

DATE: November 28, 2022
TO: David Cameron, administrator
City of Republic
FROM: David Burton
Community Development Specialist
RE: Republic Engaged Neighbor Project Ideas

**Greene County
Extension Council**

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Elaine Montgomery

Thank you for meeting Aug. 30 about the Owen Park Neighborhood Association project. Your probing questions took the conversation further than I had imagined and I am excited to dream about creating a culture of neighborliness right here in Republic, Missouri.

I apologize for the delay in my written response. I was slowed by needing to do some additional research before responding (including enclosed survey data) and some family health issues.

I have enclosed with this cover letter relevant materials and articles that we might discuss as we refine what social revitalization through neighborhood engagement might look like in Republic. I think this packet provides a good roadmap since the goal is be comprehensive since our vision is to be the best in the nation.

Possible projects ideas and goals for the Republic Engaged Neighbor Project could include the following.

- Create neighborhoods that are clean, safe and friendly. Research says these are the big three when people select a place to live.
- Foster connections which impacts people's community involvement, support for issues and level of trust for others.
- As Republic grows, people fear the loss of our "small town feel," which means they fear losing their community status. Getting residents to connect is vital.

These are some methods used by other communities that I think would have relevance in Republic. I've listed in priority order.

- **Getting more local residents in to relevant neighborhood leadership training** like MU Extension Neighborhood Leadership Academy, Neighboring 101 online or the Republic Access class (we want to try again in 2023 if we can get more than 10 people registered).

- **Offer Neighborhood Labs (in neighborhoods)** that focus on the gifts of a neighborhood and are provided over six hours for 8-10 neighbors. The goal is to get class members connected and social invested in their neighborhood. Need a neighborhood contact to organize. These could work well in partnership with HOAs. MU Extension could provide individual incentives to attend or monies to help fund a completed neighborhood project. An opportunity that could arise from these trainings with be neighborhood watch programs.
- **Organize a roundtable discussion with area pastors.** Part of the goal would be to help pastors understand the positive impact their members could make by loving their neighbors. Examples might include a sermon series (have an outline) participating churches do at the same time or even a provided small group study that churches use at the same time. Pastors also need to see the number of code violations in the city that involve widows or single moms or others that they are in a position to help with some organization. Getting help from church groups to address code violations with regular action would be powerful.
- **Create a neighborhood council** comprised of officers from Homeowners Associations in the city and leaders in neighborhood associations. This Council would meet quarterly to organize events, hear from guest speakers, and hear from the city about projects and neighborhood focused ideas or needs.
- **Block party trailer** (containing everything needed for a block party and delivered in a trailer) owned and delivered by the city.
- **Small neighborhood mini-grants** to provide start-up funding for neighborhood projects.
- **Coordinating special trash pickup events by neighborhoods** using neighborhood volunteers to run the collection site and/or dumpster.
- **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.
- **Learning from other existing city neighborhood programs.** On my Neighboring 101 class in January I will be hosting neighborhood specialists from three cities (Arvada, Colorado, Excelsior Springs, Mo, and City of Peoria, Arizona) to explain their neighborhood programs. The City of Springfield also has a 15 year old program, although they lost their grant funding about 6 years ago which has caused a lot of the program to be changed but some of the original plans might be useful to Republic. The program in Springfield no longer has any training or leadership development, and the city uses it mainly as a communication tool and for clean up events.
- **Creating neighborhood associations throughout the city.** Different cities have decided the association boundaries in different ways: some based on history, some allow for self section. One national group says a neighborhood must be easy to walk from one end to another to visit a neighbor (a 30 minute walk seems appropriate). We might host an online tool to allow people to pick their “neighborhood” and present a proposal for adjustments.
- **Creation of Tiger Fridays (or another regular night of the week) during the summer.** These would be a weekly or monthly events on someone’s driveway in a neighborhood. Whoever would like to host places a Tiger sign at the end of their driveway and the neighbors know that on Friday evening (or another day of the week) that is the house to go to with your lawn chair and a drink to get to know your neighbors.

- **One recommendation to facilitate this effort could be the creation of a Neighborhood Commission.** In Kingsport, Tennessee, the Neighborhood Commission is composed of twelve citizens who advise on and promote initiatives to strengthen neighborhoods and, as needed, provide input to the Board of Mayor and Alderman on the impact of various programs to neighborhoods. The Kingsport Neighborhood Commission seeks to improve all of Kingsport's neighborhoods and the quality of life of all the neighbors who live in them.

Our five steps to a successful neighboring program in Republic could have lots of events, education and projects organized by volunteers and the city itself. We can learn from the examples of other cities and then improve upon on efforts. The end result will strengthen Republic socially, culturally and economically.

Those five key steps include:

Step 1: Cast the Vision. We cast this vision. Share the vision over and over and over. Talk about it at every opportunity.

Step 2: Lead by Example. To activate people to be good neighbors, we need to lead by example. That means city leadership and other key community opinion leaders.

