

Developing and maintaining strong, diverse, active chapters is one of the most important - and difficult - challenges we face.

Local chapters provide the heart of KFTC's power base and grassroots leadership. It's also an acknowledgment that the task of building and maintaining strong, long-term chapters can be a challenge on a par with any difficult issue campaign.

During tonight's Chapter Development armchair we will r

## AGENDA:

- 1.) Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda
- 2.) Overview of key principles for KFTC's chapters
- 3.) Discussion qualities of powerful chapters
- 4.) Share examples of KFTC chapter building over the years

Have folks on the call go around and introduce themselves.

Review Agenda.

Any Questions?

## We have a vision.

We are working for a day when Kentuckians – and all people – enjoy a better quality of life.

**When the lives of people and communities matter before profits.**

When our communities have good jobs that support our families without doing damage to the water, air and land.

**When companies and the wealthy pay their share of taxes and can't buy elections.**

When all people have health care, food, education, clean water and other basic needs.

**When children are listened to and valued.**

When discrimination is wiped out of our laws, habits and hearts.

**And when the voices of ordinary people are heard and respected in our democracy.**

At the start of today's conversation about KFTC chapters, it's worth reminding ourselves of the common vision we are working for.

This is especially true because chapters are so different, one from another. If you attended the Floyd County chapter meeting, the Rowan County chapter meeting, the Madison County chapter meeting, the CKY chapter meeting and then continued on to Louisville and Bowling Green - you would be amazed and a bit bewildered by the range of people, issues, and chapter dynamics. In fact, it might be hard to tell that these local groups are units of the same statewide organization.

But no matter what each group looks like, who is around the table, what issues they work on, or how they run their meetings, they are united behind a common vision. In fact, KFTC's vision statement was developed by our members in 1998 precisely because they realized it was so important to articulate what the heck KFTC's diverse membership has in common with each other, and what all of us is working for.

Let's take a look: (Ask someone to read it.)

## What is a KFTC Chapter?



- Building blocks of KFTC's power and democratic structure.
- One vote on Steering Committee.
- Typically form along county lines.
- Mutual support relationship with statewide organization.

So, we know that KFTC chapters are very different, one from another. And we know they share a common vision and commitment to a set of statewide goals.

Let's take a closer look at what exactly is a KFTC chapter.

Chapters are, as we've said, the building blocks of KFTC's power and democratic structure.

Each chapter gets one vote on KFTC's Steering Committee. This is the board of directors that decides the organizations' strategic priorities, sets policy, and oversees how we manage our resources.

Most but not all chapters form along county lines. The Central KY chapter is official comprised of Fayette County and many of the counties surrounding it. The Bowling Green chapter includes members in several surrounding counties.

Chapters have a mutual support relationship with the statewide organization

What does this mean? Chapters get support support – staffing, resources, information and research, etc – from the statewide organization and in turn, support the statewide organization when needed (participate in committees, volunteer for the Steering Committee, coming out to lobby together in Frankfort, etc.).

Can people think of other ways this mutually supportive relationship work?



## Chapter Rights



- **Formal affiliation with KFTC.**
- **Elect member to Steering Committee and nominate members for other KFTC positions.**
- **Request organizing support and receive preference for opportunities and resources.**
- **Choose local issues & leadership; input into statewide issue priorities.**

Each chapter has certain rights, which are spelled out in a chapter petition form. Chapters review these rights annually when they decide whether to renew their status as a chapter for another year.

Chapters have the right to be formally affiliated with KFTC, to elect a member to the board, to request organizing support and receive preference for opportunities and resources. Chapters have the right to choose local issues and leadership, and they have input into statewide priorities.

It's worth noting that chapters have broad latitude to choose local issues, as long as those issues fall within the bounds of our statewide issue platform. This is a very long document. It's available on our website. It is adopted by our membership each year at our annual meeting. And it describes the position statements taken by the organization. If a chapter is so bold as to find an issue that isn't addressed within the statewide platform, they simply have to request permission from the Steering Committee before they can work on it in KFTC's name.

