



KLA: “A Review in Direction”

By

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**Kosciusko Leadership Academy
White Paper
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Project Summary/Scope

The Kosciusko Leadership Academy was developed to cultivate future leaders in the communities of Kosciusko County in all facets of the communities. This includes agricultural, manufacturing, retail, and service industries along with city, county and state governments.

To determine if the goals and mission the founding members of the Kosciusko Leadership Academy put in place 26 years ago are still valid today we decided to survey the last seven KLA alumni classes from the year 2000-2006. We sent out 142 surveys and 40 surveys were returned for a 28.17% return. KLA is a very valuable program to developing future leaders as is evident from the results of the survey. To sustain KLA into the future some changes are necessary based on these same survey results.

The conclusions and recommendations we have drawn from our survey are based solely on the data provided. This paper is to be used as a tool to make appropriate changes ensuring that KLA will be available to other future leaders of Kosciusko County. Sustaining growth of the community organizations, volunteers, and economies of Kosciusko County through the 21st century can only be accomplished through knowledgeable, competent leadership.



February 27, 2007

«First_name» «last_Name»

«Address»

«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «First_name»,

As participants of Kosciusko Leadership Academy, (KLA), we are completing a White Paper Project titled, "KLA: A Review in Direction," which as you may recall is a requirement for course completion. We represent Cardinal Center and Maple Leaf Farms.

The purpose of this survey is to determine if KLA is meeting its mission to develop informed and innovative leaders; and to ensure that KLA will continue to bring excellent training services to the future leaders of Kosciusko County.

The survey has been sent to KLA Alumni from the class of 2000 through the class of 2006. We realize that your time is valuable, but we are asking that you take a few minutes to fill out this survey, so that the future participants of KLA will receive exceptional training, just as you did. Please complete the enclosed survey and return it in the enclosed pre-postage paid envelope.

Sincerely,

Jay B. Tate
Cardinal Center, Inc./CCI General Manager

Joel Harstine
Maple Leaf Farms/Senior Network Engineer

**KLA: "A Review in Direction"
Survey**

Please write additional comments on the back of the sheet on the lines provided.

- Yes No 1. Do you feel the four below goals of KLA listed below still apply today?
- **Educate** you through practical sessions with recognized leaders examining the issues that face our community.
 - **Enrich** you by building a network of peer and community leaders.
 - **Inspire** you to see possibilities of our thriving community.
 - **Challenge** you to take action, get involved and make a difference in our community.
- Yes No 2. Did you have a positive experience personally and/or professionally while participating in KLA?
- Yes No 3. Do you feel KLA helped prepare you for leadership roles in the workplace, community, and home?
- Yes No 4. Do you believe you are more involved in the workplace, community and home because of your KLA experience?
- Yes No 5. Did you feel the KLA participants in your class were representative of tomorrow's leaders?
- Yes No 6. Did you feel that the curriculum of your KLA class increased your knowledge of the community government, and businesses in Kosciusko County?
- Yes No 7. Did you feel the KLA participants in your class were representative of the businesses in Kosciusko County?

8. How would you characterize the impact KLA has had on you personally and professionally? Please Explain:

9. What could be added to the KLA curriculum that would have benefited you that was not offered during your year? Please Explain:

10. What would you have changed, added, or deleted from the KLA curriculum to improve its leadership value? Please Explain:

11. Would you recommend that your business/organization sponsor a future KLA participant?

Question #1

Do you feel the four below goals of KLA listed below still apply today?

- **Educate** you through practical sessions with recognized leaders examining the issues that face our community.
- **Enrich** you by building a network of peer and community leaders.
- **Inspire** you to see possibilities of our thriving community.
- **Challenge** you to take action, get involved and make a difference in our community.

Results: 36 yes

4 no

Comments:

- Inspire: I think there should be more discussion on all volunteer and leadership opportunities within the county both professional and personal.
- Challenge: I feel the challenge should be ongoing. Call on KLA graduates, past and present, for needs in the community
- Recommend one source in the county that holds an exhaustive list of all leadership and volunteer opportunities; should be on many levels-leadership, personal opportunities, and family opportunities-no matter how big or small.
- Look at other meeting sites outside of Warsaw-other major employers perhaps-don't go to the same site twice (Police Station, Bowen Center)
- Involve KDI/Chamber of Commerce and bankers to talk more in depth about economic development in the county.
- Overall the information provided in the session was valuable, however, many of the sessions were drawn out considerably; the same amount of information could have been given in much less time.
- The selection of a white paper topic was not given enough attention; specific ideas should be given, a process for carrying out the project should be emphasized and research methodology should be discussed. In general, the substance of the white paper could be greatly increased.
- I have always been involved in some level of community service so this wasn't new to me to be involved in comparable activity.