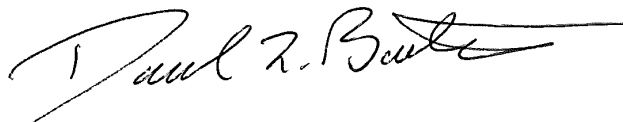
Step 3: Provide Ideas and Resources. We provide ideas and tools to for residents take action. The key is to offer ideas that can be implemented easily. Perhaps do a Front yard Friday event, donuts in the driveway, goodies in the garage, or pancakes on the porch.

Step 4: Pull Together as Needed. As residents connect with their neighbors, new opportunities might arise where a group or neighbors or church can step in and serve.

Step 5: Celebrate stories. We need to invite residents to share stories of being good neighbors so we can celebrate them. The city sharing stories and examples can be an encouragement to others.

I look forward to thinking about this project more and tying up some lose ends. I believe this could help move Republic forward in some very positive ways and it would be a thrill for me to be involved.

Sincerely,



David L. Burton
Community Development Specialist
University of Missouri Extension

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Funding of Extended Partnerships With Republic

The next three pages are in regards to David Cameron's questions about interdepartmental agreements to fund David Burton's extended involvement with a neighboring project in the City of Republic.

For interdepartmental agreements, the University has generally used Memorandums of Understanding. If the wording gets too complex, the MU legal department has to get involved and that can delay implementation by several months.

I have also included some examples regarding recent buy-outs of my time to coordinate projects. This agreement would be with the Greene County MU Extension Council and that council would bill the city. The extension council will then make an agreement with the University to offset any of my salary related funds to the University.

I do not pretend to know the city budget for a project of this nature. Therefore, I can see several possible scenarios under which we might work and develop this project.

1. 10% of my time (about \$12,000) or 25% of my time (about \$28,000) to work in support of this project with the level of time being funded.
2. My time plus a small event budget.
3. Or there might be an opportunity to co-fund a community development educator position with the University funding half of an educator position with the city funding the other half. (This would be in the neighborhood of \$18,000).

An example of a memorandum of understanding that was used in 2021 follows on the next two pages. I would recommend a similar document with the City of Republic, basically replacing the word Ridgecrest with the City of Republic.

**Memorandum of Understanding
Between
Greene County Extension Council
And
The Curators of the University of Missouri**

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into between the Greene County Extension Council, hereinafter referred to as Council, and The Curators of the University of Missouri, on behalf of University of Missouri Extension, hereinafter referred to as Extension.

The Council has local non-University funds to be used toward salary and benefits of a local specialist's work on a specific program.

The Council agrees to reimburse the University for 10% of the total salary and benefits for David Burton's appointment for a period of 1 year. Benefits can vary but the amount is near \$12,000.

The University will support David Burton's plan of work to meet programming of the grant.

This agreement will be in affect from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022.

The Curators of the University of
Missouri

Greene County Extension Council

Signature

Title & Date

**Memorandum of Understanding
Between
Greene County Extension Council
And
Ridgecrest Baptist Church**

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into between the Greene County Extension Council, hereinafter referred to as Council, and Ridgecrest Baptist Church, hereinafter referred to as Ridgecrest.

The Council has local non-University funds to be used toward salary and benefits of a local specialist's work on a specific program.

The Council agrees to reimburse the University of Missouri for 10% of the total salary and benefits for David Burton's appointment for a period of 1 year. Benefits can vary but the amount is near \$11,000.

The University will support David Burton's plan of work to meet programming needs and work of the grant.

While David Burton is working for University of Missouri Extension, the University will monthly bill this amount to the Council, and the Council will then invoice Ridgecrest.

This agreement will be in affect from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022.

Elders of Ridgecrest Baptist Church
Springfield, Missouri

Greene County Extension Council

Signature

Title & Date



Healthy Communities
(417) 881-8909
extension.missouri.edu

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



City of Republic
417-732-3100
republicmo.com



Share “neighboring” success stories and feedback at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/neighboring>

State of Neighboring in Republic

The following pages contain our first “State of Neighboring” survey (conducted by Pollfish). While the numbers and demographics are completed I have not had time to do a full analysis or to run any cross tabulations. The goal is to create a statewide publication on the lessons learned from this study and to repeat it every year or every two years (depending on funding) to charge any progress that our effort as made to change the narrative on what is a good neighbor in Missouri. Repeating the study, similar to what MU Extension has done over the years on land prices and farm rental rates, should provide a valuable and unique document. This study is scientifically valid and has a margin of error of +/- 3%.

Among the 750+ respondents to the survey we did have 67 respond that live in Republic. I share those results here in a narrative that I think could be a useful guide for planning.

Q1. I know the names of the neighbors in _____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. The majority answer was “a few” with 25.03% and 27.46% said one or none.

Q2. I know the occupation of the neighbors in _____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. Among residents, 47.% said one or none.

Q3. I know an interesting fact about the neighbors in _____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. They were more likely to answer in the affirmative to this question with 48% indicating some or a few. Of course we did not ask if this was a good or negative fact.