This does happen. When KFTC chapters started to work on Welfare Reform issues, for example, or Restoration issues, they came to the Steering Committee to request permission. Eventually those local efforts developed into statewide campaigns, and platform itself was expanded to address them directly.

## Chapter Responsibilities



- Elect local leadership.
- 15+ members at start - then grow.
- Raise at least \$500 in grassroots events and help with fundraising.
- Support KFTC's goals and issues.
- Use non-violent, direct-action organizing methods.

Chapters also have a set of minimum responsibilities. They must elect local leadership, including SC rep, a membership and fundraising coordinator, and a publicity coordinator. They must have at least 15 members to start with, and grow to at least 30 within 2 years. They must raise at least \$500 a year in chapter fundraising events - and help raise funds beyond that through memberships and donations. They agree to support KFTC's issues and goals. And they agree to use non-violent, direct-action organizing methods.

Let's take just a moment to look at that last phrase. Is everyone familiar with those terms?

Non-violence is a serious topic that we could take a full day to explore and define, but I think everyone has a good sense of what it means at a basic level.

What about direct-action organizing? This term really captures our belief, as an organization, that fundamental social change happens when people who are directly affected by a problem work together to challenge those in power to make necessary changes. Direct action organizing is about changing power relationships, not just changing policy. Direct action, in our view, is any action that people take themselves to directly confront and put pressure on decision-makers. Direct actions exist on a spectrum, obviously, that includes letter writing, lobbying, testifying and demonstrating. It can also include civil disobedience.

## What are chapters good for?

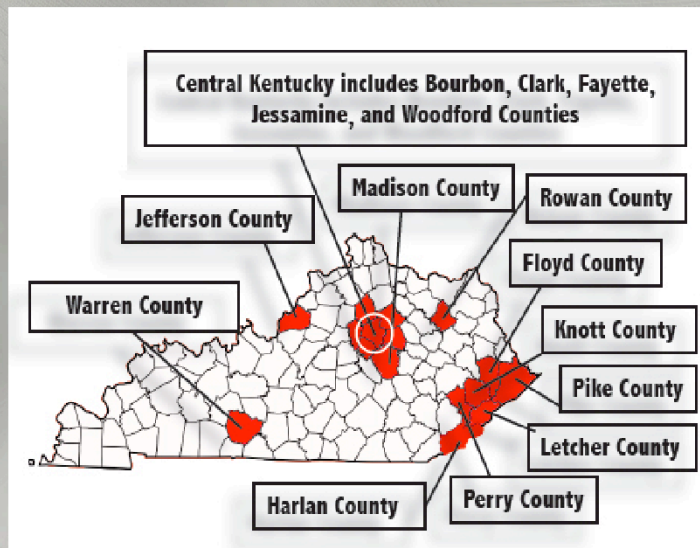


•So now we know what chapters are. What I want to know is, What are they good for? (Why do chapters matter? Why are they worth the trouble it takes? Why not just have a statewide organization of individuals?)

- Entry point for new members/leaders.
- Chapters give local members connection to KFTC's statewide power.
- Chapters give local members access to KFTC's internal decision-making.
- Chapters represent a number of votes in a give district
- Enable us to activate and turn people out locally on key local and statewide issues
- Enable us to build relationships with decision-makers.
- Enable us to raise money through local events and local personal networks.
- Enable us to make key issues important in local elections and educate voters
- Enable us to get local press on issues that otherwise would be ignored
- Chapters are the place where many people learn leadership and organizing skills.

