



THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Missouri Community Betterment's e-Newsletter | DECEMBER 2018

Celebrating and connecting Missouri communities to each other and a network of resource providers to empower them to improve their quality of life.

A call to "Believe in Better"



The possibility of better

Better opens the door.
Better challenges us to see what's there and begs us to imagine how we could improve on that.
Better invites us in and gives us a chance to seek dramatic improvement on behalf of those we seek to serve.

As our 55th anniversary year closes we are more committed than ever to serving grassroots volunteers who are banding together with their neighbors to be change-makers – people who believe in “the possibility of better” – in their communities.

Do you believe in the possibility of better?

Being a believer is not always an easy position to be in... especially in small rural communities that do not have the human and financial resources in place that most metropolitan area residents can call upon for making improvements.

MCB provides **helpful connections** to volunteers in Missouri neighborhoods and communities of all sizes, and

we focus most efforts on those in rural areas who simply need to be pointed in the right direction for the **technical assistance, professional consulting and funding** they are seeking. MCB's website and experienced team share a wealth of knowledge on a wide range of economic development, management and volunteer topics. They also serve as **conduits to many public and private resource partners** at the federal, state and regional levels.

In addition to connecting community volunteers to resources and each other, MCB serves as a **catalyst and accountability partner for communities** who want guidance and need a boost of encouragement from an outside source. Consider these recent notes:

“Through the presentation of inspirational and encouraging speakers our adults and youth have been able to bring important and exciting ideas back to our community during the 43 years of participation that have resulted in over 200 progressive projects in our town. Many of our successes have been shared with other communities.”

– Elaine Campbell, president of Houston Community Betterment and Arts Council, Houston, MO

“This program provides and leads to opportunities for my constituents that would not be available any other way.”

– Missouri Senator Dan Hege man, 12th District

“Improving our community quality of life is not an easy task. MCB promotes committees of action and has provided the avenue for volunteers to step forward and lead the drive for all kinds of improvements. We now have a Heritage Days event, a committee working on improving the Farmers Market area on our Public Square, and improvement of the overall appearance of our older downtown area. City leaders typically do not have time for these kinds of projects but can play a supportive role as the projects progress. So, lots of things have been put in play, none of which would be happening without MCB.”

– David Norman, Mayor of Ava, MO

We often hear from community members how valuable they feel their experiences with MCB are to their ability to move their community efforts forward. Online access to information is helpful, however, the **personal connection that is offered through our community visits and statewide gatherings** are what continue to set MCB apart from other organizations. It is this **down-to-earth human-centered approach along with a dedication to listening, problem-**

solving, and leadership in partnership with participating communities that allows MCB to meet the need so many community advocates have for a human liaison to the digital and support organization resources available to them.

“Missouri Community Betterment is a tremendous association that recognizes the efforts and achievements of our state’s rural communities. As a former youth member, community member and State Board Member I am a product of the leadership development promoted by the association.” – *United States Congressman Jason Smith*

In addition to our mission, our sponsors and friends will also be excited to learn that Missouri Community Betterment, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization recognized by the I.R.S. has also recently received **GuideStar’s 2018 Platinum Seal of Transparency** for organizational management practices.

As we enter 2019, we are expanding our funding model to invite more believers in to help make a difference. Although we do not have Missouri Neighborhood Assistance Program [NAP] tax credits to offer donors at this time as we have often had in the past from the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Missouri community volunteers need support and deserve recognition now more than ever. MCB is not only maintaining its number of 60 participating communities, but we have been very busy this year communicating with a list of 48 communities who are seriously interested in getting involved as they seek to improve the quality of life in their communities. The participation in our Fall Conference alone increased 20 percent!

The need for, and interest in, our services is on a significant rise. We simply have to raise our efforts and resources to better meet the existing need.

If you believe in the possibility of better, and that community volunteerism matters to the prosperity and quality of living in our state, will you help us as we move forward in our mission of empowerment? Support Missouri Community Betterment today!