Q4. By what method do you interact with your current neighbors? Please select all that apply. A majority (65%) said “smile and wave.” Front-yard interactions ranked high with 53.8% selecting that option too. Another 54% of respondents also marked face-to-face conversations. “I do not interact with my neighbors” was marked by 8% of respondents.

Q5. In general, how important is it for neighbors to get together and socialize? “Somewhat important was marked by 41% while 33% said it was of little or no importance.

Q6. I would like to interact with my neighbors beyond a friendly wave hello. Among Republic residents, 62% answered yes.

Q7 and Q8: 76% of residents say they have done at least one favor for a neighbor in the past year and 55% have hosted some type of social get-together.

Q9.I have at least one trusted neighbor I can leave a key with in case of emergencies. While 63% answered yes, 36.7% said no.

Q10. Overall do you wish to be more or less personally connected to your immediate neighbors? While 49% said the same and 10% said less, that leaves 40% desiring more.

Q11. If my neighborhood had a block party, I would definitely attend. A full 64% of respondents said yes, and 23% marked unsure, suggesting the type of party (and length of the party) would be significant factors on their attendance.

Q12. In the past 12 months, have you worked with neighbor(s) to improve your neighborhood or community? This question was used by State Farm in their national study but it lets respondents to define “neighbor” they way they choose, meaning some could have answered yes for just general community service work. But, even with that option, only 27% marked yes, with 70% saying no.

Q13. Since moving to your neighborhood, have you participated in welcoming a new neighbor to the neighborhood? Please select all that apply. Among respondents, 62% said they had done one of the suggested welcoming things for a neighbor (a note, a gift or a welcome party).

Q14. Which of the following characteristics or behaviors, if any, would you say generally define a good neighbor? Please select all that apply. As we have seen over the last decade or two, Americans like their “good” neighbors to be quiet and leave them alone. This thinking impacts our actions and choices when it comes to neighbors, and residents of Republic see it no differently than the region or nation.

- Top response: Respects my privacy (78%) - this is higher than the region and the nation where being quiet normally earns the top spot.
- Second highest: Is quiet was marked by 73% of respondents
- Third highest: Takes care of their property selected by 66% of respondents.
- Fourth highest: Watches out for their neighbors property selected by 63%

FINAL COMMENTS

Additional analysis is needed but the responses do show an interest in being social connected as well as a need for that social connectedness. It all begins with getting to know names!

There is a high degree of willingness to gather socially in a block party that is something that the city, groups or individuals should take advantage of to spark neighbor connections.

Residents are better than the regional average for welcoming new residents (a good sign) and a very high percentage would prefer to know their neighbor better (beyond just saying hello).

These responses would seem to demonstrate the existence of a core group of residents that should be susceptible to the message of becoming a better neighbor. The biggest challenge may be to make the principles of being an engaged neighbor more sticky or memorable.

State of Neighboring in Greene County, Missouri

Regional Respond Totals

Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	Difference in regional survey and engaged neighbors
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)	N/A	<i>746 respondents randomly selected with a +/-3% margin of error</i>	<i>278 respondents who attended an MU Extension neighboring class.</i>	
- All	11%	13.81%	33.05%	19.24%
- Most	22%	19.84%	27.97%	8.13%
- Some	18%	21.98%	12.71%	-9.27%
- A few	33%	18.77%	16.10%	-2.67%
- One	7%	10.72%	5.93%	-4.79%
- None	9%	14.88%	4.24%	-10.64%
Q2 I know the occupation of the neighbors in _____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)	N/A			
- All		8.08%	21.19%	13.11%
- Most		15.35%	27.97%	12.62%
- Some		19.06%	18.64%	-0.42%
- A few		19.71%	17.80%	-1.91%
- One		14.05%	8.47%	-5.58%
- None		23.75%	5.93%	-17.82%
Q3 I know an interesting fact about the neighbors in _____ of the homes adjacent to my property or apartment. (SingleSelection)	N/A			
- All		7.77%	16.10%	8.33%
- Most		15.55%	22.88%	7.33%
- Some		18.77%	18.64%	-0.13%
- A few		19.84%	22.03%	2.19%
- One		13.81%	9.32%	-4.49%
- None		24.26%	11.02%	-13.24%

Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	Difference in regional survey and engaged neighbors
Q4 By what method do you interact with your current neighbors? Please select all that apply. (MultipleSelection)				
- Just waving or saying hello	75%	60.99%	79.05%	18.06%
- Face-to-face conversations	67%	55.63%	83.66%	28.03%
- Telephone calls	26%	14.48%	27.97%	13.49%
- Social media	13%	19.17%	35.59%	16.42%
- Text messages	13%	22.12%	49.15%	27.03%
- Written notes	4%	3.22%	6.78%	3.56%
- Some other way	3%	4.29%	4.24%	-0.05%
Front yard interaction		49.46%	66.10%	16.64%
- I don't interact with my neighbors	8%	8.58%	5.08%	-3.50%
Q5 In general, how important is it for neighbors to get together and socialize? (SingleSelection)				
- Extremely important	6%	8.71%	11.86%	3.15%
- Very important	18%	16.89%	34.75%	17.86%
- Somewhat important	34%	36.19%	33.90%	-2.29%
- A little important	25%	20.91%	12.71%	-8.20%
- Not important	17%	17.29%	6.78%	-10.51%
Q6 I would like to interact with my neighbors beyond a friendly wave hello. (SingleSelection)				
Agree	63%	57.10%	78.81%	21.71%
Disagree	37%	19.44%	7.63%	-11.81%
Unsure		23.46%	13.56%	-9.90%
Q7 I have done at least one favor for an immediate neighbor in the past year. (SingleSelection)				
Agree	44%	72.52%	87.18%	14.66%
Disagree	34%	20.78%	9.40%	-11.38%
Unsure		6.70%	3.42%	-3.28%
Q8 In the last 12 months I have hosted at least one neighbor in my home socially. (SingleSelection)				
- Agree	67%	36.60%	33.90%	-2.70%
- Disagree	33%	59.52%	65.25%	5.73%
Unsure		3.89%	0.85%	-3.04%

Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	Difference in regional survey and engaged neighbors
Q9 I have at least one trusted neighbor I leave a key with in case of emergencies.				
- Agree	56%	56.70%	74.58%	17.88%
- Disagree	44%	33.51%	16.10%	-17.41%
Unsure		9.79%	9.32%	-0.47%
Q10 Overall, do you wish to be more or less personally connected to my neighbors. (SingleSelection)				
More	32%	35.25%	55.93%	20.68%
Same	62%	53.08%	41.53%	-11.55%
Less	6%	11.66%	2.54%	-9.12%
Q11 If my neighborhood had a block party, I would definitely attend. (SingleSelection)				
- Agree	76%	56.57%	81.36%	24.79%
- Disagree	20%	15.55%	5.93%	-9.62%
Unsure	4%	27.88%	12.71%	-15.17%
Q12 In the past 12 months, have you worked with neighbors to improve your neighborhood or community?				
Yes	12%	30.97%	45.76%	14.79%
No	88%	61.66%	50.85%	-10.81%
Unsure	0%	8.04%	3.39%	-4.65%
Q13 Since moving to your neighborhood, have you participated in welcoming a new neighbor to the neighborhood? Please select all that apply. (MultipleSelection)				
Yes, I have welcomed verbally or in writing a new neighbor to my neighborhood	31%	33.51%	52.99%	19.48%
Yes, I have invited a new neighbor into my home or to a gathering	14%	13.14%	18.80%	5.66%
Yes, I have given a gift to welcome a a new neighbor to my neighborhood	12%	12.20%	27.35%	15.15%
No, I have not welcomed a new neighbor into my neighborhood	54%	52.28%	35.04%	-17.24%

Questions and Answers	State Farm 2016 Survey	2022 Regional Pollfish Survey	2022 Statewide Survey of Engaged Neighbor Participants	Difference in regional survey and engaged neighbors
Q14 Which of the following characteristics or behaviors, if any, would you say generally define a good neighbor? Please select all that apply. (MultipleSelection)	N/A			
- Respects my privacy		70.38%	71.12%	0.74%
- Is quiet – does not make excessive noise		62.23%	62.95%	0.72%
- Practices good parking etiquette		47.45%	79.66%	32.21%
- Takes care of their property		54.42%	87.29%	32.87%
- Practices good parking etiquette		36.46%	50.00%	13.54%
- Watches out for neighbors' property		55.06%	87.29%	32.23%
Watches out for fellow neighbors' personal safety		55.09%	82.20%	27.11%
Helps out a neighbor with an unexpected need		40.48%	82.20%	41.72%
- Helps fellow neighbors with small favors		41.55%	66.95%	25.40%
- Checks in on elderly neighbors		43.70%	75.42%	31.72%
- Socializes with fellow neighbors		34.99%	59.32%	24.33%
- Leaves interactions to a quick hello or wave of the hand		26.54%	22.03%	-4.51%
- Provides babysitting		6.43%	5.08%	-1.35%
- Helps out a neighbor with a financial need		11.39%	8.47%	-2.92%
- Greets me by name		36.06%	61.02%	24.96%
- Hosts social events or get-togethers		9.79%	22.03%	12.24%
- Is involved with the neighborhood association or HOA (and if one does not exist is involved in the community).		10.32%	28.81%	18.49%
- Cares about me and my family		35.66%	55.93%	20.27%
- Welcomes new residents to the neighborhood		29.36%	50.85%	21.49%
- Is positive and encouraging in conversation		41.69%	79.03%	37.34%
- Willing to loan a tool or food ingredient (like sugar) when asked.		40.62%	63.56%	22.94%
- Other		1.21%	5.08%	3.87%
Q15 Additional comments that you would like to share about neighboring. (OpenEnded)				

