

## KANSAS! Magazine

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

What is the magazine of the year? In 2014, the publication which was selected as magazine of the year in its circulation class is a magazine which celebrates the people and places of the great state of Kansas. In addition to this award, we are also celebrating the fact that 2015 marked seventy years of the publication now known as KANSAS! Special thanks to writer Julie Tollefson whose article in KANSAS! Magazine shared the history of this beautiful publication. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Andrea Etzel is the editor of KANSAS! Magazine. Andrea is the latest in the series of about a dozen editors who have guided the publication throughout its seven decades.

The publication began rather modestly. In November 1945, the Kansas Industrial Development Commission (predecessor of the Kansas Department of Commerce) launched a little eight-page newsletter called *To The Stars*. It was a rather Plain Jane newsletter in black-and-white.

The inaugural issue stated: "*To The Stars* is a new publication which we hope will be of help to Kansans, particularly to those interested in making Kansas the most outstanding state in the Middlewest. We want it to be informative. We will pass along all ideas and developments which have merit. We will, from time to time, have information that will be of benefit to every community in the state. We believe *To The Stars* will serve a real purpose in Kansas life."

The publication changed through the years. In 1957, it was rechristened KANSAS! – complete with the exclamation point. Over time, it transitioned from bi-monthly to quarterly publishing, from a black-and-white newsletter to a full-color magazine, from free distribution to paid subscriptions and advertising, and from industry-focused to an emphasis on lifestyle and leisure. It is published through the state Travel and Tourism Division, now part of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism.

One thing has not changed: A deep commitment to Kansas. Through gorgeous photography, excellent writing, and high quality printing, it lovingly depicts and describes people and attractions all across this state.

For example, a magazine feature called Reasons We Love Kansas highlights dining, shopping and businesses around the state. In addition, there are listings of upcoming events and high quality articles on various Kansans and their communities.

One consistent hallmark of KANSAS! Magazine (since it became a color publication) is high quality photography. The Gallery section includes awesome, reader-submitted photos from around the state. Anyone who thinks Kansas is not scenic should see these photos, which will convince them otherwise.

Andrea Etzel, a Topekan, became editor in 2014, succeeding Jennifer Haugh. Three past editors served for a combined 45 years. Don Richards was editor from 1953 to 1964. He was succeeded by the first woman editor, Frances Smith, who served from 1966 to 1977. Andrea Glenn had the longest tenure, from 1978 to 2001.

In 2014, the International Regional Magazine Association named KANSAS! Magazine its magazine of the year in its circulation class.

“We’re really excited about hitting 70 years,” said current editor Andrea Etzel. In honor of this milestone, the magazine invited readers to submit their bucket list of favorite things to do and see in Kansas. Then an honorary editorial board narrowed down the more-than-300 submissions to a Top 70 list, which was featured in the winter 2015 edition.

The Top 70 list includes attractions in every corner of the state, in cities large and small, urban and rural. These include such things as a Sporting KC soccer match in Kansas City and the Flint Hills Discovery Center in Manhattan, plus attractions in rural communities such as Guy and Mae’s Tavern in Williamsburg, population 351, and the Pawnee Indian Museum near Republic, population 156. Now, that’s rural.

“It’s really about exploring your own backyard and appreciating what we have here,” Etzel said. For more information, see [www.KansasMag.com](http://www.KansasMag.com).

What is the magazine of the year? In 2014, it was KANSAS! Magazine, which is celebrating seventy years of publication. We commend Andrea Etzel and all the present and past staff of KANSAS! Magazine for making a difference by portraying our state so beautifully and effectively. To me, it’s a magazine for every year.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.