

# Two KAN STEP Projects Move Towards Completion: Navarre Community Center and Library in Troy

**T**wo projects continue under the KAN STEP Program in Kansas as of February 1, 2017. These are at Navarre and Troy. I would like to showcase some of the progress on these two projects in support of the program but to also give credit to the many volunteers who have been involved.

## Navarre Community Center

The citizens in and around Navarre in eastern Dickson County are well on the way to rehabilitate the old school building there into an updated, functional community center. Navarre is located seven miles south of Enterprise, Kan., or about 13 miles southeast of Abilene.

The Navarre project involves removal and replacement of all plumbing and heating systems; all new electrical wiring is also being installed. The old gymnasium was re-studded to form new perimeter walls and a new ceiling was also



Tammy and Ryan Riffel pause at the new ADA ramp connecting the hallway to the gymnasium/community room. Ryan is the project Sparkplug.

added. Sections of interior block walls were removed to accommodate the new uses of areas. The project is massive as it involves 7,388 sq. ft. of building space. Dickinson County, on behalf of



The project involves extensive areas of new ceilings. As of February 1, volunteers have donated five thousand hours of labor.

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The entire gym was furred out, sheetrocked and insulated as one aspect of the project. The space will also serve as a community room.

the Navarre community, received a \$299,998 KAN STEP grant for the project. Ryan Riffel is the lead Sparkplug for the project.

As of February 1, 2017, the project is approximately 75 percent complete. The goal is to have the project completed by sometime in April. Remaining work includes finishing of two bathrooms, some painting of walls and installation of the cabinetry in the kitchen area.

**Tammy, wife of Sparkplug Ryan Riffel, says the project has been something of a learning experience.**

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Tammy, wife of Sparkplug Ryan Riffel, says the project has been something of a learning experience. "My advice to any other community is to make sure you have open lines of communication with your architect or

engineer," she says. "Take the time to evaluate all the options; looking back we could have done some things differently, but we will have a great facility that the community will put to good use and be proud of," she comments. There have been approximately 50 volunteers on the project. BG Consulting, Manhattan, has provided design services; grant administration is by North-Central Kansas Planning Commission.

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# Challenges on Library Project at Troy Include Maintaining Operation

**T**he city of Troy, located in extreme northeast Kansas, was awarded a \$299,955 KAN STEP Grant in 2013 for the total renovation of the Library District 1 Doniphan County central branch facility in Troy. As of February 1, the project is about two-thirds complete; a request for extension of time for completion is being requested to the Kansas Department of Commerce.

A challenge on this project is that an estimated twenty-five percent of the time for volunteers has been spent moving library materials from place to place in order for volunteers to work.

The main goal was to bring the facility up to code with three new ADA-compliant bathrooms, ADA compliant entrances and exits including a new fire exit in the rear of the building and a complete new facade with glass front and entry vestibule. Other major aspects included wiring, gas line, water, sewer and four new HVAC systems as well as new office spaces. The project is also to receive a basic face lift to all existing rooms (walls, floors and ceilings). A goal is for the building to appear as new construction when complete except for areas where the Library District opted to maintain a rustic, nostalgic appearance.



Gus Gronniger and Ron Blocker create opening for a new door.

This project has had many hurdles and proven to be more extensive than anyone could foresee. First, the building itself serves as a huge hurdle in two major ways. The structure is a conglomerate of buildings added onto in various ways for at least the last hundred years and is a multi-level structure as a result. Obviously there were issues that the architect or any local person could not be aware of. There were many hidden issues that could not be foreseen until demolition. This forced some redrawing of plans on the fly as the project progressed.

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**Another complication was that the Library District was required to allow the former owner of the building access to an extensive array of materials stored in his woodworking shop in the basement until his passing.**



All new facade is nearly complete.



The project includes four HVAC systems.

of the building access to an extensive array of materials stored in his woodworking shop in the basement until his passing. This resulted in a delayed start of the KAN STEP project.

The fact that the Library needs to continue operations during the renovation has forced volunteers to divide the project into four major phases. Many hours have been consumed moving materials from room to room and within the same room just to gain space to work. That has made somewhat of a safety nightmare for the library patrons

trying to navigate through construction areas to use the only existing restroom and library space.

Volunteer labor for this project has proven to be a hurdle mainly because of the need for volunteers who were more knowledgeable on some aspects of the work. One of the major volunteers lost his own home to a fire but he still found time to help on the library projects as he constructed a new home and also kept his own business in operation. The project has benefited immensely because of the volunteer work by Gus Gronniger, a retired industrial engineer. It's clear that this renovation has required more planning than would have been necessary for a new building. The volunteers continue to work towards the end; the project is receiving many compliments from patrons and citizens awaiting a finished project.

The architect is BG Consultants, Manhattan, Kan. Grant administration is being provided by Government Assistance Service, Lawrence, Kan. The volunteers continue to work towards the end; the project is receiving many compliments from patrons and citizens awaiting a finished project.

*Joe Schmelzle has been assisting the KAN STEP Program with KRWA since 2014. From 1978 to 1995 he was a worker and foreman for a general contractor that specializes in commercial construction. Since 1995 Joe has operated his own electrical business.*



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