Demographics of the study as report by Pollfish

Gender	Male	36.93%
	Female	63.07%
Age	>54	16.27%
	25-34	19.73%
	18-24	19.33%
	35-44	24.80%
	45-54	19.87%
Ethnicity	Arab	0.40%
	Asian	1.87%
	Black	3.87%
	Hispanic	3.87%
	Latino	0.67%
	Prefer not to say	1.07%
	Multiracial	0.93%
	Other	2.53%
	White	84.80%
Education	High school	47.38%
	Voc/Tech College	17.11%
	University	26.47%
	Post-Grad	8.69%
Martial status	Single	30.75%
	Married	38.90%
	Divorced	8.82%
	Living with partner	12.97%
	Widowd	2.01%
	Separated	3.74%
Number of children	None	45.19%
	1	20.86%
	2	16.31%
	3	9.49%
	4	4.28%
	5	1.87%
	6	94.00%
	Prefer not to say	1.07%
Income level	Lower 1	28.07%
	Lower 2	30.21%
	Middle 1	13.77%
	Middle 2	9.63%
	High 1	6.42%
	High 2	2.54%
	High 3	3.21%
	Prefer not to say	6.15%

Actions Make Neighbors Engaged, Not Just Good

By David L. Burton

Being an “engaged neighbor” instead of just a “good neighbor” requires action.

An engaged neighbor understands the importance of helping when needed, sharing a cup of sugar when asked, and happily lending a solid back or a listening ear.

An engaged neighbor is willing to share their backyard firepit with the nearby residents.

An engaged neighbor is willing to share a conversation, laugh or a tear over a freshly brewed cup of coffee (or tea).

An engaged neighbor finds joy investing in those around them and takes the time to learn and use the names of those that live near them.

An engaged neighbor is a giver and performs kind deeds without being prompted.

Engaged neighbors understand they do not have to become your best friend. But engaged neighbors also know a smile, and using names goes a long way toward building a relationship.

An engaged neighbor knows how to be a quiet neighbor. They don't mow their lawn at 7 a.m., don't honk their horn every time they pull into the driveway, and they keep their music down past 9 p.m.

An engaged neighbor finds excuses to do more front-yard living. They also make themselves available for conversations and connections with neighbors. Just being visible in your front yard can lead to conversations or opportunities to serve.

My wife and I call this the "ministry of being available."

Neighboring is an opportunity to be thankful for those living nearest us, a chance to be a blessing or generous, and an opportunity also to receive. You will likely be surprised by the unique gifts of the people that live near you if you take the time to get to know them!

An engaged neighbor knows that the opposite of loving their neighbor is not hate, it is apathy. If you really want to love your neighbors, start by learning and using their names! Then find ways to do life together.

An engaged neighbor invests in the neighborhood, attends homeowners meetings (if there are any) and is serious about watching and protecting their neighbor's property.

An engaged neighbor is committed to finding neighborhood solutions, not problems. Anyone can complain but few consider how kindness and forgiveness and mutual respect can solve most neighborhood and community issues.

An engaged neighbor pushes against America's cultural trend of selfishness and isolation. Instead of always picking self-interests (and thinking of their home as a fortress of solitude or refuge) an engaged neighbor recognizes that selfishness destroys relationships, health and community.

An engaged neighbor reaches out to those in the neighborhood that are overlooked, marginalized, disabled, widowed, lonely or forgotten.

An engaged neighbor follows the relational example set for us nearly 2,000 years ago: listen well, ask lots of questions, embrace interruptions, be of service and sharing hope.

Being an engaged neighbor can bring out the best in all of us. The good in humankind bubbles up when neighbors form mutual relationships of help and support, kindness and understanding.

This year more than others, we need to be reminded that engaged neighbors help to create good neighborhoods and vibrant communities that are safe, clean and friendly.

REPUBLIC SPECIFIC METHODS

At the heart of this proposal packet is the idea that we want residents of Republic to engage with each other and with civic life. Doing so builds connections and improves our social fabric. This is especially important as the community grows.

Working together we can create a community where being connected as a neighbor is one of our core values. It begins by setting the example ourselves. But then we also have to use the language of an engaged neighbor and tell stories that showcase engaged neighbors.

Storytelling is an important part of changing the narrative and getting people to think about what being a good neighbor means to them.

Equally important to make “neighboring” popular is education on what it means, how to connect with people, and how to use the gifts and assets of your neighborhood.

The answer may be neighborhood labs in garages and neighborhood gathering spots across the city, reaching 8-10 people at a time. A framework in which to approach the issue is important and well as regular discussion. And larger events might also create momentum.

I do think it is worth discussing how we recognize engaged neighbors in Republic and how we support their efforts. Is this an annual awards banquet or is it working within the current structure of the Republic Community Foundation?

Could it mean getting local businesses involved in supporting neighbor-theme weeks or coming up with our own neighborhood focused event?

Having pastors at churches in Republic work together to launch a neighbor themed month would move the needle quickly. But we also need a mechanism in place that makes it easy for members to put in to practice what they have heard about the importance of loving their immediate neighbors. This might include church members doing work that is needed to eliminate code violations in town or more neighborhood focused events.

