

**Current FACtS**  
 FAC News to Use  
 February 19, 2015

**Up for a Family Adventure Quest this Year?**



2015 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year for the Kentucky State Parks Family Adventure Quest – the digital photo scavenger hunt for families or friends!

This year's edition has a new twist. Teams of two to six members choose between an eastern or western booklet. This doesn't mean you only get to explore half the state, it just means that the quests that require visiting a specific park will only be in the half of the state you choose.

That still leaves more than two thirds of the challenges that can be answered at your choice of parks. For example, a non-park-specific challenge may ask for a photo of your team building a sand sculpture at a Kentucky State Park beach. The beach you choose is up to you!

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**FAC Spotlight:**  
**Garth Vinson, DFSS, Mentors**  
**Students Through Operation**  
**Preparation**

*Received Community Recognition Award*

For Garth Vinson, horticulturalist with the Landscape Division in the Dept. for Facilities and Support Services, being part of the solution is much better than just complaining about something without any idea of how you might change it.

That's why he's always been interested in giving back, especially when it comes to education and career development.

About five years ago he learned of Operation Preparation, a new initiative through GearUpKentucky. He's been involved with the public school system in various capacities and thought this was a really good way to connect with individual students. Just recently he was recognized for his outstanding contribution to the program.



Operation Preparation is aimed at 8th and 10th grade students, which are pivotal years in the college/career planning process. Mentors not only help students focus on the importance of planning for college and/or a career, they bring real life examples and encouragement. They also bring an unbiased perspective-someone other than a parent or teacher.

"I have such a diverse background myself," said Vinson. "I talk with students about careers in agriculture, military service, aviation, transportation, welding, and the sciences."

Each year Vinson said he probably mentors about 30 students over the course of two days. He looks for the ones that seem especially lost without any direction. He's also encountered some students who "are quite adamant about what they are going to be when they grow up."

When asked if he had any compelling or interesting stories to share Vinson had a quick yes.

"My favorites over the years have been the youth that seem resigned to work a "job" but truly come alive when talking about the possibilities that are out there for them. One fellow started out not knowing what direction to



go. After talking with him about his interests and hobbies it was clear to me that he loved airplanes and aviation related topics. As I told him about the A&P program as a part of the Aviation Maintenance Technology at Somerset Community College you could see is eyes light up! I talked with him recently at another school function and he graduates this spring and is planning to go to Somerset."

Vinson said he's also seen some heartbreaking examples of students who have already given up, even as 10th graders.

"Kids in this category can come from any socio-economic background. Most of them don't realize the possibilities or potential of what is out there awaiting them."

It's important for people to volunteer said Vinson. But he also warns that people need to check their biases or prejudices at the door and try to provide the most clear and accurate information to the students.

On the other hand, he thinks that for many people this would open THEIR eyes to what our youth have to offer today. "These are our future leaders and criminals, our designers and engineers, our laborers and our miscreants. Each of them needs help and guidance to achieve the very best that they can accomplish."

Currently Vinson is involved with the FFA Alumni, serving as a judge for local, state and national FFA events;. He's also a member of the Site Based Decision Making Counsel for Western Hills.

"Be involved and let your voice be heard."

For information on Operation Preparation, go to <http://gearupky.org/opprep2014/>.

Teams have until Dec. 1, 2015, to complete as many quests as they like in an effort to have fun and win prizes. It's a great goal-oriented way to explore the natural and historical resources of the nation's finest park system. A digital camera is necessary to capture your team's fun along your journey, and your photos just might show up on the park website or Facebook page. In fact, you can earn a bonus point just for sharing a picture and quest experience to the parks' Facebook page on your own this year.

Participants from 5 months old to 87 years young enjoyed the quest in 2014, and once they start, many teams repeat year after year. Thirty-eight of the 137 teams that signed up in 2014 were repeat participants. One team has participated for eight years now!

"Team Jones" from Elizabethtown just completed their first quest in 2014.

"We had a great time! My kids would get so excited when I said we were going to do a 'quest' that weekend. I became a

little obsessed with going to as many parks as possible and doing every quest," said Ivy Jones. "We didn't get to all of them this year. Can't wait for next year!"

They may not have visited all the parks, but they did complete 20 quests, which earned them a lodging certificate, a \$25 Kentucky State Parks gift card and four passes to the park fort, house tour, or museum of their choice.

By correctly completing just 10 quests, a team will receive a certificate for a one-night stay at the park lodge of its choice (Sunday through Thursday) and free passes to park museums or forts. Complete 20 quests and receive the lodge stay and passes, plus a \$25 Kentucky State Parks gift card. Complete 25 of the 29 quests and get the lodge stay, passes and a \$50 gift card!

Teams have until Dec. 1, 2015 to submit their quest booklet and CD of photos. As few as four park visits are required to earn the first prize level, if you do your homework.

A \$15 registration fee gets you the quest booklet, a commemorative cap, a kite (yes, to be used for a quest!), bonus BOGO (buy one, get one) coupons for some of the destinations involved, and informational materials to help you along your way.

More details and registration forms can be downloaded at [www.parks.ky.gov](http://www.parks.ky.gov) (look for the "Family Adventure Quest" button), where you can peruse the photo gallery of past participants. You can also pick up a registration form at any Kentucky State Park starting in February.

## Check It Out...

Public libraries across Kentucky are reporting unprecedented usage as technology continues to change the way Kentuckians use their libraries.



Kentucky's 119 public libraries indicated that Kentuckians checked out 30,664,564 items during the 2013-2014 fiscal year, setting a record which was an increase of 2 percent over the previous year.

The driving factor in this increase was the circulation of more than two million e-books. For the first time, the number of e-books checked out from public libraries in the state surpassed the number of items checked out from bookmobiles.

In addition to the dramatic increase in usage of electronic materials, Kentucky's public libraries provided 4,858 computers for public use. In a world where technology is necessary for so many activities, the library is the only place where many Kentuckians have access to a computer to search for employment, access government services, prepare school assignments, and take tests among many other tasks.

Many Kentuckians brought their own devices to use at the library as every library system offered wireless access. More than 1.25 million wireless sessions were counted at library locations. Many other Kentuckians visited their public libraries from home, school or office through library websites and the Kentucky Virtual Library as the libraries play an increasing role in the education of Kentuckians at every level of the educational process.

The number of people registered for library cards in public libraries increased to 2,664,920 or 60% of Kentucky's population.

## Special Election Set for March 3 for Bourbon, Fleming, Harrison, Lewis, Mason, Nicholas, Robertson, & Rowan Counties



A Special Election will be held in Bourbon, Fleming, Harrison, Lewis, Mason, Nicholas, Robertson, and Rowan Counties, Kentucky on March 3, 2015 for State Senator, 27<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District.

Only those citizens who have registered to vote and who reside in these counties shall be entitled to vote in this election.

In accordance with Section 148 of the Kentucky Constitution, KRS 118.035 and the voting leave regulations 101 KAR 2:102, Section 7 and 101 KAR 3:015, Section 7, all employees who are entitled to vote, who are otherwise scheduled to work during the hours that the polls are open, and who request leave in advance shall be granted four (4) hours of voting leave to cast their vote.

If you have questions, check with your supervisor or the Div. of Human Resources.