county for years to come. This is how we sustain Osborne County."

MINDY MILLER
OCCF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Legacy of Generosity

The establishment of these funds reflects the power of local philanthropy and the difference families can make in their communities. OCCF is honored to partner with the Brush, Sims, and Remus families to help them achieve their charitable goals. These designated funds ensure that their generosity will continue to make a meaningful impact for years to come.

To learn more about creating a fund or contributing to an existing one, visit www.osborneccf.org.

Totten Fund to benefit USD 392 and USD 107 Rock Hills

The **Totten Family Memorial Fund**, established by Bonnie Totten West, a USD 392 Class of 1960 graduate, honors her mother's lifelong dedication to education. Lola Totten, an inspiring educator, taught at Mankato High School (now Rock Hills) from 1943-1946 and Osborne High School from 1957 until her retirement in 1973. Her passion for teaching and her commitment to fostering academic excellence left an enduring impact on her students and community.



LOLA TOTTON, EDUCATOR

This endowed fund, created through the Osborne County Community Foundation, continues Lola's legacy by supporting students. The fund will serve as a valuable resource for the math, science, and music departments within USD 392 Osborne and USD 107 Rock Hills. Beyond classroom learning, the fund will also support extracurricular activities related to these disciplines, ensuring that students have opportunities for hands-on learning and enrichment in academics and the arts.

The Totten Family Memorial Fund is a lasting tribute to a remarkable educator and family, reflecting their shared values of learning and service to the community. Contributions to the fund are welcome, enabling others to join in sustaining this impactful legacy. Grants will be available beginning in March 2025.

Alton's Centennial Garden a community effort

The future is bright for a community project dating back generations

In March 2021, the revitalization of Alton's Centennial Garden began as a project through Alton PRIDE. The effort was supported by the generosity of Solomon Ridge Farms as the primary donor and a contribution from the Sarver Charitable Trust, along with community members who purchased the large juniper trees.

Ginger and Doug Howell led the efforts to tear out the old landscaping and install new greenery, transforming the space into a refreshed and inviting garden for the community. Community volunteers played an essential role, helping to plant, weed, and maintain the garden to ensure its ongoing success.

Garden's roots run deep

The origins of Centennial Garden stretch back decades when it was created prior to the 1970 Bull City Centennial. It featured flowers that were planted and tended by Violet Holtlander, Maryellen Boland, Leola Clausen, Nadine King, Sylvia Tyler, and others. Later on, Alsa Hartzler became the flower garden's caretaker until her death in 2006.

These women, with their green thumbs, hand-watered and planted annuals from seed each year, creating a flourishing centerpiece for Alton. Their legacy

inspired the recent revitalization and continues to guide the community's vision for the future.

New life for garden project

After the initial garden transformation was completed community volunteers have donated time and funds to maintain the project. Seeing the need for a sustainable stream of income for this project, Mike and Lori Adams established the Welch Family Memorial Fund through the Osborne County Community Foundation this year.

The new fund honors Lori's mother, Marilyn Welch, and provides a sustainable, annual stream of income to the City of Alton for maintaining and enhancing Centennial Garden. This ensures that supplies like annuals, bulbs, and mulch can be purchased every year without financial strain.

Community members and supporters can help grow the fund, ensuring its sustainability and enabling future improvements. Expanded landscaping, pathways,

benches, and even a professional sprinkler system could become a reality as the fund grows. This flexibility ensures that Centennial Garden will not only be maintained, but can also evolve to meet the community's vision, serving as a vibrant and cherished space for generations to come.

"I am excited to see Alton have a way to maintain and develop the Centennial Garden. This is a wonderful place that should be a source of pride."

GINGER HOWELL
OCCF CHAIR AND VOLUNTEER (ALTON)



Organizations look to the future of Osborne County communities

In 2024, several local organizations partnered with the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) to establish new funds, showcasing their dedication to planning for the future and sustaining their missions. These efforts reflect a shared vision for creating lasting impact and ensuring long-term resilience within our communities.

The **Osborne Public Library** established an organizational fund to provide a steady source of income, ensuring the library continues to serve as a cornerstone for education and community engagement. This fund offers a way for supporters to contribute through memorial donations and estate gifts, fostering a legacy of learning and access to resources for years to come.

“This fund will help safeguard the library’s role as a vital community resource regardless of fluctuating budgets.”