- Most projects were generated from individual research in the community or through team members involvement at work not through established needs; more focus could be brought to areas requiring support if the were presented.
- It was a great experience-our group was awarded the \$5,000 grant. The white paper project really challenged me. I was very proud of our work. It showed me that I am a leader and a doer.

Question #2

Did you have a positive experience personally and/or professionally while participating in KLA?

Results: 39 yes

1 no

Comments: None

Question #3

Do you feel KLA helped prepare you for leadership roles in the workplace, community, and home?

Results: 30 yes

10 no

Comments: None

Question #4

Do you believe you are more involved in the workplace, community and home because of your KLA experience?

Results: 22 yes

18 no

Comments: None

Question #5

Did you feel the KLA participants in your class were representative of tomorrow's leaders?

Results: 33 yes

7 no

Comments:

- Some participants simply felt the class was a chore-partly due to their employer's suggestions to be included. That's too bad...what a great opportunity.

Question #6

Did you feel that the curriculum of your KLA class increased your knowledge of the community, government, and business in Kosciusko County?

Results: 39 yes

1 no

Comments: None

Question #7

Did you feel the KLA participants in your class were representative of the businesses in Kosciusko County?

Results: 38 yes

2 no

Comments: None

Question #8

How would you characterize the impact KLA has had on you personally and professionally? Please explain:

Comments:

- For myself, I was honored that Mr. & Mrs. Bertsch selected me to attend KLA. This is definitely an asset to our business.
- Very good experience...met many new people.
- Ours is a wonderfully diverse community. This class helped open my eyes to its industry and people.
- It was a better introduction to the highlights of Kosciusko County rather than so much "leadership"
- Gave me a better understanding on how our community is governed and why...also an understanding of needs in our county
- I have expanded my connections in the community and have a better knowledge of my community.
- Networking
- More knowledge of the county
- Some knowledge of community was good
- Professionally – meeting other like minded people in a different setting – good thing
- KLA made me more aware of the community and county in which I live and challenged me to get more involved to make a difference and have an impact.
- Clearer understanding of our local economy and government
- KLA gave me the overall knowledge of our county to know who to contact as references in my profession
- KLA was a great education – not only how and why of government and business functioning, but also meeting and interfacing with numerous community leaders and local "challenges"
- The knowledge of our community is much stronger because of KLA. I know it is mainly agriculture, then orthopedic and finally health care that supports Kosciusko County
- Created a more real understanding of community involvement throughout businesses and individuals
- Although I had lived in this community all my adult life, KLA made me more aware of many facets of business, government, and the community
- It had a very positive and lasting effect
- Promoted personal and professional growth through education and communication with multiple professional, personal, and political viewpoints
- Best avenue for me as a newcomer to meet people and learn about the region, white paper got me involved with a smaller group plus outside organizations and causes us to have an impact on others
- I gained mostly from the information provided

- I have lived in Kosciusko County for most of my life but didn't realize the uniqueness of the county. It helped me realize the importance of working hard to keep our businesses local.
 - KLA helped me see the diverse nature of business in our county. It also helped to build relationships with new folks that have given me resources when I have questions on situations, procedural practice, etc.
 - Dr. Grill's presentation of Myers-Briggs has had a lasting impact on my relationship dynamics
 - KLA gave me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the community and form lasting business and personal contacts
 - Strong contacts and relationships were formed; learned a lot about our community as I was new to town; good networking
 - I am more aware of the community: businesses, focus, direction, schools, community efforts
 - Gave me a better understanding of local industry and government
 - Introduced me to the Myers-Briggs personality test which I've used a lot; introduced me to many different aspects of the area and economy that I was unaware of
 - I became involved in the KYLA and have served on the board for two years
-
- To have a better understanding, appreciation and respect of the workings of Kosciusko County – businesses, industry, and government
 - It really brought up my self-esteem and motivated me to become involved in the community; the networking possibilities helped me professionally
 - Helped me become more aware of the businesses in Kosciusko County which in turn has allowed me to...(didn't finish response)
 - Being new to my position and the community, KLA had a major impact on helping me to become acclimated in the community