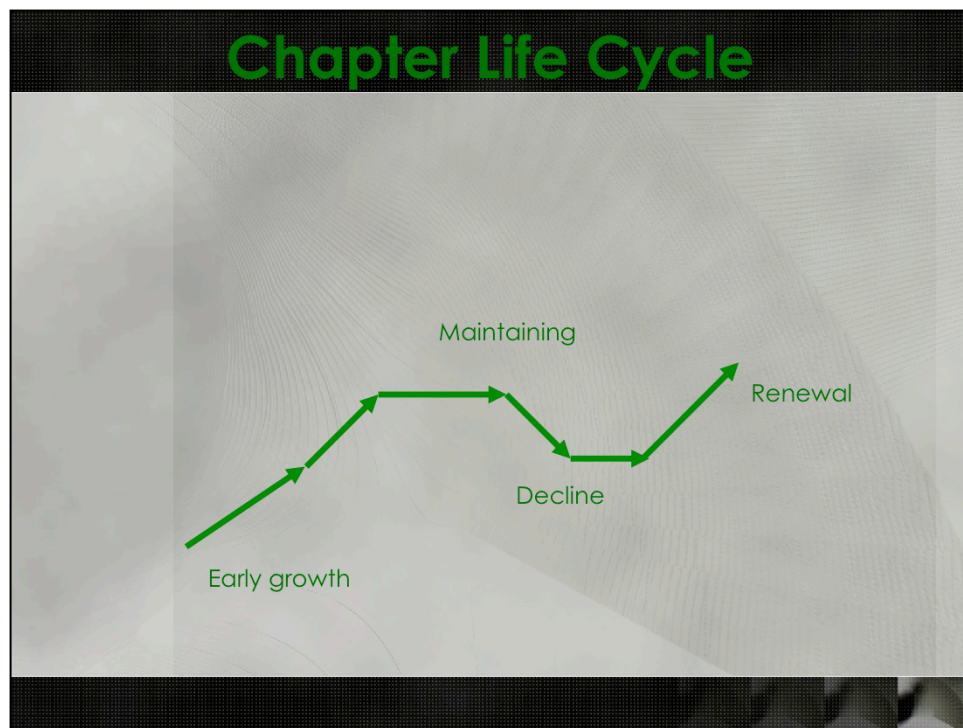


## KFTC Chapters 2009



Here's a map of our chapters we had in 2009. This map needs to be updated slightly – we no longer have chapters in Pike and Knott (although Knott is about to come back). And we have chapters in Scott County and Northern Kentucky now (just goes to show that some chapters can come and go).





As many of you know if you've been part of a chapter for a while, there is a fairly predictable ebb and flow to chapter development. Typically chapters experience a great deal of growth and influx of energy early on as things are first getting started. Often, but not always, this phase is associated with a hot local issue campaign.

Then there may be a period of time - years even - when the chapter's growth levels off. This can be a very productive time. Often in this phase a chapter may focus more on statewide issues, using the power that it's built through local campaigns to weigh in on a larger stage. It can also be a bit disorienting for members who came in during the initial campaign. People may wonder, "What are we doing now that our first campaign has been resolved? What are we for, now?"

Often this period is followed by a time of relative decline. Sometimes this is sped up by a transition in staff or leadership. Other times it is gradual as people lose a sense of urgency and begin to drift away.

Very often, this time of flagging energy is followed by a period of renewal. Sometimes that's sparked by the appearance of new staff, new leaders, or a new issue. Sometimes existing leaders pull together and refocus their efforts.

The take away lesson - I think - is that each of our chapters is somewhere on this chart. Where ever we are, I think it's helpful to understand that it's part of a familiar cycle. Our plans and actions as leaders can help manage the challenges of rapid early growth, or focus the energy of a chapter that is

## How do chapters build their power?



We've talked a lot about how chapters are a building block of KFTC's power. Let's look at that a bit more closely. How do chapters build their own power? What are some of the ingredients of a powerful chapter?

Numbers of people - networked to other people!

Quality of leadership

Coherent Strategy

Compelling message

Ability to raise money

Ability to educate and mobilize voters

## Qualities of effective chapters



Floyd County chapter member Bev May speaking at press conference in Frankfort.