KAREN WALLACE
OSBORNE PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The **Downs Community Connection** took an ambitious step forward by creating a fund to address local needs and strengthen the community. To ensure their fund met the minimum to be endowed, they initiated a successful “Believe in Downs capital campaign, rallying community support and demonstrating the power of collective effort. This fund positions Downs for growth and sustained development.

Establishing the Downs Community Connection Fund is just the beginning of a long-term vision for the organization. With the initial goal of creating an endowed fund achieved, the group is now focused on growing the fund to expand its impact. Continued fundraising efforts and community support will allow the fund to provide greater resources for local projects and initiatives, ensuring that Downs remains a vibrant and thriving community

for years to come. By investing in the fund’s growth, the Downs Community Connection is building a legacy of sustainability and opportunity for future generations.

“Through our capital campaign, we saw the incredible power of our community coming together to invest in our shared future,” said Linda Miller, a representative of the Downs Community Connection. “This fund ensures that we can continue to support meaningful projects and initiatives in Downs for generations to come.”

Alton’s **Bull City Community Foundation** also looked ahead by creating a fund aimed at revitalizing and sustaining the town’s future. Focused on projects such as housing initiatives and public spaces, this fund highlights how local organizations can work with OCCF to build a thriving future for their communities.

These organizations serve as inspiring examples of how planning with OCCF can empower missions and provide lasting benefits. By establishing endowed funds, they are not only addressing today’s needs but also laying a foundation for a vibrant and prosperous future.

Downs Community Connection (DCC) has made great strides in utilizing grants from the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) to kickstart new and impactful projects. For example, DCC utilized a grant to make repairs and enhancements to the gazebo in downtown Downs (see photo below).

Through these grants, DCC has been able to address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for long-term growth and development within the community. By tapping into the resources provided by OCCF, DCC has built a foundation for sustainable progress, helping to bring their vision for the future to life.

In addition to the successful projects funded by OCCF grants, DCC is taking a significant step toward ensuring the sustainability of their efforts by establishing their own organizational fund with OCCF. This endowed fund will provide a steady stream of income, helping to sustain ongoing initiatives and support future projects.

ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDS

Organizational funds are a powerful way for non-profits, schools, and community organizations to secure financial stability and long-term growth. By partnering with the Osborne County Community Foundation, organizations can establish endowed funds that generate a steady stream of income to support their mission year after year. The principal of the fund remains intact, ensuring that the organization’s legacy endures while the interest is used for current needs and future projects.

These funds provide a reliable source of financial support for operational expenses, special initiatives, or program growth. They also offer a way for donors to contribute through memorials, estate gifts, and planned giving, providing supporters with the opportunity to leave a lasting impact. Whether you’re looking to secure your organization’s future or expand its reach, an organizational fund with OCCF is a smart investment in sustainability and community advancement.





SCHOLARSHIPS

"The Rothenberger Scholarship has been a huge help in supporting my education at FHSU. It allowed me to focus more on my studies and less on financial stress, giving me the opportunity to pursue my passion for education and work toward my goal of becoming a teacher."

AYDAN DILL
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Students in pursuit of higher education

The Rothenberger High School and College Scholarship Funds continue to play a vital role in supporting students from Osborne County as they pursue their academic and career goals. These scholarships, administered by the Osborne County Community Foundation, provide financial assistance to students demonstrating strong academic commitment and leadership potential.

Aydan Dill, a USD 392 Osborne graduate, was the inaugural recipient of the Rothenberger High School Scholarship in 2023. Aydan began her journey at Fort Hays State University, majoring in education, with aspirations to make a difference in the classroom. Recognizing the ongoing support offered by the scholarship, Aydan successfully reapplied for her second year, demonstrating her commitment to achieving her educational goals.

In 2024, two high school graduates were awarded the Rothenberger Scholarship. **Doak Guttery**, also a USD 392 graduate, is now attending Kansas State University,

where he is pursuing a degree in animal science and nutrition. **Jillian Schaeffer**, another USD 392 graduate, joined Fort Hays State University to major in elementary education, aiming to inspire and educate the next generation of learners.



PHOTO: April Mick, The Portrait Place



PHOTO: Photos by Tori

These scholarships highlight the Rothenberger Fund's commitment to investing in the success of local students and fostering a brighter future for Osborne County. By supporting both new high school graduates and returning college students, the fund ensures that students like Aydan, Doak, and Jillian have the resources they need to thrive in their academic endeavors.

