

DATE: March 27, 2024  
 TO: **Dave Cameron**, City Administrator for Republic  
**Andrew Nelson**, Assistant City Administrator  
 FROM: David Burton, Community Development Specialist  
 RE: Republic Engaged Neighbor Project Update

**Greene County  
 Extension Council**

- Christina Hammers  
*Chair*
- Judy Stainback  
*Vice-chair*
- Morgan Ash  
*Secretary*
- Lisa Bakerink  
*Treasurer*
- John Russell  
*County Commission*
- Tammy Lowrey  
*Farm Bureau*
- Shelia Taylor  
*MFA*
- Vacant  
*City of Willard*
- Joseph Hoffman  
*City of Springfield*
- Vacant  
*City of Battlefield*
- Vacant  
*City of Republic*
- Vacant  
*4-H Youth member*
- Members at large
- Allison Anbari
- Eric Bruning
- Sandi Haustein
- Aaron Jones
- Ray Meyer
- Elaine Montgomery
- Rick Stenberg
- Merri Sutherland
- Eric Sutton
- Buck Van Hooser

Thank you for funding a neighborhood engagement program between MU Extension and the city of Republic focused on neighborhood engagement. That agreement ends April 30, 2024. The last invoice will be sent in May. I would love to meet and discuss our successes, what could be done differently, and how we can continue the partnership with a new Memo of Understanding for 12 months.

Here are efforts that I think have gone well so far in Republic.

- Four residents were in our **Neighborhood Leadership Academy** and three of them got funding for their community projects as part of that class. One of this will result in a sports equipment library for the parks department, meeting a long-term goal there. *Note: I recruited six people from Republic area for our Neighborhood Leadership Academy. Three of them submitted their projects for grant consideration at the end of the class and two were awarded. Hayden Hradek received \$3000 to support his sports equipment library project idea. I also got a meeting for Hayden with the leadership at Amazon and they are going to support his project with a donation of \$3,000 worth of sports equipment and totes! The Greene County Extension Council has added \$1500 to the project. Garrett Cline tells me this is an idea they have dreamed about for a number of years and now a Republic resident is helping make it happen. Justin Shaw also had his grant approved for a bench and garden renovation around the little free library in Owen Park. His grant was for \$2,500. Kennedy Hollingshad had a proposal for a mural that would have been approved but she decided it could not be completed in 2023 and pulled it (so maybe next year). In addition, this program is sponsoring three commissions for public art displays in Owen Park for a total of \$1,500. We also awarded two grants for two projects in a depressed neighborhood in Battlefield but that neighborhood is in the Republic School District and the total on those two grants is \$7,000. Add that all up and you can document a direct value of \$18,500 from this partnership to neighborhoods inside the Republic School district.*

