



KANSAS WISE
WOMEN IN STATE EMPLOYMENT

Kansas WISE April Newsletter



Stepping onto a brand-new path is difficult, but not more difficult than remaining in a situation, which is not nurturing to the whole woman.

— *Maya Angelou* —

AZ QUOTES

Throughout the month of March, the Kansas WISE steering committee hosted several events where the theme of embarking on a new path was prevalent throughout our discussions. Whether it's the possibility of a new job or the change in

a relationship, striking out on a new path can be just as challenging as it is rewarding. As you weigh your decision, surround yourself with supportive individuals who can help you on your path.

Need professional support? Through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), benefits-eligible employees and their dependents can receive confidential assistance, including short-term counseling (up to eight sessions per member, per issue, per year). Find more information [here](#).



Earth Day: April 22

Saturday, April 22, will be the 53rd anniversary of Earth Day. Officially recognized in 1970, Earth Day supports environmental protection. Over the years, it has influenced [policies in the United States](#), including the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. It has also had a global impact with the United Nations signing the Paris Climate Agreement on Earth Day in 2016.



Rachel Carson

Women past and present have worked tirelessly to safeguard the planet and its inhabitants. [Rachel Carson](#) was one such woman. Beginning her career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, her work detailing the dangers of chemical pesticides resulted in a ban on DDT and other pesticides. Rachel's 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, is considered a catalyst to the global environmental movement. Despite criticism from chemical companies who worked hard to discredit her, she was awarded medals from the National Audubon Society and the American Geographical Society. In 1980, sixteen years after her death, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

There's no shortage of female environmentalists that we could celebrate, but start with these five women:

- [Rachel Carson](#), author, scientist and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, her work was a catalyst for the environmental movement.
- [Professor Wangari Maathai](#), founder of the Green Belt Movement and the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.
- [Isatou Ceesay](#), Creator of the Njau Recycling and Income Generation Group in Gambia, which turns plastic bag waste into purses and creates revenue streams for local women.
- [Sylvia Earle](#), marine biologist and deep diving pioneer, she became the first female chief scientist of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- [Winona LaDuke](#), Co-founder of Honor the Earth, a Native American-led organization raising awareness and increasing financial resources for the Native environmental movement.



March Reflections

During the Kansas WISE conversation starters in March, a small group of women gathered to discuss employee retention. Regardless of the branch of government, agency, or position, it is clear the State has a lot of important and meaningful benefits to offer its employees. Each position is different but there's something for everyone within State employment depending on what specifics an individual is looking for in a job. The conversation grew into a great series of ideas and questions: Should we consider employee retention in a broader context and not just at a particular agency? Are we doing enough to make sure those already recruited into employment have awareness of access to opportunities that might increase retention? Are we encouraging capable, skilled individuals to advance or move into a new channel even if it means leaving our division or agency? Are supervisors creating an environment for open communication and listening when employees express a need or request change that could keep them in their job or at the State? Over the lunch hour, it was excellent food for thought! But perhaps the best part of the conversation was listening to some strong, positive testimonials from women who have worked for the State for 2, 7, 10, even 20+ years.



Celebrating Our Achievements

On Wednesday, March 8, Kansas WISE hosted **Kansas WISE 2023: Resilience**. The day was celebrated with a panel conversation comprised of four inspiring women, each sharing their own personal stories of resilience.

Thank you to Executive Director Stacey Knoell, the Honorable Rachel Pickering, Dr. Carla Whiteside-Hicks, and Assistant Revisor Eileen Ma for participating in the panel. You reminded us that we all have the ability to be resilient, and the path to resilience is unique to each of us.



If you missed the event or would like to listen again, the panel discussion can be viewed online at [Kansas WISE Resilience](#).



On Thursday, March 30, Governor Kelly hosted a Women's History Month celebration recognizing three women who have made an impact on Kansas communities. Honorees included Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace, former Secretary of Administration; Julie Lorenz, former Secretary of Transportation; and Dr. Tiffany Anderson, Superintendent of Topeka

Public Schools. All have made history through national recognition. Read more about the event and their achievements [here](#).

A special shout out to Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace for her idea to create a group dedicated to lifting up women in state employment. With her support, Kansas WISE has grown and flourished.