Applications for the 2025 Rothenberger High School Scholarship are open to graduating USD 392 seniors planning to

pursue higher education at Fort Hays State University and Kansas State University in specific fields of study.

WHY START A SCHOLARSHIP FUND WITH OCCF?

Starting a scholarship fund with the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) is a meaningful way to invest in the future of our community while ensuring lasting impact. Scholarship funds provide critical support to students pursuing higher education or specialized training, helping to ease financial burdens and open doors to opportunities.

OCCF scholarship funds are endowed, meaning the principal remains intact, and only the interest earned is granted each year. This ensures the fund's sustainability, creating a legacy that will benefit students for generations without ever depleting the original investment.

By establishing a fund with OCCF, you can tailor the scholarship to reflect your values or honor a loved one, whether by supporting students from a specific school, focusing on particular fields of study, or assisting those with financial need. OCCF handles all administrative responsibilities, including fund management and scholarship selection, ensuring your gift is impactful and enduring.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

In 2024, 35 organizations received funding for projects in Osborne County. Applications were accepted during four grant cycles.

4

GRANT CYCLES

35

GRANTS GIVEN

\$99,641

FUNDS AWARDED

Bull City Community Foundation
Alton Jubilee youth activities

Bull City Community Foundation
New housing foundation

Bull City Community Foundation
Alton park improvements

City of Downs
Life saving support

City of Downs
Personal protection equipment for volunteer fire department

City of Downs
Downs Celebration

City of Osborne
Osborne County Youth Track Club

Downs Arts Council
Kansas Storytelling Festival

Downs Community Garden
2024 programming

Downs Community Connection
A twinkling Christmas

Downs Community Connection
Roadside park safety and beautification

Downs Community Connection
Osborne County Memorial Day Spectacular Livestock Show

Downs United Methodist Church
Community Food Bank

Downs Historical Society
Sod and Stubble tourism signs

Grace Brethern Church
Creating with the creator

Osborne County
Tilden Township cemetery restoration

Natoma Community Library and Art Center
Front window renovation and fascia/soffitt replacement

NCK Outdoors, Inc.
Osborne Shady Bend Trail Improvements - Phase Two

NCK Outdoors, Inc.
Osborne Shooting Sports

New Life Church of Natoma
Stained glass window repair

Osborne Community Foundation
Main Street Beautification

Osborne County Memorial Hospital
Freezer/refrigerator for laboratory

Osborne County Memorial Hospital
Pathway to Wellness seating area

Osborne County Memorial Hospital
E3 emergency alert system

Osborne Public Library
Technology resources for community

USD 272 Lakeside
Young Amertowne 2024 program

USD 272 Lakeside
Press box sound system

USD 272 Lakeside
Library improvements

USD 392 Osborne
Cutting into the future with students

USD 392 Osborne
Class of 2024 tree project

USD 392 Osborne
Band instrument enhancement

USD 399 Natoma
Stop trafficking program

USD 399 Natoma
Elementary math aids

USD 399 Natoma
Scientific calculators for upper level math students

USD 399 Natoma
Clay Target Team

Alton lays the foundation for revitalization

Need for affordable housing identified as a top concern for Osborne County

One of the key concerns identified in Osborne County is the need for additional housing. The Bull City Community Foundation is taking a bold step to address the critical need for new housing in Alton with the Alton Housing Initiative. This forward-thinking project focuses on revitalizing the community by creating modern, affordable housing opportunities.

One of the initiative's first major milestones is the construction of a 1226 sq. ft., three bed, two bath, two car garage home on a lot that was cleared during a recent cleanup project. This transformation not only makes use of previously unused land, but also sets the stage for a brighter future in Alton, as well as additional new homes on the lot.

OCCF Grant Supports Foundation Work

In 2024, the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) supported the Alton Housing Initiative by awarding a grant to help fund the concrete foundation for this new home. This essential first step lays a strong physical and symbolic foundation for the project, demonstrating the community's commitment to growth and progress. From there, Nation Builders Ministries began the framing process.

A Vision for Rural Revitalization

Rex Johnston, a member of the Bull City Community Foundation, shared his thoughts on the importance of this initiative: "Revitalizing a small rural town



The new housing project in Alton is nearing completion with work underway inside by Nation Builders Ministries.

like Alton is about more than just building houses—it's about breathing new life into the community and ensuring that future generations have a place to call home. Projects like this give us hope and pride in what our town can achieve when we work together."