Or, could this be accomplished with neighbor themed education and events in our schools, encouraging students of all ages to become engaged in their neighborhood and community?

What I do know is that this approach is going to require coordination beyond that of a single person or a volunteer.



GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK 2022

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 4

In honor of Missouri Good Neighbor Week:

- Help us reach our goal of 10,000 Acts of Neighboring in Missouri by sharing what you did for your neighbors this week!
- Nominate an Engaged Neighbor that you know

(All nominees will receive a small prize, and grand prizes will be awarded to winners.)

Learn more today!

missourigoodneighborweek.com

#MOGOODNEIGHBORS



10 County Residents Recognized for Their Neighboring Efforts

Missourians celebrated the first Missouri Good Neighbor Week (Sept 28 – Oct. 4) by doing neighboring acts and nominating others as the most engaged neighbors.

The Greene County MU Extension Council also selected county winners.

These neighboring stories do not normally make the news, but these behaviors impact our health, community, and democracy. The 2022 award winners in Greene County are as follows.

ACTS OF NEIGHBORING

Lyndal Scranton and Jerry Pendergrass of Springfield provide lawn care for eight low-income neighbors free of charge.

Twenty-four residents of the new Owen Park Neighborhood Association in Republic donated \$340, 80 pairs of socks, to People Helping People, enough to create boxes for 30 families.

Westside Neighborhood Betterment Association of Springfield held a neighborhood event on Oct. 1 in the park featuring pizza and games.

Gordon-Chumbley organized an outdoor potluck/campfire for residents of her block in Springfield on Oct. 1 for 23 neighbors.

Nicole and Jason Parke hosted a pancake party in their driveway for 32 neighbors.

MOST ENGAGED NEIGHBORS

Judy Davis (Springfield, Mo.) – Judy is 84 years old and the glue that holds the neighborhood together. "Judy worked for weeks this summer organizing a sit-down dinner for all 13 families on our street. She is so loved by all," wrote her nominator.

Liz Scoggins (Springfield, Mo.) -- Liz lives in the Weller Neighborhood, volunteers at Weller Elementary, and is connected to her neighbors. "Liz doesn't let her lack of financial resources keep her from blessing others. When others find excuses, she finds a way," wrote her nominator.

Sandi Huston (Springfield, Mo.) – Sandi is a member of the Westside Neighborhood Betterment Association, the creator of a memorial garden and the maintainer of a neighborhood little library. "Sandi is the neighbor everyone would like to have," wrote her nominator.

Steven Stovall (Bois D'Arc, Mo.) – Helps his neighbor (a cancer patient) with chores and errands so she can continue living on her farm. "He has gone far beyond being a good neighbor. He and his wife have made it possible for me to be home and happy," wrote her nominator.

Cindy and Ray Sullens (Battlefield, Mo.) – They have come to the aid of a neighbor facing serious health concerns by doing chores of kindness. "They have been a lifesaver for my husband and me during the most difficult and the lowest point in our lives," wrote her

nominator.

STATEWIDE AWARDS

There were also 17 statewide awards presented. Two of those went to Greene County residents.

- Sharon Taylor Gullett of Springfield was recognized with the Best of Missouri Award for organizing a lantern walk in the Rountree neighborhood. Over 500 luminaries lined the neighborhood's sidewalk for one mile on Oct. 1.
- Pamela S. Buhr of Springfield was recognized as one of Missouri's Most Engaged Neighbors for her efforts in the Brentwood Neighborhood Association and for hosting a connection cookout for her own immediate neighbors.

REPUBLIC MAKES SMALL SHOWING MAY WANT TO TIE NEIGHBOR WEEK TO PUMPKIN DAZE LOCALLY

Despite advertisement on local social media pages, in the Greene County Commonwealth, and a 1500 house mailing, Republic residents had a small showing in this year's Missouri Good Neighbor Week. Granted there was a busy week of activity in the park and a much hyped high school football game going on, but those are not the only factors working against us.

After the event I have heard of some things people did with or for their neighbors and just did not report it, but still, for a community that has been doing this longer than many the low numbers were a disappointment.

One factor could be the lack of local partners in support of Missouri Good Neighbor Week. My hope is that in 2023, more churches will embrace the idea and organize efforts.

But also, this is the same week as Pumpkin Daze and it is difficult to promote both within the same week. **One of the organizers of Pumpkin Daze has asked me to consider ways to incorporate neighboring into that event.** Doing so presents additional challenges of space and costs. But there might be something that is uniquely Republic that would fit.

For example, in Battle Creek, Michigan, home of Kellogg's and Post Cereal Companies, the city annually lines Main Street with tables and an array of disposable bowls and utensils for what is called the "National Cereal Festival." Basically the entire town (and visitors) show up to eat breakfast cereal together! Would something like that work as part of Pumpkin Daze? Perhaps a Pumpkin Pie contest and afternoon pie eating festival?