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Board takes bold leap forward

We have more big news about your organization beyond the proven mission model and growth of interest and need. Our leadership has invested in innovative "collaborACTIVE" strategy and momentum with a strong belief in the value of bettering our organization with the following:

1. As the longest standing statewide community betterment/development organization in the nation, we have updated our vision, mission and purpose statements and strategic action plan to **focus our efforts on the greatest needs and unique value of our role** in ensuring Missouri thrives with connected communities where people desire to live, learn, work, play and visit.
 2. Our **website** will soon be getting a facelift reflecting these updates that will make it **easier to navigate and more accessible** to more community volunteers.
 3. All of our communications materials are in the midst of receiving updates that **better share the impact** of investments in empowering community volunteers.
 4. And, we are swiftly moving forward with plans to **expand our support to, and celebration of, communities who are strategically planning their progress**. Communities will soon be able to use our new checklist as a planning guide and annual self-assessment. By bringing together the promising practices of many public and private community development and integrated management models through this co-creation process, MCB seeks to uplift and promote all technical assistance resource organization partners to better meet and serve grassroots volunteers where they are in their knowledge gathering and leadership development.
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55th Anniversary Year sees growth

The Annual Fall Conference's theme, "Rural Rally," was a fitting celebration of achievements and collaboration of many communities throughout the state (with a 20% increase in attendance over the previous year) along with a few milestones of our own. Missouri Community Betterment's leadership spent some time throughout 2018 to pause and plan as **the longest standing statewide community betterment/development organization in the nation**. Here are a few of the highlights of the activity and outcomes:



- **Assisted 62 fully participating communities** throughout the state with personal visits and guidance that are now gaining access to resources and information relative to their needs.
 - 13 of these communities are new to Missouri Community Betterment's program.
- **Celebrated and uplifted** community efforts, youth/adult collaborations, and outstanding adult and youth leaders at two successful statewide events:
 - **Missouri Youth Civic Leaders Summit, "The Courage to Lead"** held March 2-4, 2018
 - MCB Youth Advisory Board and Lafayette County 4-H hosted the event contributing hours of planning and onsite leadership through youth-adult partnerships.
 - Awarded four IMPACT mini-grants to help implement youth-led projects.
 - **MCB Annual Fall Conference, "Rural Rally"** held October 15-16, 2018
 - Honored to have Governor Parson kick off the awards ceremony at the Fall Conference.
 - Recognized MCB as the longest standing statewide community betterment/development organization in the nation. Shared promising practices through educational and motivational sessions that encouraged participants to think differently about their communities as they work to make them places where youth and adults alike want to build their lives.
- **Gathered innovative ideas** and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders for consideration on how to best meet the evolving needs of communities in the age of technology and a global economy.
- **Invested** the time, expertise, and resources necessary for transformational strategic action planning **to carry MCB's program boldly forward.**
- Leveraged budget efficiently and effectively; fully funded to carry out planned programming.

A Brief History of MCB

Our organization was officially formed in 1963 as an outgrowth of a grassroots initiative spurred by rural utility companies in the 1950s under the name "**Planned Progress.**" Helping communities of all sizes learn how to help themselves was so successful, Missouri's Department of Economic Development [MoDED] decided to fully fund and manage the initiative so it could continue to grow and foster even more community development activities over the next 25 years.

By 1987, much progress had been made throughout the state. There were also more programs in place by then providing various types and levels of support for economic development and technical assistance to communities. In 1989, the Missouri Community Betterment Educational Fund, Inc. was created as a separate organization from MoDED and we officially became a stand-alone 501(c)(3) nonprofit with our own board of directors comprised of private and public civic leaders.

For nearly 30 years we have now been celebrating a broad range of supporters for our continued work in communities from public and private entities and individuals. Thanks to banks, utility companies, cooperatives, agribusinesses, universities, foundations, government agencies and departments, regional planning commissions, small businesses and individual friends of MCB, we have continued to help youth and adult community members help themselves for **55 Years.**

2019 will mark a renewed grassroots "Planned Progress" initiative. Keep an eye open for more news coming soon on this initiative that will include helpful new resources for community volunteers!

Thank you to our 2017–2018 Donors!

Annual Sponsorship Levels

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Gold - \$5,000-\$6,999
Silver - \$2,500-\$4,999
Bronze - \$1,500-\$2,499
Corporate - \$500-\$1,499
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2017–2018 Sponsors

Platinum

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Questions??

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