

Marking a Road to Santa Fe: 200th Commemoration Wagon Show

An antique wagon show will be held September 19-20, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. on the Santa Fe Trail at Council Oak Park, 210 East Main Street, Council Grove, Kansas. The wagon show will have two divisions: wagon and carriage. Trophies will be awarded to the top entry in both divisions. A People's Choice Award will also be awarded. No modern rubber tires and NO animals unless approved by the Wagon Committee. There is no fee to register. Send registration to the Kaw Mission, 500 North Mission, Council Grove, Kansas 66846. Several presenters will be part of the event.

David Sneed, a noted historian of horse-drawn wooden wagons, will be a guest speaker. With more than two decades of personal research, David Sneed is the founder of the country's most extensive private collection of Western vehicle archives. Inside his sprawling files are countless original catalogs, photographs, patents, promotional materials, and related ephemera. Records in his "Wheels that Won The West" compilation span nearly two centuries of horse-drawn vehicle manufacture. Focusing on the Specific farm, freight, ranch, coach, business, and military vehicles, Sneed is an avid writer and curator of thousands of artifacts.

Jeff McManus will be presenting traditional blacksmithing from a portable blacksmith shop housed in a two-wheeled wagon. McManus has lived in Wyoming and has been involved in ranching his entire life. Blacksmithing became an essential interest in his life in 1974, when he started making iron products for Mountain Man reenactors. Since that time, jobs such as iron work for log house interiors, exteriors, along with a few parts for stagecoaches and wagons, have increased his enjoyment of Blacksmithing. His first team to Harness and drive came at the age of 13, helping his dad feed cattle with a team and a hay rack. He has since owned several teams of horses and mules and has gathered a collection of several types of wagons. He is currently President of the National Stagecoach and Freight Wagon Association, and he uses his time to lead the NSFVA's efforts in encouraging us to preserve our history and knowledge of horse-drawn transportation.

Don Werner, of Werner Wagon Works, is a skilled wagon maker and Wagonwright. He will be giving demonstrations on wheelwrighting. Werner of Horton, Kansas, along with his wife Connie, has been in the wagon-building business for 37 years. When Don was a little boy, his dad farmed with a wagon, and he would ride in the back listening to the corn hit the bang boards. From his memory came the desire to build his own wagon, and from that desire, Werner Wagon Works was born. They have products in almost every state, Canada, and Japan. Besides building small buckboards and grand stagecoaches, the Werners also do restoration of horse-drawn wagons. Don is a wheelwright and can make new wheels or restore old ones. The Werners are unique in that they build everything from the ground up. In the U.S. today, there are only a handful of these craftsmen. Their vehicles are housed in a museum and have participated in historical presidential inauguration parades, traveled several historical trails, and are used privately by individuals who love the era of these horse-drawn conveyances.

Steven S. Brosemer, P.S., will display and demonstrate the surveying equipment and techniques used in the time period of the Silbey Survey, along with the maps prepared by Joseph Brown. The expected accuracy and challenges to the survey crew of Brown will also be discussed. This will be a hands-on experience for the participants. Equipment shown will be a period-correct compass and Gunter's chains. Brosemer is now mostly retired and has been in private surveying practice for over forty-five years. He is a 1972 graduate of Wichita State University with a degree in Secondary Education and was authorized to teach Social Studies and Science. After teaching public school for six years, Steve decided to follow in the footsteps of his late father and principal mentor, James H. (Tony) Brosemer, P.S. 82, and became licensed by exam in 1980. Steve has specialized in retracing the Public Land Survey System of Kansas for most of his career. He was President of the Kansas Society of Land Surveyors (KSLS) from 1988 to 1989 and has been an elected Director on four occasions. KSLS has bestowed the Life Member Award, three Presidential Citations, and two Head Chainman Awards on Steve.

The last award was for his work with co-author Norm Bowers on the book, *Boundary Surveying in Kansas*. Steve has published over 90 articles in *Section Lines* (KSLS Newsletter) and has been a presenter at many KSLS-sponsored seminars since 1982. Steve performed a first-person presentation at the Rendezvous 2012 event as Deputy Surveyor Hawn, circa 1860, at Pawnee Rock. In 2013, he published an article in *Wagon Tracks* detailing how to use the original government surveys to locate the Santa Fe Trail accurately. Steve was appointed to three terms on the Kansas State Board of Technical Professions (KSBTP) and was their Chair in 2015-2016. He has also given back to his community, having served as the Chair of the Emporia Area Chamber of Commerce in 2012 and as a longtime member of the Board of Directors of the Lyon County Historical Society.

Historian Mark Brooks is the Site Administrator of the Kaw Mission and Last Chance Store State Historic Sites. He is a fourth-generation Council Grovian; his great-grandfather came to Morris County, Kansas, in a covered wagon. He can trace his lineage back to before Kansas was a territory for five generations. Mark spent 13 years on the Council Grove City Council, leaving as Council President. He is also on the Santa Fe Trail Association Board of Directors. He serves as the liaison between the Kansas Historical Society and the SFTA, in addition to his roles as publication chair, eblast editor, and Heart of the Flint Hills Chapter President. He portrays Seth Millington Hays, the great-grandson of Daniel Boone and Council Grove town founder, in the "Voices of the Wind" pageant held every two years.

Friday, September 19, 2025

9:00 a.m. - David Sneed: Parts of a Wagon

10:00 a.m. – Jeff McManus- Blacksmithing

11:00 a.m. - Mark Brooks: Santa Fe Trail History

Noon: Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. - Steve Brosemer: Surveying the Santa Fe Trail

2:30 p.m. – Jeff McManus: Blacksmithing

3:30 p.m. - Wheelwright Don Werner

5:00 p.m. Wagon Show ends

Saturday, September 20, 2025

9 a.m. - Steve Brosemer: Surveying the Santa Fe Trail

10:00 - Jeff McManus: Blacksmithing

11:00 a.m. - Mark Brooks: Santa Fe Trail History

Noon: Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. - David Sneed: Parts of a Wagon

2:30 p.m. – Wheelwright Don Werner

3:30 p.m. – Jeff McManus: Blacksmithing

5:00 p.m. Wagon Show ends