- A **Neighborhood Watch training** in the fall had 12 registered and 14 attended a training in Stoney Creek to earn Neighborhood Watch status. Stoney Creek was able to earn Neighborhood Watch status. *A citywide spring training on March 26 had 7 in attendance. MU Extension invested \$300 in marketing that event and providing pizza for attendees.* Three neighborhoods are pursuing Neighborhood Watch status which would double the number of watch areas currently in town. I do believe that our fall training could benefit from promotional efforts by the city.
- We had three youth sign up for the **50-yard challenge** (doing free lawn mowing for veterans, elderly, disabled, etc.). Students can earn a free mower, blower and trimmer in this program.
- We successfully funded and installed a Little Free Library in Owen Park with the blessing of the Republic Parks Department. The library is well maintained and the area will soon be landscaped and get a bench funded by an MU Extension grant. *This was a \$500 investment in Republic by the Greene County MU Extension council because of our partnership. Little Free Libraries aid in literacy but also build social capital via the connections made.*
- **We did host a fall neighborhood event in Owen Park.** It was not exactly a pop-up but we did have 30-plus in attendance. KY3 filmed two PSAs during the event. *This became a different type of gathering after the committee rejected the idea of smaller pop-up events in neighborhoods. One member was very opposed to that idea and absent support from a position of authority it was impossible to convince a group of adults that already feel stretched that an after work or weekend meeting had value. I was thankful for the help with an event in Owen Park but I did not think that was a sustainable plan or one that would meet our stated goals. We have to start small and start where people live..*
- **I am in the process of working with area churches on Neighborhood Mission Trips.** I have written a 42 page plan and curriculum to be piloted in Republic. Two churches have expressed an interest and this would be a good way to mobilize residents to take action. *Brookline Baptist will host one the end of June. North Point church is considering.*
- **I have announced and communicated a goal of 100 block parties between March and November in Republic.** This is a way to multiply efforts and engage residents. A registration portal is in place with a goal of getting grant dollars to help. *Hood United Methodist Church, North Point Church and Brookline Baptist are all making plans to participate.* My goal would be to get city staff or elected officials at some of these parties to visit and listen. To date, none of the council members have agreed to host a block or driveway gathering in their neighborhood.
- **We have a neighborhood coffee social planned for March 23** with council and mayor candidates in my garage in the area of Owen Park. *Candidates Justin Shaw, Eric Gerke and Eric Franklin all attended and we served 55 cups of coffee and 6 glasses of milk along with 86 donuts at a cost of about \$200.*
- **Turquoise Table Grants.** Greene County MU Extension offered turquoise picnic tables across Republic as a conversation and gathering space. These work best if the family hosting the table is fully committed. *This was done at a cost of \$1800. Three tables remain to neighborhood yards and one in Owen Park.*

Here are areas that did not meet expectations and where we could seek improvement.

- **Our city committee** is comprised of city employees who are nice to work and have been great resources but neighborhood engagement is not their priority. Meetings and communication has waned due to other demands and priorities for city staff. Either the team needs direction from a supervisor or we consider a committee with a different structure.
- **Missouri Good Neighbor Week** was great statewide, but we had fewer participants this year from Republic than last year. We can and should do better but it will take partnerships. It was hard to get promotional help because it was close to Pumpkin Daze. But still, this is low hanging fruit and could be a way engage other partners in Republic. *This is more of a marketing effort at this point.*
- **The first issue to come out of our committee meetings was over grown yards in Republic.** I could not get local pastors to meet. I got help from one pastor on locating a youth to mow. We had a plan in place to provide assistance. But by the time a yard is reported and then code-checked and the owner is contacted the grass has grown another foot or been resolved. Although this was identified as a top issue, we had zero yards referred to our youth.
- **I asked council members to host a neighborhood or driveway meeting multiply times during the year and there were no takers.** Granted it was hard to arrange without committee members or staff willing to attend something on a weekend or in the evening. But still, no council members would agree even with multiple asks, so there was a disconnect here.

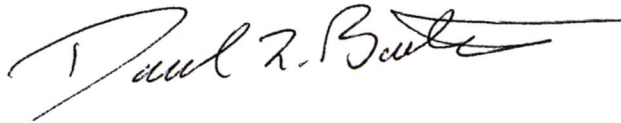
These are some opportunities going forward.

- **Getting more residents in** Neighborhood Leadership Academy or Neighboring 101. This year we had six which was a great effort. *There is a fall class and recruitment begins soon. Many people are able to attend for free and as noted early, this can result in funding for Republic neighborhood projects.*
- **Organize a meeting of non-profits in Republic that address community needs.**
- **Plan a training banquet for neighborhoods in Republic.** A training could include a city update or address specific neighborhood issues. I see this being an annual event. It does not work with the Chamber meeting and schedule. But we need more partners first. We would need an active committee and a hook and I'm not sure we are there yet.
- **Republic Neighborhood Alliance Email.** This list has grown to nearly 200 Republic residents. Greene County MU Extension is currently funding this as a cost of \$20 per month. The group gets a monthly email at this point.
- **Partner with HOAs in the city.** No one with the city seems to have a list of HOAs and I have had no success communicating with the ones that I know exist. *A communication list for HOAs would seem important for the city and should be a priority research project.*
- **Annually recognize the best neighborhood efforts in Republic** and support that winner with a trip to the Neighborhoods USA annual conference. This might be done in partnership with the Republic Community Foundation. I even considered doing this at Chamber meetings but those are so rushed that the Foundation dinners seems a better option.