KFTC has a list of “Qualities of Effective Chapters” that has been developed and refined over the last 30 years.

In fact, this list was developed during a strategic planning process where a committee of members looked at the life cycle of many, many KFTC chapters, including some that lasted more than 20 years and others that faded away after a period of decline. They identified this set of qualities, many of which were present in chapters that thrived or missing in those that declined.

## Vision, Mission, and Goals

- Committed to a broader vision, not just a single issue,
- Take time to identify common goals/priorities as a chapter,
- Connect to and support KFTC's vision and goals.

Read Slide.

Many chapters may form over a single-issue, but the ones that are more likely to stick around broaden their work and vision...



## Issues, Strategies, and Actions

- Lasting chapters are multi-issue and work to build connections across issues,
- Choose issues that build membership and advance group's long-term goals,
- Use direct-action organizing (visible events) to build support and empower people.



Jefferson County Chapter Meeting

Read Slide.

What do you think of this list? Anything jump out?

## People and Relationships

- Always work to build an active, diverse, growing membership,
- Create ways for all people to contribute ideas, skills and voices,
- Build a sense of community.



Madison County Chapter member Myles Maxson at EPA public hearing in Frankfort.

Read Slide.

This is perhaps one of the things that chapters do best within KFTC. Chapters are wonderful for relationship building. Being a statewide organization, it can be hard to maintain connections with people from all over the state – but local access points like chapters can help with this.

What are ways that chapters can build a sense of community and for people to participate?

# Leadership

- Help all people grow and learn and demonstrate leadership,
- Provide training and opportunities for members to learn new skills and ideas,
- Share leadership responsibilities and hold each other accountable.



Read Slide.

Long-term chapters need to have a set of active leaders that also work to develop new and emerging leaders – so that there is always room for people to step-up over time. It is often hard for the same set of small leaders to maintain a chapter for years and years, new and emerging leadership is key!

Other thoughts about leadership in a chapter?

## Fundraising

- Consistent focus on raising money through membership drives, sales and events,
- See fundraising as part of building grassroots power,
- Encourage all members to contribute, no matter how much.

Read Slide.

This is important for strong chapters to prioritize. Fundraising is important for KFTC. And having chapter leaders work on it also helps people commit more to the organization and buy-in.



## Democratic Process & Structure



- Disagreement is healthy and necessary part of democratic life – can be done constructively.
- Make sure all voices are heard and respected.
- While work happens in smaller groups, major decisions are made by chapter.

Read Slide.

Who wants to be a part of an organization that they don't have a voice in?  
KFTC's prioritize's democracy and making sure everyone's voice is heard.  
This is just as important at the local level in our chapters.

Other thoughts about this democratic process?

# Media and Communications

- Good internal systems to keep members informed and active.
- Make good use of local media to get visibility for the chapter and its issues.
- Create many ways for people to tell their own story.
- Create ways for people to practice and learn to be effective spokespeople.



Floyd, Knott and Letcher Co KFTC collaborated to put on a special Growing Appalachia edition of WMMT's public affairs show "Mountain Talk".

Read Slide.

Strong chapters know the value of good media and communications.

Any stories or thoughts about this piece?

## Research, Planning, and Evaluation

- Research issues and learn where power lies,
- Develop shared plans (strategies) and follow-through,
- Evaluate and learn along the way.



Mountain Witness Tour in Harlan & Letcher County with Boyle & Jefferson County KFTC Members

Read Slide.

Strong chapters are always learning and growing!

## Celebration and Fun



- Take time to recognize everyone's effort and contribution,
- Even in hard times, create times to celebrate.

Read Slide.

Any questions about this one 😊?





Which of these qualities we reviewed seems most important to you? Why?

Which is easiest for chapters? Or more of a challenge?

Other thoughts?

## **NEXT CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT ARMCHAIR SEMINAR:**

August 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

Campaign Organizing Skills:

Developing and selecting good issues