Have you, your colleagues, or your department been nominated for or won an award? Do you want your colleagues to be recognized for their achievements? We want to hear about it! **Please submit awards or achievements to KansasWISE@ks.gov for inclusion.**



Kansas WISE

How to Use Earth, Pets, and Humor to Manage Stress

Join the Personal Development, Self-Care, and Wellness Subcommittee for a conversation on managing stress.

- **Date:** Tuesday, April 11
- **Time:** 2:30pm-3:30pm
- **Location:** Zoom
- **Registration:** Free and open to State of Kansas employees. [Register here.](#)

We understand people are busy and schedules may prevent you from attending Kansas WISE events. Other information and opportunities are forthcoming so stay tuned!

Kansas WISE Happenings



Kansas WISE Mentoring Pilot Program

Mentee Applicants

Mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on people professionally and personally. Mentees can expand their knowledge and skills, gain valuable advice, and build their professional networks.

The Mentorship Program offers the following types of activities:

- 1:1 mentorship: Traditional model of mentoring where one mentor is paired with one mentee.
- Group mentoring: One mentor meets with a group of mentees (5-7)
- Peer mentoring: Mentorship between employees in an organization to foster knowledge and skills transfer.
- Bring your own mentor: Mentee identifies a mentor and asks them to participate in the program.

Start your mentee journey today by applying [here](#).

Mentee spaces are determined by the number of volunteer mentors.



Events and Resources

Events last one hour unless otherwise stated. Times listed are central time.

Smithsonian Tour - Voice and Votes: Democracy in America: The Smithsonian is coming to Kansas! The exhibit explores the history of American democracy and will tour six Kansas communities through January 7, 2024. More information [here](#). See full schedule below.

- Boot Hill Museum, Dodge City - March 25-May 7, 2023
- Mid-America All-Indian Museum, Wichita - May 13-June 25, 2023
- Nicodemus National Historic Site, Nicodemus - July 1-August 13, 2023
- Franklin County Historical Society, Ottawa - August 19-October 1, 2023
- Winfield Public Library, Winfield - October 7-November 19, 2023
- Republic County Historical Society, Belleville - November 25, 2023-January 7, 2024

National Women's History Month Presents! Women's Reflections on the Pandemic: Join us for a reflection on women's experiences during three years of the Covid-19 pandemic with writer and professor Alexandra Délano and filmmaker Daniela Alatorre. We will explore their short film, *Fragments*, and a book of poetry, *Brotes*, and they will reflect on the pandemic from the perspective of two confined women in different parts of the world. - Virtual - April 20, 5:00pm - More information [here](#).

The Heritage Center Hosts: "Celebrating Women of Leavenworth County, Kansas Past, Present, Future": Join the Leavenworth County Historical Society at the Heritage Center in historic downtown Leavenworth for historical presentations of women to know, recognition of present businesswomen and inspirational women leaders along with future up and coming young women of Leavenworth. - Leavenworth, KS - April 21, 6:30-9:00pm - More information [here](#).

Party for the Planet: An Earth Day Celebration: It's an Earth Day celebration surrounding the conservation efforts of Sunset Zoo and the Manhattan community. Bring the family for interactive booths, entertainment, and more! - Manhattan, KS - April 22, 9:30am-4:30pm - More information [here](#).

Greater Topeka Partnership: Unveiling of Teresa Cuevas Statue: Teresa Cuevas, founder of Mariachi Estrella, will be commemorated with the unveiling of a life-size bronze statue at Topeka's Evergy Plaza. Mariachi Estrella was one of the first all-female Mariachi groups in the United States. The event includes an official ceremony to unveil and dedicate the statue, music and entertainment, and food and beverages for sale. - Topeka, KS - May 5, 6:00-8:30pm - More information [here](#).

Did You Know?

Did you know – KPERS 457 is hosting a great series of free financial webinars this month, including “Retirement Planning for Women” on Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 10:30am. Click here to register: [Retirement Planning for Women](#).

State employees can subscribe using their state email address [here](#).

Anyone wishing to subscribe using their personal email address should email KansasWISE@ks.gov with their agency name.

Please email us with any questions and feedback.

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