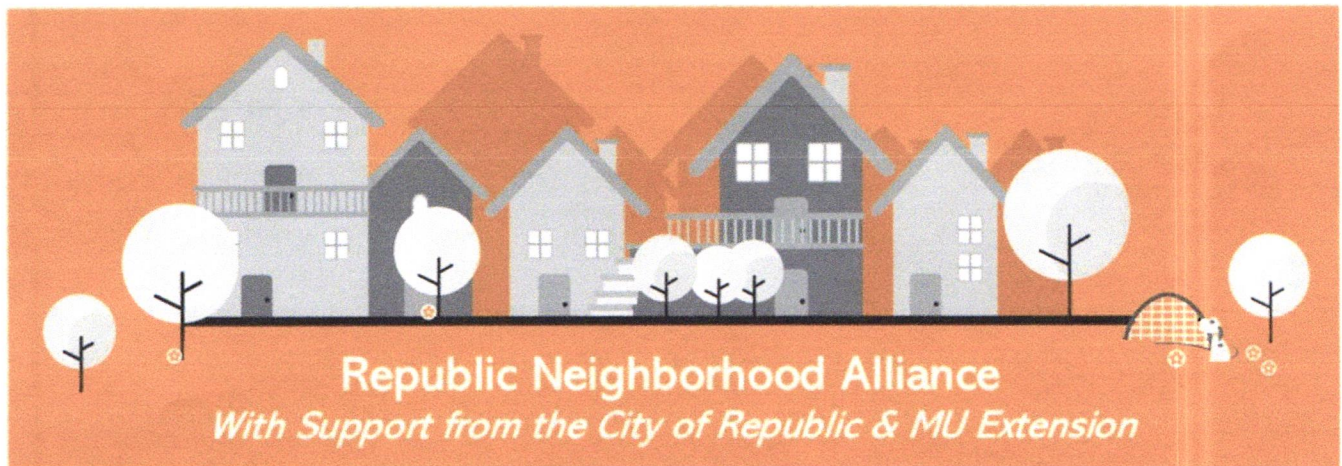
This does not capture all of the meetings and conversations and proposals I have made in the city related to neighboring. The process has been slow and the interest has been low. No one else from the committee has agreed (yet) to take a lead on this in their own neighborhoods. I still believe churches and city employees and elected officials hold the key to success, but they have to be interested or persuaded to be interested first.

I look forward to thinking about this project more and committing lots of time toward its success. I believe this could help move Republic forward in some very positive ways.

Sincerely,



David L. Burton  
Community Development Specialist  
University of Missouri Extension



## Join Republic Neighborhood Alliance Email List

The goals of the Republic Neighborhood Alliance (RNA) are to increase positive interaction among neighbors, increase engagement with the city, help residents identify what is strong in their community, empower neighbors to discover the assets around them, and educate neighborhood leaders on how to help make Republic clean, safe and friendly. You also get timely update by email and special announcements.

Become a part of the Republic Neighborhood Alliance at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RepMoNeighbor>



# State of Neighboring in Missouri and Republic

Data from our 2022 and 2024 “State of Neighboring in Missouri” survey (conducted by Pollfish) is a valuable resource for tracking changes in Missouri. This study is scientifically valid and has a margin of error of +/- 3%. The 2022 study had 1200 respondents from Southwest Missouri (Springfield DMA) with 106 of those being from Republic. The 2024 study will have 1800 respondents with about 56 from Republic. The questions on names can be tracked from 2019 to present shows the impact of ongoing efforts to write and talk about the value of neighboring and social capital in Republic. For me, here are the highlights from this study for Republic that jump out.