This is a partnership worth exploring. Promotional help on Missouri Good Neighbor Week from the city would be great too, but I realize that is difficult when Pumpkin Daze needs the same type of marketing support.

Neighboring 101 Could Use More Participation from Republic

You can register for Neighboring 101 free at <http://extension.missouri.edu> until Dec. 16. After that time, there will be a one-time enrollment fee of \$25 for this on-going program.

Upcoming sessions and guests include the following.

POWER OF FORGIVENESS

December 15, 2022 — Patricia Plumb is a guest lecturer for the International Forgiveness Institute. The IFI and its founder have 30 years of research supporting the power of forgiveness to heal families, relationships and even entire communities. We will look at what role forgiveness can play in creating or restoring strong neighbor relationships.

In 2023, there will be a one-time fee of \$25 to enroll in Neighboring 101.

CITY EFFORTS AT NEIGHBORING

January 19, 2023 - Representatives of the City of Arvada, CO, Peoria, AZ and Excelsior Springs, MO will be our special guests as they share about their citywide neighboring initiatives. These programs empower residents to become active partners in making their respective cities a vibrant and resilient community. These cities support the effort by providing resources and training opportunities to residents who would like to bring neighbors together.

START OF THREE MONTHS OF GUEST AUTHORS

February 16, 2023 - **Peter Lovenheim** is an author and journalist whose articles and essays have appeared in the New York Times, New York magazine, The Los Angeles Times, Parade, Politico, The Washington Post, and other publications. His most recent book, *The Attachment Effect*, is attracting a worldwide readership. He is Washington Correspondent for the Rochester Beacon, an online source of news and commentary for his hometown of Rochester, NY. He is our guest this month because of a book he wrote about 10 years ago titled: "In the Neighborhood: The Search for Community on an American Street, One Sleepover at a Time."

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR DAY

March 16, 2023 - **Annual Mister Rogers Lecture**. This year we welcome: Maxwell King! Maxwell King is the former editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer and president of the Heinz Endowments. He is the author of the New York Times-bestselling Mister Rogers biography "The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers." King also served as chairman of the board of the national Council on Foundations and as president of The Pittsburgh Foundation.

PLACEMAKING EXPERT

April 20, 2023 - **Melody Warnick**, author of "This Is Where You Belong: The Art and Science of Loving the Place You Live."

NEIGHBORHOOD LABS ONLINE

Using a new curriculum designed to help individuals discover the gifts in their neighborhood. To engage those gifts is the topic of this online class/study that will take place in three parts as part of the Zoom program in June, July and August.

Class offered
via zoom to over
600 students.



Only registered
members can
access recordings
of all past classes.

Neighboring 101

- Dec. 15 – The role of forgiveness in neighborhood relationships.
- Jan. 19 – Panel discussion on creating city-neighboring initiatives
- Feb. 16 – Peter Lovenheim, author of “In the Neighborhood.”
- March 16 – Maxwell King, author of “The Good Neighbor”
- April 20 – Melody Warnick, author of “This is Where You Belong.”
- May 18 – Discovering your gifts and the gifts in your neighborhood
- June-July-August: ABCD approach to impacting your neighborhood

Must register online at extension.missouri.edu



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“Small Town Feel” is About Connectedness, Applies to Your Community

For the Springfield Daily Citizen — November 2022 — by David L. Burton

The image of “small-town” America has been romanticized over the years. But still, for many who grow up in a small town, the feeling it provides is worth protecting.

I know a few things about growing up in a small town. For 26 years, I called Ash Grove, Missouri, home. Growing up in Ash Grove from the mid-1960s through the 1980s was like living in Mayberry, the fictional town of Andy Griffith, on television. (More on this later).

Some residents living in cities around the perimeter of Springfield have been sharing on social media about their desire to retain the "small town feel" of their town.

Critics will complain that changes are causing the community to lose its “small-town feel.” Sometimes that phrase is used because the town population has grown. Sometimes it is because of increased crime, new faces in the stores, or even tax proposals.

Relators often talk about the small-town feel of a town where they are selling homes. Many communities brag about having a small-town feel. One study had 80 percent of respondents saying the number one goal of their city should be to "preserve the small-town feel."

DEFINE SMALL-TOWN FEEL

The phrase "small town feel" evokes a quiet, laid-back lifestyle in a close-knit community where people know each other, can rely on each other, and where people are connected.

Engagement and connection are at the root of creating a "small-town feel."

You, dear reader, are key to the "small-town feel" of your community. If you think the "small town feel" has disappeared, could it be that you have disengaged from your community?

Some people don't want to deal with their neighbors, volunteer in a park, or make eye contact with others. But a community is built by those who are willing to engage. A small-town feel is created when you take the time to get to know people and find ways to connect.

That is something a city government cannot do for you.

Vickie Pratt, senior vice president of economic development at the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, says the small-town feel is about connectedness, and those who fear its loss are communicating something else.