The Alton Housing Initiative represents a collaborative effort between local organizations, volunteers, donors, and builders who share a vision for a revitalized Alton. The new home will provide much more more than just shelter—it will serve as a model of what's possible when

community members unite to address pressing needs.

GRANT STORIES

The stories behind the grants awarded in 2024 showcase the dedication and passion of local organizations and individuals who are working to improve the community. These grants not only address immediate needs but also address sustainability and community engagement across various sectors.

After the sale of the new home, the Bull City Community Foundation looks to use the proceeds to underwrite additional housing projects in Alton.

OCCF is proud to play a role in this transformative project, ensuring that Alton continues to grow as a place where people can put down roots and thrive.



FOUNDATION

The foundation was poured for the new home in Alton as part of the Alton Housing Initiative, a project sponsored by the Bull City Community Foundation. This milestone marked a significant step forward in addressing the need for housing in the community and revitalizing small rural towns like Alton.



FRAMING

Nation Builders Ministries, a dedicated local organization in Alton, is leading construction of the new home. Their involvement ensures that this home will be a lasting asset to the community, reflecting the collaborative spirit of those working to enhance Alton and bring new members to the community.



FINISHING

The new house in Alton is quickly taking shape, with visible progress marking an exciting phase of the Alton Housing Initiative. As construction continues, organizers are turning their attention to identifying the next residents who will call this house home and become an integral part of Alton.



OCCF board members Sarah LaRosh (left) and Nadine Sigle (right) presented a grant to NCK Outdoors, Inc. to benefit the Osborne Shooting Sports group. This new group started with a grass-roots effort by local volunteers including Kate Kendig, Rodney Moss, and Katie Lix (left to right).

Volunteers taking aim at youth engagement in Osborne County

The Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) is proud to support NCK Outdoors, Inc. with a grant to help establish the Osborne Shooting Sports group. The grant funds were used to purchase a clay target thrower, an essential piece of equipment for introducing community members to the sport of trap shooting.

"I'm excited to help get this new program started in Osborne. I know there's a lot of interest and can't wait to see what the future brings."

KATIE LIX
ORGANIZER

The Osborne Shooting Sports group aims to promote shooting as a recreational and educational activity, emphasizing safety, skill development, and camaraderie. With OCCF's support, the group is better equipped to provide opportunities for youth to engage in this growing sport, fostering an appreciation for responsible shooting and outdoor traditions.

The grant application was supported by Kate Kendig, a USD 392 senior who contributed to the project during her summer internship. Reflecting on her experience, Kate shared, "This was my first opportunity to learn about the

grant process and to see how it works from start to finish."

Kate's involvement highlights the value of engaging young leaders in community initiatives. Her contributions, alongside the work of NCK Outdoors and OCCF, underscore the collaborative spirit of Osborne County.

The clay target thrower purchased with the OCCF grant will be used for practice sessions, events, and skill-building workshops, helping the Osborne Shooting Sports group grow into a valuable resource for the community.

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM FOR OSBORNE COUNTY?

Do you have a dream for Osborne County that could benefit your community or make a lasting impact? With a clear vision and a thoughtful plan, you can turn that dream into reality by applying for a grant from OCCF.

- Start by identifying a project that addresses a community need, enhances quality of life, or drives positive change.
- Then, develop a detailed plan outlining your goals, the steps needed to achieve them, and the resources required.
- Once your plan is ready, visit www.osborneccf.org to learn about grant opportunities, guidelines, and deadlines.

OCCF is here to help you bring your ideas to life and create a brighter future for Osborne County.

EMPOWERING LOCAL YOUTH

Youth and school-related projects were key beneficiaries of grants from OCCF in 2024. Of the 35 grants awarded, 40% percent benefitted local youth.

4

GRANT CYCLES

14

GRANTS GIVEN

\$33,905

FUNDS AWARDED

OCCF grants empower Natoma students

The Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) continues to invest in the future of Osborne County by supporting education through grants that provide essential tools for classrooms. At USD 399 Natoma-Paradise-Waldo, educators and students alike are seeing the positive impact of these grants, which have enabled the purchase of much-needed learning resources.

Mrs. Schofield, an elementary teacher at USD 399, received a grant from OCCF to enhance her classroom with new math aids. These tools have helped young learners stay engaged and excited about math, making abstract concepts more accessible and interactive.

"It's wonderful to see the enthusiasm these resources bring to the classroom," Mrs. Schofield shared.