First and foremost, the number of residents that say they know the names of their neighbors has steadily increased since 2019, when we held the first National Good Neighbor Day event in Republic. Future neighboring events, a Republic Neighborhood Alliance newsletter, a weekly column about neighbors in the Greene County Commonwealth, regular posts about becoming an engaged neighbor on community social media, and speaking engagements in the area would all, undoubtedly, have an impact on this steady improvement.

**Q1. I know the names of the neighbors in \_\_\_\_\_ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment.** From 5.7% in 2019, to 9.18% in 2022 and finally 16.6% in 2024, all while Republic experienced rapid growth. Also significant is that the percentage of residents saying they knew none or just one of their neighbors decreased rather significantly.

**Q2. I know the occupation of the neighbors in \_\_\_\_\_ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. Q3. I know an interesting fact about the neighbors in \_\_\_\_\_ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment.**

In the questions of knowing a neighbors occupation and knowing an interesting fact about them, it looks like we have a core group of residents (about 16%) that are highly engaged. These are the people who know all of their neighbors, know their occupation and speak to them. On both the occupation and interesting fact question, the percent of residents saying they know this about none of their neighbors dropped by double digits. It takes time to see the impact of increased social capital but these questions are an early indication of pending improvement.

**Q5. In general, how important is it for neighbors to get together and socialize?** 66.3% of Republic residents say it is important to some degree.

**Q6. I would like to interact with my neighbors beyond a friendly wave hello.** Among Republic residents, 59% answered yes, with 22% unsure.

**Q10. Overall do you wish to be more or less personally connected to your immediate neighbors?** While 56% said the same and 35% desire more.

**Q11. If my neighborhood had a block party, I would definitely attend.** A full 59% of respondents said yes, and 30% marked unsure, suggesting the type of party (and length of the party) would be significant factors on their attendance. But this is a strong enough result that I believe it supports the effort to have 100 block parties in one year.

# State of Neighboring in Republic, Missouri

## Case Study

Questions and Answers	2016 State Farm National Survey	2019 Survey on Good Neighbor Day	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2024 Statewide Pollfish Survey
<p><b>Q1 For this study, we define the word “neighbor” as those individuals living behind the eight closest front doors to you, these eight neighbors are typically the ones that adjoin your property or place of residence. Please complete: I know the names of the neighbors in ____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)</b></p>	N/A	<i>88 respondents from across Republic</i>	<i>100 respondents randomly selected with a +/-3% margin of error</i>	<i>56 respondents randomly selected with a +/-3% margin of error</i>
- All	11%	5.70%	9.18%	16.67%
- Most	22%	9.20%	17.35%	20.00%
- Some	18%	7.25%	22.45%	24.67%
- A few	33%	28.80%	23.47%	13.00%
- One	7%	30.05%	13.27%	9.00%
- None	9%	19.00%	14.29%	16.67%
<p><b>Q2 I know the occupation of the neighbors in ____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)</b></p>	N/A		Percent	Percent
- All			5.10%	16.67%
- Most			11.22%	33.33%
- Some			17.35%	10.00%
- A few			18.37%	16.67%
- One			23.47%	10.00%
- None			24.49%	13.33%
<p><b>Q3 I know an interesting fact about the neighbors in ____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)</b></p>	N/A		Percent	Percent
- All			3.06%	16.67%
- Most			10.20%	26.67%
- Some			17.35%	30.00%
- A few			25.51%	12.00%
- One			14.29%	10.00%
- None			29.59%	14.67%