“When people say they don’t want to lose the small-town feel, they are really saying they are afraid they will feel left out, or not be part of the decision-making,” said Pratt. “They won’t say it that way, but what they are expressing is that they are afraid of being left out, afraid there won’t be a place to be engaged, and afraid they won’t matter.”

If you think your town has lost its "small town feel," could that loss of connection be a result of

you becoming less engaged?

Start by learning and using the names of your immediate neighbors.

Then find a way to volunteer in the community. Not online but in person with a community festival committee or organization.

Next, attend community events, shop locally, hang out locally, and connect with others in a local club, organization, or a local church.

These steps create community connections that help you feel more connected and engaged. Before you know it, the town will have a "small town feel" again.

LACK OF NEIGHBOR CONNECTIONS MATTERS

Being neighborly is something of a lost art in America. In the 1970s, according to the Pew Research Center, more than 60 percent of people socialized with their neighbors at least monthly. Today, that number has shrunk to 25 percent or less.

According to research released last year, a third of Americans don't interact with their neighbors. Another study says half of us cannot name one of the people who share our buildings and blocks.

There are many reasons for this shift, from development patterns that make it harder to connect with people nearby to technologies that make it easier to connect with people far away.

The combined effect, says Marc Dunkelman of Brown University, is significant. A few years ago, Dunkelman wrote, "The Vanishing Neighbor: The Transformation of American Community."

He says the combined effect of technology and fewer connections with neighbors has profoundly affected politics, economics, and innovation.

"The lack of neighborly connections matters greatly," said Dunkelman.

Likening human relationships to the rings of Saturn, Dunkelman says we are increasingly spending our time and energy on the inner ring, which is family and close friends, and on the outer ring, which is full of people we don't know but share an interest with, typically online.

It's that middle ring — the one powered by "relationships that are familiar, but not intimate" — that we increasingly overlook. Dunkelman says the loss of the middle ring is a root cause of, among other things, political dysfunction in America.

"Issues that used to be hashed out over backyard fences are now hashed out in the halls of Congress. The less we talk with people with different viewpoints, the more battle-hardened we all become," said Dunkelman.

This disappearance of middle-ring relationships also has implications for community and place. "You're much less likely to go to a PTA meeting, bowl in a league, or have a block party when you don't know your neighbors," Dunkelman said.

SONG FOR YOUR HOMETOWN

The idea of getting to know your neighbors and embracing your town reminds me of the Andy Griffith Show (1960-1968), which aired an episode titled “A Singer in Town,” which first aired on April 11, 1966.

In this episode, Mayberry residents are excited when television and singing star Kevve Hazelton comes to town. He is there for a quiet rest and fishing.

Aunt Bee and her friend Clara decide to try to get Kevve to record a song they wrote for a town celebration. Kevve is not initially interested, but his manager thinks it has potential, so he agrees. Ultimately, he invites the women to the studio to watch the show.

However, in rehearsal, Aunt Bee and Clara see Kevve has turned their ballad about Mayberry into a rock and roll song with electric guitars and go-go dancers.

With only a half hour to air time, they tell him he has to change the arrangement. Everything ends well when Kevve slows the song down and sings a soft melody for the cameras.

“My hometown is the greatest place I know, where the neighbors I find are gentle and kind and the living easy and slow. My hometown is the only place to be, here the worries are small and the kids grow tall, and strong, and healthy and free. It’s my hometown, my hometown, Mayberry, Mayberry.”

Some have used episodes in the Andy Griffith Show as part of a Bible study. I have used two different episodes to teach about community newspapers. In the case of this hometown episode, the show can teach us about neighbors and community development.

Healthy communities need volunteers like Aunt Bee and Clara who are willing to take the initiative and make something beautiful.

Healthy communities address problems head-on, find solutions, and nurture their children. Those types of actions make for a quality of life.

Healthy communities embrace new ideas and focus on what a town can become tomorrow not only what the town has been.

GO BUILD CONNECTIONS

That brings us back to engaging with neighbors to help create a “small-town feel” right where you live – in a neighborhood, an association, or a community.

You can create a livable community that feels small with neighborhood connections. It also helps to invest in your community by attending various meetings and gatherings or hanging out at third places. (More about that last item next month).

You might even take it a step further and host a driveway cookout, organize a neighborhood parade, do front porch concerts, or organize a lemonade crawl through the neighborhood.

The end result will be connectedness for you and an improved community for everyone else.

Becoming An Engaged Neighbor

Small Steps Can Make a Big

Difference in Greene County, Mo



Extension
University of Missouri

Learn more online



SCAN ME

Service

Organize a fun service project for the community!



Clubs + Cookouts

Commit to scheduled plans with them. How about a game night, book club, or community cookout?



Get to know each other

What are their hobbies? Ask them! One of the best ways to learn about your neighbors is by getting to know them in a fun environment. Who doesn't love festivities?



Share contact information

Everyone enjoys a helping hand. Lend some contact information they may need, such as a restaurant, upcoming event, or even your phone number!

Say hello!

It's the small steps that count. Introduce yourself to people you have not met before!



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