Projects like this not only strengthen the learning experience but also help build a brighter future for Osborne County by empowering the next generation of problem solvers.

In the upper grades, math teacher Tyler Masters also secured a grant from OCCF to purchase high-quality graphing calculators for students in grades 7-12. These calculators, a critical resource for advanced math courses, will be kept in the classroom and made available to students who may not have the means to purchase one on their own.

Masters highlighted the significance of this grant: "Students simply cannot achieve the needed education or ACT scores without knowing how to use this calculator and having one available to them."

By providing access to this essential technology, OCCF is leveling the playing field and giving every student the opportunity to succeed in math and beyond.

Grants like these demonstrate the vital role OCCF plays in fostering educational excellence throughout Osborne County.



USD 399 math teacher Tyler Masters secured a grant for high-quality scientific graphing calculators, providing advanced math students with the tools they need to excel in their studies and college-related testing.

By ensuring teachers have the tools they need to engage students and by addressing barriers to learning, the foundation is creating lasting change that will benefit students, families, and the entire community.

Through partnerships with educators like Mrs. Schofield and Mr. Masters, OCCF reaffirms its commitment to empowering schools and equipping students with the resources they need to thrive. Relatively small requests can make a significant impact and together, we are building a stronger foundation for Osborne County's future—one classroom at a time.

Lakeside Jr./Sr. High received a grant from the OCCF to support their junior high students' participation in the Nex-Gen Ameritowne program. This hands-on experience provided students with the opportunity to engage in interactive, real-life scenarios that teach essential skills like personal finance, teamwork, and business operations. The program fosters critical life lessons that help prepare students for the future.

Osborne High School also benefited from OCCF grant support, with funding directed to the Media 2 program. The grant provided video-related technology that enables students to create and edit video projects, enhancing their skills in media production and digital storytelling. This investment helps students gain valuable, real-world experience with tools that align with today's technological and creative demands.

Additional OCCF grants were also awarded to Osborne County schools in Downs, Osborne, and Natoma. A complete list is available on page 11.





Portable defibrillators funded by OCCF are now available at the Downs city office, enhancing emergency preparedness and saving lives in the community. OCCF board members Heather Hancock and Savana LaRosh presented the grant to members of the Downs City Council and city staff.

Community health and wellness vital

Access to quality healthcare and wellness resources is essential for thriving rural communities, where residents often face unique challenges due to geographic isolation and limited resources. In Osborne County, initiatives that promote health and wellness play a vital role in ensuring the safety, well-being, and connectedness of the community. The Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) recognizes these challenges and has taken meaningful steps to address them through targeted grants that support health and wellness.

OCCF continues to make a significant impact on the health and wellness of our communities through strategic grants that address local needs. These grants demonstrate the foundation's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents and fostering a healthier, more connected community.

City of Downs Receives Portable Defibrillators

One recent grant funded the purchase of portable defibrillators for the City of Downs, which will be available for use at the city office and the Downs Municipal Swimming Pool (during the season). These life-saving devices ensure that residents and visitors have access to critical emergency equipment in public spaces. By providing this vital resource, OCCF is helping to improve emergency preparedness and support life-saving interventions within the community.

Pathway to Wellness Bench Enhances Walking Path

In Osborne, OCCF awarded a grant

for a new bench along the Pathway to Wellness shared-use inclusive walking path at Osborne County Memorial Hospital. This addition offers walkers, patients, and hospital visitors a place to rest and enjoy the scenic pathway, encouraging physical activity and contributing to mental well-being. The bench will enhance the functionality and accessibility of this new community resource, promoting health and wellness for people of all ages and abilities.

Refrigerator, Freezer for Osborne County Memorial Hospital Lab

Another grant provided funding for a new refrigerator and freezer for the lab at Osborne County Memorial Hospital. These essential pieces of equipment are critical for safely storing supplies, lab samples, and ensuring accurate testing. Reliable laboratory facilities are a cornerstone of quality healthcare, and this grant reflects OCCF's commitment to supporting healthcare infrastructure in Osborne County.

Together, these initiatives exemplify the impact of OCCF's health and wellness grants in meeting diverse community needs. From life-saving equipment to supportive infrastructure for physical activity and healthcare, OCCF is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of Osborne County residents.

Osborne County Memorial Hospital lab technician Maria Kuhlmann (right) utilizes the new commercial refrigerator on a daily basis. The appliance was essential for the lab when OCMH purchased a new chemistry analyzer. As a result of updating equipment there was a need for more cold storage for supplies.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN OCCF GRANT?