## State of Neighboring in Missouri

Questions and Answers	2016 State Farm National Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey - Springfield DMA	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	City of Republic - 2023 Case Study	2024 Regional Pollfish Survey - State of Missouri
<b>Q1 For this study, we define the word “neighbor” as those individuals living behind the eight closest front doors to you, these eight neighbors are typically the ones that adjoin your property or place of residence. Please complete: I know the names of the neighbors in ____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)</b>	N/A	1200 respondent s randomly selected with a +/- 3% margin of error	278 respondents who attended an MU Extension neighboring class.	106 responden ts randomly selected with a +/- 3% margin of error	1800 respondents randomly selected with a +/- 3% margin of error
- All	11%	12.50%	33.05%	9.18%	13.50%
- Most	22%	24.17%	27.97%	17.35%	25.04%
- Some	18%	22.75%	12.71%	22.45%	24.02%
- A few	33%	16.92%	16.10%	23.47%	18.42%
- One	7%	9.67%	5.93%	13.27%	7.81%
- None	9%	14.00%	4.24%	14.29%	11.21%
<b>Q2 I know the occupation of the neighbors in ____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)</b>	N/A	Percent		Percent	Percent
- All		7.25%	21.19%	5.10%	6.71%
- Most		17.17%	27.97%	11.22%	13.75%
- Some		20.83%	18.64%	17.35%	22.33%
- A few		18.00%	17.80%	18.37%	25.13%
- One		14.67%	8.47%	23.47%	11.54%
- None		22.08%	5.93%	24.49%	20.54%
<b>Q3 I know an interesting fact about the neighbors in ____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)</b>	N/A	Percent		Percent	Percent
- All		4.83%	16.10%	3.06%	3.40%
- Most		12.33%	22.88%	10.20%	10.70%
- Some		18.67%	18.64%	17.35%	17.83%
- A few		22.33%	22.03%	25.51%	25.38%
- One		17.00%	9.32%	14.29%	15.28%
- None		24.83%	11.02%	29.59%	27.42%

Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey - Springfield DMA	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2024 Regional Pollfish Survey - State of Missouri
<b>Q4 By what method do you interact with your current neighbors? Please select all that apply. (MultipleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
- Just waving or saying hello	75%	59.25%	79.05%	58.16%	66.81%
- Face-to-face conversations	67%	58.75%	83.66%	60.20%	65.45%
- Telephone calls	26%	16.58%	27.97%	10.20%	15.62%
- Social media	13%	20.08%	35.59%	19.39%	18.08%
- Text messages	13%	23.08%	49.15%	21.43%	25.38%
- Written notes	4%	2.58%	6.78%	0.00%	2.21%
- Some other way	3%	3.92%	4.24%	3.06%	4.33%
Front yard interaction		50.83%	66.10%	50.00%	32.60%
- I don't interact with my neighbors	8%	7.92%	5.08%	9.18%	7.89%
- Neighborhood social events or activities		0.00%			11.38%
<b>Q5 In general, how important is it for neighbors to get together and socialize? (SingleSelection)</b>				Percent	
- Extremely important	6%	9.08%	11.86%	8.16%	6.03%
- Very important	18%	20.67%	34.75%	14.29%	18.17%
- Somewhat important	34%	35.08%	33.90%	43.88%	36.25%
- A little important	25%	18.83%	12.71%	22.45%	21.82%
- Not important	17%	16.33%	6.78%	11.22%	17.74%
<b>Q6 I would like to interact with my neighbors beyond a friendly wave hello. (SingleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
Agree	63%	58.83%	78.81%	59.18%	55.26%
Disagree	37%	16.42%	7.63%	19.39%	18.93%
Unsure		24.75%	13.56%	21.43%	25.81%
<b>Q7 I have done at least one favor for an immediate neighbor in the past year. (SingleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
Agree	44%	74.17%	87.18%	72.45%	80.48%
Disagree	34%	19.83%	9.40%	24.49%	14.09%
Unsure		6.00%	3.42%	3.06%	5.43%
<b>Q8 In the last 12 months I have hosted at least one neighbor in my home socially. (SingleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
- Agree	67%	39.92%	33.90%	38.78%	27.25%
- Disagree	33%	56.50%	65.25%	61.22%	70.29%
Unsure		3.58%	0.85%	0.00%	2.46%



Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey - Springfield DMA	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2024 Regional Pollfish Survey - State of Missouri
<b>Q9 I have at least one trusted neighbor I leave a key with in case of emergencies. (SingleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
- Agree	56%	55.92%	74.58%	58.16%	60.19%
- Disagree	44%	33.50%	16.10%	34.69%	29.63%
Unsure		10.58%	9.32%	7.14%	10.19%
<b>Q10 Overall, do you wish to be more or less personally connected to my neighbors. (SingleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
More	32%	35.75%	55.93%	35.71%	31.32%
Same	62%	53.50%	41.53%	56.12%	59.17%
Less	6%	10.75%	2.54%	8.16%	9.51%
<b>Q11 If my neighborhood had a block party, I would definitely attend. (SingleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
- Agree	76%	59.67%	81.36%	59.18%	61.04%
- Disagree	20%	14.00%	5.93%	10.20%	12.56%
Unsure	4%	26.33%	12.71%	30.61%	26.40%
<b>Q12 In the past 12 months, have you worked with neighbors to improve your neighborhood or community?</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
Yes	12%	35.75%	45.76%	23.47%	22.16%
No	88%	57.33%	50.85%	71.43%	74.62%
Unsure	0%	7.92%	3.39%	7.14%	3.23%
<b>Q13 Since moving to your neighborhood, have you participated in welcoming a new neighbor to the neighborhood? Please select all that apply. (MultipleSelection)</b>		Percent		Percent	Percent
Yes, I have welcomed verbally or in writing	31%	33.00%	52.99%	44.90%	
Yes, I have invited into my home or gathering	14%	16.42%	18.80%	9.18%	
Yes, I have given a gift to welcome	12%	16.08%	27.35%	12.24%	
No, I have not welcomed a new neighbor	54%	49.42%	35.04%	43.88%	
<b>Q13 Does your neighborhood have an active neighborhood watch program?</b>					Percent
We have neighborhood watch, and are active.					21.31%
We do NOT have neighborhood watch.					62.73%
I am not sure what Neighborhood Watch is or if our neighborhood has this program.					15.96%

Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey - Springfield DMA	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2024 Regional Pollfish Survey - State of Missouri
<b>Q14 Which of the following characteristics or behaviors, if any, would you say generally define a good neighbor? Please select all that apply. (Multiple Selection)</b>	N/A	Percent		Percent	Percent
Respects my privacy		69.75%	71.12%	74.49%	71.31%
Is quiet and does not make excessive noise		53.33%	62.95%	63.27%	55.60%
picks up after pet on a walk, etc)		46.67%	79.66%	57.14%	54.24%
Takes care of their property / mows lawn		54.08%	87.29%	65.31%	58.06%
Practices correct parking etiquette of vehicles		36.08%	87.29%	50.00%	39.30%
Watches out for neighbors' property		60.33%	82.20%	69.39%	67.49%
Watches out for their fellow neighbors' personal safety		54.33%	82.20%	65.31%	59.17%
Helps out a neighbor with an unexpected need		43.08%	66.95%	50.00%	49.49%
Helps fellow neighbors with small favors		44.92%	75.42%	52.04%	48.81%
Checks in on elderly neighbors		42.25%	59.32%	54.08%	46.69%
Teachers their children to respect neighbors property		37.00%	22.03%	42.86%	54.41%
Leaves interactions to a quick hello or wave of the hand		27.25%	5.08%	29.59%	25.64%
Provides babysitting		8.00%	8.47%	11.22%	4.75%
Helps out a neighbor with a financial need		12.83%	61.02%	16.33%	8.32%
Greets me by name		36.33%	22.03%	42.86%	42.19%
Hosts social events or get-togethers for neighbors		12.92%	48.81%	13.27%	11.54%
Is involved with the neighborhood association or HOA (and if one does not exist is involved in the community).		11.08%	55.93%	10.20%	12.73%
it		34.67%	60.85%	42.86%	32.00%
Welcomes new residents to the neighborhood		30.33%	79.03%	35.71%	39.98%
Is positive and encouraging in conversation		41.50%			41.77%
Willing to loan a tool or food ingredient (like sugar) when asked.		41.42%	63.56%	47.96%	47.37%
Includes me in their routine activities					5.01%
Prays for me and my family					25.81%
Does random acts of kindness for neighbors					46.94%
Engages me in conversation and listens					36.25%
Other		0.92%			1.27%