Question #9

What could be added to the KLA curriculum that would have benefited you that was not offered during your year? Please explain:

Comments:

- More info on business in our county...More specifics on what our county has to offer...more tours of businesses that hold meetings
- Nothing – keep up the good work
- As opposed to the emphasis being on companies – who are the leaders and what, do they have to share?
- A better idea of where volunteers are needed and how to volunteer
- Educational offerings after high school
- Networking class or curriculum
- KLA is only an intro to the community
- Fresh blood – new moderator
- As I recall the curriculum was very good and balanced. I'm not sure what else could have been added.
- Hands-on participation of some kind during the year
- More emphasis on local industry and how Warsaw plans for the future worker
- Specific training on skill sets, techniques and self-direction on how to be a profound leader. Recommend speakers that will tell their stories and share their mistakes as well as successes.
- More not-for-profit visits so KLA members can see all of the volunteer opportunities there are.
- Actually tour facility where meetings are held – not just their conference room.
- Perhaps a bit more on the history of Kosciusko County, although many presentations did cover their business/activities from a historical perspective.
- I would have enjoyed spending more time on the subject of personality types/communication styles and techniques.
- A cultural session – what are the cultural activities going on in the county – i.e. Wagon Wheel, the arts, Grace College public events, etc.
- Training toward involvement, rather than sessions which are aimed mostly at providing information.
- A class on education in Kosciusko County to recognize or learn about school systems and their accomplishments/uniqueness, and a short focus on volunteer programs or charity functions that individuals or businesses can get involved in.
- Perhaps more info. on how the state budget process works and how that relates to the local operations – city, county, school, etc.
- More focus on small businesses

- More information on areas that would require attention – most info given did not establish need in the county
- A tour of an orthopedic manufacturing facility; this would be very beneficial since orthopedics are such a large part of the economy here
- It would have been beneficial if KLA had “forced” some get acquainted activities at the beginning to allow individuals to become familiar with each other, soon rather than later
- The aspect of volunteerism and the non-profit sector; actual ways to volunteer besides just as board members
- More plant visits to see the actual manufacturing and diversity within Kosciusko County
- Tours of the places we had class

Question #10

What would you have changed, added, or deleted from the KLA curriculum to improve its leadership value? Please explain:

Comments:

- Don't think I would change anything
- Decrease Myers-Briggs emphasis; most individuals are well aware of this previous to KLA; more class participation and less lecture
- Who are the leaders of local companies and what do they have to share
- Add KLA graduates to speak to their leadership roles in the community
- Networking class or curriculum
- A variety of instructors not just one lead instructor; the white paper added very little to the experience; public school related projects
- Less Grace College influence
- I can't think of anything offhand that I would have changed. It was a very positive experience and well worth the time.
- Need new blood – new leader
- More encouragement to volunteer at one of the needy organizations
- I would add a continuous contact program following graduation. It seems after the program, everything stops. I would be more involved now if I knew what was going on.
- No recommendations
- Add: how to be a good board member – what is expected? An outcome of KLA is to grow new board members for organizations – therefore I believe some general “board training” could be good. Add: possibly involving the Warsaw Community Library in some way – a great community resource
- Practical mentorship towards community involvement; the white paper projects could be used more for this, if more direction was given on the selection of topics and the process of carrying out the project
- I am in agriculture and feel that the AG segment could be better. KLA needs a focus on production Ag in Kos. County and its importance. Profiling CTB and Creighton's is fine but they don't even scratch the surface. When these businesses present they are selling and profiling themselves, however, I think you should work in some businesses pertaining to crop production. I don't think people realize how Kos. County is a leader in that area.
- Let Dr. Grill teach more than just moderate! He has so much to offer.
- Do not recall any course deletions – good course structure: could add more on “hard to get involved” with contact list
- More focus on communication and its importance to business

- The “mixer” at Mosaique didn’t seem very value-added
- Steve Grill and guest speakers did a great job delivering their message – their wide spectrum of topics covered many topics
- I would like to have not had to focus on a white paper project but besides stressing me out it really pushed me to work harder and expand my horizons
- More emphasis on the orthopedic industry and related companies that are supported by the orthopedic industry
- I realize the time is set for a reason but during the harsh winter months, an hour later would’ve been better. During one of our classes, we met at a nice small church in Winona Lake...I have a disease that causes me to use the restroom frequently and there were no restrooms in the church. I felt very sick by the time the class was over. If we were informed prior to that class, I could’ve been better prepared.

