

**Visioneering Wichita  
Newsletter  
January 2006**

**Let your voice be heard!**

**Visioneering Wichita wants your input for its first Racial Diversity, Opportunity and Harmony survey.** The survey measures perceptions of racial diversity issues, including opportunities and harmony in social interaction, jobs, education, healthcare and leadership.

People in the Wichita MSA of Butler, Harvey, Sedgwick and Sumner counties can take the survey online at [www.visioneeringwichita.com](http://www.visioneeringwichita.com). It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

The survey results will provide a benchmark for the Racial Diversity, Opportunity and Harmony Alliance and others in the community to make decisions about future activities and issues. Janet Harrah of the Center for Economic Development and Business Research will monitor the survey to make sure it is representative of the regional community.

For those without access to computers at home or work, the Racial Diversity, Opportunity and Harmony Strategic Alliance has worked with libraries, churches and senior citizen centers to provide additional access and assistance with the online survey.

If you have questions about the survey or would like more information about assistance for those without access to computers, please call Suzie Ahlstrand at 316-268-1135 or e-mail at [sahlstrand@wichitachamber.org](mailto:sahlstrand@wichitachamber.org).

**Thank your mentor month**

“Thank you for hanging out with me.”

“Thank you for always being my friend.”

“Thank you for everything you do for me and with me.”

With these words, mentors know how much an hour a week – many times just a lunch hour – can make in the personal and academic lives of students.

January is Thank Your Mentor Month. Visioneering Wichita’s mentoring strategic alliance is recruiting more mentors and thanking those already working with area children. Visioneering Wichita has collected stories from youth, mentors, business leaders and school personnel.

The Alliance has also developed a color your own Thank Your Mentor e-card, a Thank You Mentor certificate and a Thank You Mentor poster that can be downloaded from [www.visioneeringwichita.com](http://www.visioneeringwichita.com); click on Mentoring Alliance.

Cox Communications has produced a local public service announcement about the benefits of mentoring that is airing on Cox cable stations and City and Wichita Public School television stations.

Mentoring is part of Visioneering Wichita's K-12 Strategic Alliance. It represents a combined and coordinated effort from individual citizens and organizations, including non-profit agencies, churches, school districts and the media. Stories collected are posted on the Visioneering Wichita web site.

In addition to the electronic thank you card, the Visioneering Wichita website makes it easy for people interested in mentoring to research available options. The person can answer a few simple questions and see a list of agencies that meet individual needs.

“In order for our children to be successful, it is essential for every child to be connected to the adults in their lives and the community as a whole,” said Charles Wakefield, Principal at Pleasant Valley Middle School in Wichita. “Mentoring builds connections and provides our children role models who help them build successful lives.”

## **Unified legislative agenda announced**

Air service, technical education and aviation research are the themes of Visioneering Wichita's unified legislative agenda.

This new process of developing a unified legislative agenda for south-central Kansas came out of the Visioneering Wichita planning in 2004. As thousands of citizens provided input to the long-range strategic plan, one of the key action steps was to develop a single slate of issues from the community for implementation by the south-central Kansas legislative delegation.

“The 15,000 people who provided input to the long-range plan were specific and thoughtful on this issue,” said Harvey Sorensen, Chairman of Visioneering Wichita. “They said loud and clear that we need to advance key regional issues in Topeka. We haven't done this before, so we're charting new territory.”

The Unified Legislative Agenda strategic alliance has been meeting since February to put a process in place to develop a unified agenda. The group asked many different organizations, citizens and legislators to participate in the planning process.

“We reached out to everyone we could think of to get them involved in the process,” said Hesston Mayor John Waltner. “The Unified Legislative Agenda strategic alliance held numerous meetings, including in Harvey and Sumner counties to encourage regional participation.”

Organizations submitted proposals to the Self-Help Network of Wichita State University for members of the alliance consideration. Criteria for proposals included:

- Be specific to south central Kansas
- Improve the key benchmarks or outcomes of the Visioneering Wichita plan on Job Growth and Education
- Balance individualism with interdependent regional economic needs

More than 85 regional citizens provided input to the proposals based on the criteria. After careful review and based on the collective input, the following issues are included in the south central Kansas unified legislative agenda:

- State financial support to maintain and expand low cost commercial air service from Mid-Continent Airport
- Continued state investments in aviation research at the National Institute for Aviation Research at Wichita State University
- State support for a 25% expansion in the capacity of nursing programs in existing post-secondary public education institutions in south central Kansas
- Support for a new system and facility for technical education and training in the area through the Sedgwick County Technical Education and Training Authority

## **Visioneering Wichita publishes 2005 progress report**

In 2005, hundreds of people met to work on six different strategic alliances. More than 340 Vision Partners adopted strategies. Find out what they did for our community in the Strategic Alliance “Progress Report” at [www.visioneeringwichita.com](http://www.visioneeringwichita.com) click on Strategic Alliances and select one alliance.

## **Year-end Vision Partner reporting**

Vision Partners that adopted strategies are asked to provide brief descriptions or stories of progress or activity. Vision Partners and their efforts will be included in the annual report distributed at the annual meeting on March 14.

To sign up as a Vision Partner or to provide information about your activities, call Diane Longfellow at 268-1141 or [dlongfellow@wichitachamber.org](mailto:dlongfellow@wichitachamber.org).

## **Visioneering Wichita's first annual meeting March 14**

Mark your calendar for the annual meeting on March 14 at 7 p.m. at the Wichita State University Metro Center. Results from Visioneering Wichita's first year will be highlighted and celebrated. Plans for this year will also be highlighted.