

News Column for Use Week of 6/15/2020  
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River Valley District  
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## **A Season of Change**

Who would have dreamed what 2020 would bring? As I enter the final weeks of my career with K-State Research and Extension, I am choosing to write about the three “Rs.” For me that is Reflection, Recognition, and Retirement.

Reflection provides an opportunity to look back. At this time, I am reminded of the importance of forgiving oneself of failures and shortcomings. This is one of my most challenging things to do, but I must remember the past cannot be changed and try to remember to not repeat those same mistakes. I was raised to apologize to those I had offended and ask forgiveness for my sins. For those I may have offended along the way in this job, please know it was never my intention and, as I was raised, I ask for your forgiveness. As you, our taxpayer clientele, go through life, remember to reflect and forgive yourself!

Reflection also provides the opportunity to take pride in a job well done. It has been with great pride that I have served in my various roles related to K-State Research and Extension. I have always been a K-Stater! Dad always told the story of me wanting to skip going to grade school and simply go straight to K-State with James, my oldest brother! It has been with great pleasure that I have served the role of Agriculture Agent with 4-H Responsibilities, 4-H Project Leader, District Board member, and finally District Extension Director. It is with great pride to see the Lease Survey I helped write in the 1990s still in use across Kansas, some 25 years later. I smile each time I drive by a windbreak I designed. I am thrilled to work side-by-side with an Extension Agent who grew up as one of my 4-H members and who I also inspired to go into Extension work. It is so much fun to work with a 4-H member whose parents were my 4-Hers as well. Finally, I am proud when my kids pull out a 4-H camp, fair, or demonstration memory and remind me of how those skills they learned still serve them today. As you, our taxpayer clientele, go through life, remember to reflect and take pride in those you have helped along the way.

I must also recognize those around me. I have worked for some awesome board members and beside some of the best volunteers who have given selflessly of their time. A shout out to Marilyn Martin who, come July 1, will have served for 15 years as our River Valley District Board Treasurer. She is just one example of thousands of volunteers. We have built a team of the best co-workers and educators in the River Valley District. We are a family who has worked, laughed, and cried together! Do not forget to call your River Valley Extension office. At K-State Research and Extension we have answers to almost every question or issue you encounter in life. My favorite slogan we ever had was “Knowledge for Life!”

Retirement has been the buzzword in the District this year. Karen Langvardt started us off, and I will give her the “kindest soul” award! If you know Karen, you know what I mean. Denise Swenson followed. To Denise, I provide the “best laugh” award. One cannot be around Denise for long without a good laugh about something! Deanna Turner retired at the end of May. To Deanna, I give the “Dedicated Servant” award! Over 46 years in Extension! Wow! The lives she has touched and the kindness and dedication to our senior community cannot be matched. We estimate since 2005, Deanna and her team of volunteers, have saved our seniors over \$5.6 million with their Medicare Part D enrollments. Amazing Deanna! Thank you for your work!

I round out our retirements in 2020. Well, so far anyway! I thank you all for this great honor and for the trust you placed in me to lead our District. I think my staff knows the value I place on family and that drives my decision to retire earlier than I ever dreamed or planned. I hope I have served you all with much kindness and both great passion and compassion. I ask you all to keep me in your thoughts and prayers and I promise to do the same for you! I wish you all the best and remind you to work hard, but also take care of yourself and the family around you!

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