Question #11

Would you recommend that your business/organization sponsor a future KLA participant?

Thirty-one "yes" responses

Comments:

- Most definitely! I believe that employees that participate in KLA also have a positive impact on other employees and the organization as a whole.
- It's a great opportunity to learn more about Warsaw and make contacts in the community.
- It's a superb vehicle to get people involved in the community.
- Primarily for people who are new to the area
- We strongly support KLA through the employees we have sent.

Four "no" responses

Comments:

- We would continue to support the program but I think the curriculum needs some freshening. Don't be so opposed to change!! Continue to challenge the invitation/ mailing list to uncover new businesses to get involved. I think part of the "stagnant potential" is the same companies their new people to "get to know" the county was as much the impression I have of KLA as opposed to creating or finding tomorrow's leaders. I enjoyed learning more about Winona, Ag, Orthopedics, etc. but challenge the curriculum to try new things. Some might be great changes and some might be complete failures and that is how things grow and stay fresh.
- Business not doing well – layoffs
- I would like to but I work for a non-profit and wouldn't be able to financially sponsor ad KLA participant. I would, however, highly recommend it to others.

Six did not respond to the question

Overall Conclusions

Based upon the results from the surveys we received back, with the exception of perhaps one area, we feel that overall KLA is meeting the goals listed in the mission statement. The first three goals of educating, enrichment, and inspire are being fulfilled. Most individuals seemed to have a very positive KLA experience saying that their eyes have been opened to the needs and strengths of their community. The broad depth of insight and knowledge given through this program is unlike any other in the community. The value of KLA to the participants, businesses and the community in general is that it provides a connection with the participants and their community through greater understanding of what's available in Kosciusko County. One participant summed up their experience by saying, "KLA was a great education - not only how and why the government and businesses function, but also through meeting and interfacing with numerous community leaders and their challenges".

With that being said, however, the last goal, "challenge you to take action, get involved and make a difference in our community", was the one area that responders felt needed improvement. Based on the responses, it appears that there is a lack of connection with past alumni both during and after the class is completed. KLA participant's desire more continued interaction with the program once they finished the class. We feel that the alumni could be a valuable asset to participating individuals by sharing their experiences both with KLA and in relation to their profession and/or subsequent involvement in the community. One idea to improve this area is to invite specific KLA alumni back to interact with participants. This connects the current class with past alumni and allows participants to network, gain ideas, and see KLA success stories. Another suggestion is to invite one alumni to speak briefly at the beginning of each session to share his/her experience with KLA and community involvement or have them work as a mentor on the white paper project. Secondly, although we feel that KLA does do a great job of developing a passion and understanding of various facets of the community, it does not spend enough time educating participants about the numerous volunteer/service needs in the community. Eighteen out of forty respondents did not believe that they have become more involved in the workplace, community or home because of their KLA experience. So we wondered how KLA can improve, to better challenge these participants or provide an avenue for them to get connected and/or volunteer in the community? This gap could be narrowed by providing a session that specifically showcases volunteer needs in the community via a fair day session. This type of session would allow participants to easily see the volunteer needs in the community and perhaps even give them the opportunity to get connected with a particular organization of their choosing. In addition, several respondents expressed a desire to get involved with being on a board but shared that they weren't sure how to go about this or what were the expectations of being on such an organization. Why not devote some class time to having community board members share their experiences in this particular community involvement/leadership? This is also a way of possibly incorporating alumni experiences as well showing that a majority of community leaders on boards are not high profile people but just those with a passion to improve their community and the people around them.

As KLA completes its 26th year, the core values and vision remains clear and unchanged. However, as our community grows and changes according to new trends and cultures, it is important for KLA to adapt to those changes by finding new ways to connect people with their community. Not only by educating them about their community, but also showing them ways to specifically get involved and use their newfound leadership skills. KLA provides Kosciusko County with a pool of community leaders excited about the community they live, work and play in. It is important to take this excitement one step further by directing or at least providing opportunities for participants to discover specific ways to get involved, whether it is at our local boys club, the Cardinal Center or even their local church. This community will continue to become better, one volunteer leader at a time.