Applying for a grant from the Osborne County Community Foundation (OCCF) is a straightforward process designed to support impactful projects in the community. Eligible applicants, including 501(c)(3) non-profits, public entities, and government entities, can visit www.osborneccf.org to access the grant application.

The website provides detailed guidelines, funding priorities, and application deadlines to ensure your proposal aligns with OCCF's mission. Applicants should be prepared to describe their project, its anticipated impact, and how it addresses community needs.

By partnering with OCCF, you can bring meaningful change to Osborne County and beyond.





February is Match Month

February is a special time for the Osborne County Community Foundation. Each year, our Love Your County Sustainability Campaign offers a unique opportunity to grow the impact of your generosity. Thanks to a matching gift from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, every donation made to OCCF's endowment fund in February will be matched at 200%, multiplying the support for the foundation, local grants, and community initiatives.

Your contributions during Match Month help build a stronger, more vibrant Osborne County. Together, we can ensure that critical needs are met, dreams are realized, and the future is brighter for everyone in our community.

Join us in making a difference each February. **To learn more or donate, visit www.osborneccf.org.**

LOVE YOUR COUNTY
SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN



FOUNDING DONORS

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Poore Farms

2024

DONORS

The Osborne County Community Foundation extends heartfelt gratitude to all donors whose generosity made a difference in 2024. Whether through large gifts or small contributions, your support has empowered our mission to strengthen communities, fund vital projects, and create opportunities that benefit future generations. Thank you for your commitment to making an impact.

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Alton PRIDE

Amanda Burda

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Drew and Kim Cheney

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City of Alton

City of Downs

City of Natoma

City of Osborne

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Rob and Cari Clark

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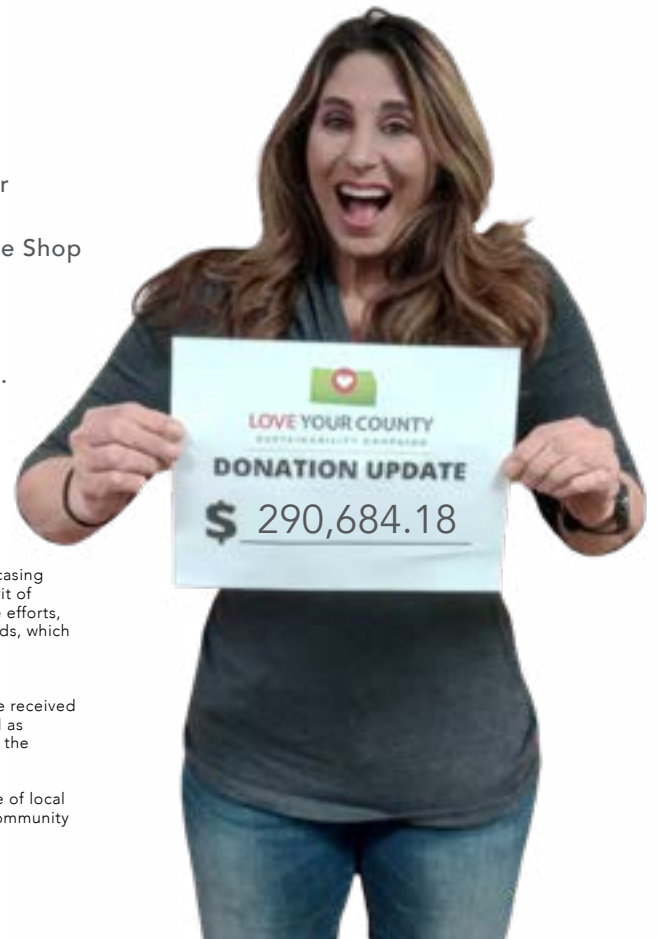
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The 2024 Love Your County Match Month in February was a tremendous success, showcasing the incredible generosity and community spirit of Osborne County residents. Through collective efforts, donors came together to raise significant funds, which were matched to amplify their impact.

Individual and corporate donations totaled \$120,684.18. Matching funds of \$100,000 were received from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, as well as an additional \$70,000 in matching funds from the Patterson Family Foundation.

These contributions will support a wide range of local projects and initiatives, helping to address community needs and create lasting opportunities.



OSBORNE COUNTY
Community Foundation

An Affiliate of Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation