KLICA News & Information October 2026

KLICA
News & Information

Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association

Mark Nutsch to Headline 75th Anniversary Convention



Mark Nutsch—a native Flint Hills Kansan, also known as Mitch Nelson portrayed by Chris Hemsworth— in the 2018, motion picture, *12 Strong*, led one of the most successful unconventional warfare campaigns in modern history. Mark served in the Army as a Ranger Regiment and Special Forces officer, deploying on multiple combat tours.

In October 2001, weeks after 9/11, Mark led a heroic 12-man U.S. Army Special Forces team, ODA-595, into Afghanistan. Riding into battle on horseback, they united Afghan allies to liberate Mazar-i-Sharif and strike a decisive strategic blow against the Taliban regime and al-Qaida terrorists. Mark's story and team have since been featured in *12 Strong*, the documentary film *Legion of Brothers*, and in the recent Paramount Plus docuseries *Special Operations True* in several seasons and episodes. With his teammates, he has co-authored their book *Swords of Lightning, a #1 new release on Amazon and numerous other professional publications.* Their mission inspired the **America's Response Monument** overlooking the National 9/11 Memorial in New York City. A Horse Soldier Monument also proudly sits in front of the Courthouse in Washington County, Kansas.

Beyond military service, he co-founded American Freedom Distillery, maker of double gold award winning **Horse Soldier Bourbons.** He and his teammates, co-founded, **Badger Six**, a non-profit which supports their team's Afghan allies and their families. He also supports veterans through the Kansas nonprofit **War Horses for Veterans** and competes in its **War Horse Challenge**, reining cow horse competitions in Las Vegas and Fort Worth. He advises the **Grey Bull Rescue** team, saving American's and allies in conflict regions and disaster areas where government or traditional aid cannot reach. He served as Honorary Chairman of the **Flint Hills Discovery Center and Foundation's Next Vistas Campaign,** receiving the "Friend of the Flint Hills" award. The **Kansas Society of Washington DC** recently named Mark as the 2026 Kansan of the Year.

Today, Mark shares hard-won lessons in leadership, resilience, teamwork, and performing under pressure—from combat to entrepreneurship to service after the uniform.





Photos of Horse Soldier Monument in Washington, KS.

January 24, 25, & 26, 2027
Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan, Kansas
KLICA Celebrates 75 Years
We Hope You are There to Celebrate With Us!

Meet KLICA

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Jon L. Ungerer

Steve Peter
KLICA President

It's finally beginning to feel like fall! It's time to put one of the hottest and driest summers I can remember behind us. The heat sure put the strain on a few of my old pieces of equipment, and working dirt that's too dry isn't much fun either. Luckily the cool has come and we've had some decent rains. However, it seems like we're always 7 to 10 days out from the next drought!

If you're like me, between moving dirt and trying to get some farming done your mind is engaged in all the tasks that need to be done and you're not thinking much about KLICA winter convention. But it's coming up fast! Jon and several of your board members have been working hard on our special 75th year convention, to make it memorable, fun, and really worth your time to attend.



We have a great speaker coming this year that promises to be very interesting and engaging. So mark your calendars for January 24, 25, & 26, 2027. It's a really great time to get together, share stories, talk shop, and enjoy the great members of our association, and if you know of any contractors that aren't members, bring them along!! We need new members! We will also have several new vendors joining in as well. This will be a once in 75 years event you won't want to miss!

Steve

"Every anniversary is an opportunity to renew our dedication, reignite our passion, and continue creating a lasting legacy."

"Celebrating our past gives us the strength to build on our future."

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KLICA 74th Annual
Convention & Business Meeting Preliminary Agenda

Sunday January 24, 2027

3:00 - 5:00 pm Registration

3:00 pm Budget & Finance Committee

4:00 pm Officers and Directors Meeting

Exhibitor Set-Up - Main Hallway
Exhibitors may set up upon arrival Sun day or Monday morning. Please be set up by 9:30 am Monday morning

Sunday Evening Reception

6:30 pm Cornhole Tournament Registration
7:00 pm Cornhole Tournament and Socializing

Monday January 25, 2027

7:00 am Registration

7:30 am Breakfast

General Session

Moderator - Vice President Mike Loflin
8:45 am - 9:30 am Continental Western Jen Sedlacek, World Insurance
9:30 am - 10:15 am Contractor Forum
10:15 am - 10:30 am Break
10:30 - 11:15 Associates Forum

Ladies Program

9:45 - 11:00 am Escape Room

Memorial Luncheon

11:30 pm
Remembering those we lost in 2026

Trade Show

12:45 - 2:45

12:45 pm - 2:45 pm Trade Show
3:00 pm - 3:45 pm Associates Meeting
3:00 pm - 3:45 pm District Meetings

Featured Speaker

4:00 pm Mark Nutsch

Associates Evening

5:30 pm Social & Awards
Associate of the Year
Lifetime Achievement
7:00 pm Auction

Tuesday January 26, 2027

8:00 am Breakfast

9:00 am - 9:30 am Committee Meetings
No designated locations
9:30 am - 11:30 am Members Annual Business Mtg

Lunch & Tour

TBD



Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association
75th Annual Convention
Hilton Garden Inn, 410 S 3rd St, Manhattan, KS 66502
January 24, 25 & 26, 2027
Attendee Registration Form

Business Name:_____ **Address:** _____**City/State/Zip**:_____

Individual Names Registering:	Entire Convention $180.00	Monday Only $100.00	*Monday Memorial Luncheon* ***ONLY*** $30.00	*Meals Attending Day—Breakfast Lunch Supper*						*Ladies AM Session Off Site*
				S S	*M B*	*M L*	*M S*	*T B*	*T L*	
_____	_____	_____	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___	_____
Totals:	_____	_____	_____	**Grand Total:**			$ _____			

Registration must be returned by January 10, 2027 ***(No refunds after January 10,2027)***

Credit cards are accepted with a 4% service fee added to the total. You will need to complete this registration form and I will send you an invoice with a link to make payment.

- Forms may also be emailed to jungerer@kansaslica.com with payment to follow. If you have questio s please contact Jon at 785 221-8697 or jungerer@kansaslica.com
- (By registering for the 2027 KLICA Winter Conventio you agree that any photograph taken of you during the Conventi n may be used in KLICA communicatio s including the KLICA Website, Facebook pages and KLICA newsle er.
- ***If you have a donation of an auction item(s) you would like to indicate at this time please list below:***

Please return to:
Jon L. Ungerer
KLICA
850 US Hwy 77
Marysville, KS 66508

Item: _____Donated by: _____

For hotel reserva ons please contact the Hilton Garden Inn directly at 785-532-9116. Individuals **must** request code **908** and indicate **KS LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSN.** at the ti e of booking in order to receive the group rate of $114.00 plus taxes. Or use the direct booking link on the KLICA Web Page: KS LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSN code 908.

Cut-o date for hotel reserva ons at the group rate is ***January 2, 2027*** to guarantee this price.

Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association

75th Annual Convention

Hilton Garden Inn, 410 S 3rd St, Manhattan, KS 66502
January 24, 25 & 26, 2027

Associate Sponsorship Registration Form

Business Name: _____ Contact: _____

Address: _____ Contact Phone: _____

	Put an X If Purchasing	Amount
Exhibitor Booth: ($300.00) Includes One Convention Registration	_____	_____
Convention Sponsorships Available		
*Sunday Night Reception ($1,500.00) Includes One Exhibitor Booth & Two Convention Registrations	_____	_____
*Monday Morning Breakfast ($1,000.00) Includes One Exhibitor Booth & One Convention Registration	_____	_____
*Monday Memorial Luncheon ($2,000.00) Includes One Exhibitor Booth & Three Convention Registrations	_____	_____
*Associates Night Bar Sponsor ($1,500.00) Includes One Exhibitor Booth & Two Convention Registrations	_____	_____
*Associates Night Sponsor ($500.00) Includes One Convention Registration	_____	_____
*Tuesday Morning Breakfast ($1,000.00) Includes One Exhibitor Booth and One Convention Registration	_____	_____
*Monday AM ___ or PM ___ Break Sponsor ($300.00)	_____	_____
*Convention Speaker Sponsor (Designate Your Amount)	_____	_____
	Total:	_____

Individuals Registering	Entire Convention ($180.00)	Monday Only ($100.00)	Meals Attending Day - Breakfast S S	M B	Lunch M L	M S	Supper T B	T L
_____	_____	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___
_____	_____	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___
_____	_____	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___
_____	_____	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___

Grand Total: _____

- Credit Cards accepted with a 4% service fee. Please complete a registration form and we will Email you an invoice with a link to pay.
- Return completed form with appropriate payment, if by check, by January 10, 2027 to : KLICA, Jon L. Ungerer, 850 US Hwy 77, Marysville, KS 66508
- By registering for the 2027 KLICA Winter Convention you agree that any photograph taken of you during the Convention may be used in the KLICA Communications including the KLICA Web Pag, Facebook pages, and KLICA Newsletter/Directory.
- With questions call Jon at 785-221-8697.
- For hotel Reservations contact the Hilton Garden Inn at 785-532-9116. Indicate KS Land Improvement Contactors ASSN Group Code 908. Or you may use the online link provided on the KLICA Webpage with the Group Code 908. Room cutoff date is January 2, 2027.

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Members Passed

Since our last newsletter KLICA has sadly lost two more of our family. It is never easy to report the loss of a member, whether their involvement with KLICA was long or short they were one of our KLICA family and will be missed.



John William Peterson Jr.

July 25, 1936 - March 3, 2026

John William Peterson passed away March 3, 2026. John served as National LICA Director of Government Relations for many years and was a presence at National LICA conventions even after his retirement. He continued to write and share Pete's Washington Wire with LICA after his retirement. John had a 40 year career with the United States Department of Agriculture, retiring as Assistant Chief of the USDA Soil Conservation Service. John was recognized internationally for his expertise in watershed planning, dam safety, and erosion and sediment control. John was a member of numerous conservation groups and was recognized for his knowledge and commitment to land management. John loved sports and his family. John is survived by his wife of 67 years, Blanche (Sorensen); their five children, Michael Peterson (Katie) of Manassas, VA; Patrick Peterson of Wrightsville Beach, NC; Kathie Bailey (Derek) of Leesburg, VA; Shannon Dube (Jeremy) of Cumberland, ME; and Erin Peterson of Harpers Ferry, WV; and his seven cherished grandchildren; Megan, Lilly, Emily, Sofia, Jack, William, and Ryan.



Nora Jean Lietz

May 28, 1928 - September 5, 2026

Nora Jean Lietz passed away September 5, 2026. Norra was the wife of Merle Lietz with whom she owned and operated Lietz Construction Company for more than 70 years. Nora was the KLICA Lady of the Year in 2001. Nora was very involved in the Lutheran Women's Missionary League and served in various offices at the local, zone and district levels. Norma & Merle traveled to 48 consecutive International Lutheran Laymen's League Conventions. Norma was also very involved in 4-H. Nora is survived by her three daughters: Sheryl (David) Meier, Maple Hill; Jean Anne Lietz, Topeka; and Linda (Tom) Stanton of Hutchinson. She is also survived by grandchildren: Cara (John) Brooks, Carisa Meier, Peter (Megan) Meier, Mendy (Jason) Brady, Rebecca (Jared) Wolfe, Nathan (Autumn) Stanton; great-grandchildren: Kylie (Jakob) Jasperson, Joshua Brooks, Liam Meier, Brecklyn Meier, Makayla Brady, Mason Brady, Walker Stanton, Hayden Stanton, Logan VanMeter, and soon to arrive Baby Stanton. Nora is buried in Bethlehem Cemetery, east of Paxico.

If you want to look sharp and help us celebrate our 75th you need to get your 75th Anniversary shirt ordered. Idntiteez in Marysville can help you with your shirt needs but don't wait too long to get your orders in. Take a look at these shirts with our 75th Anniversary logo on them. They can be further personalized with your business name on them. Mine is on the way!

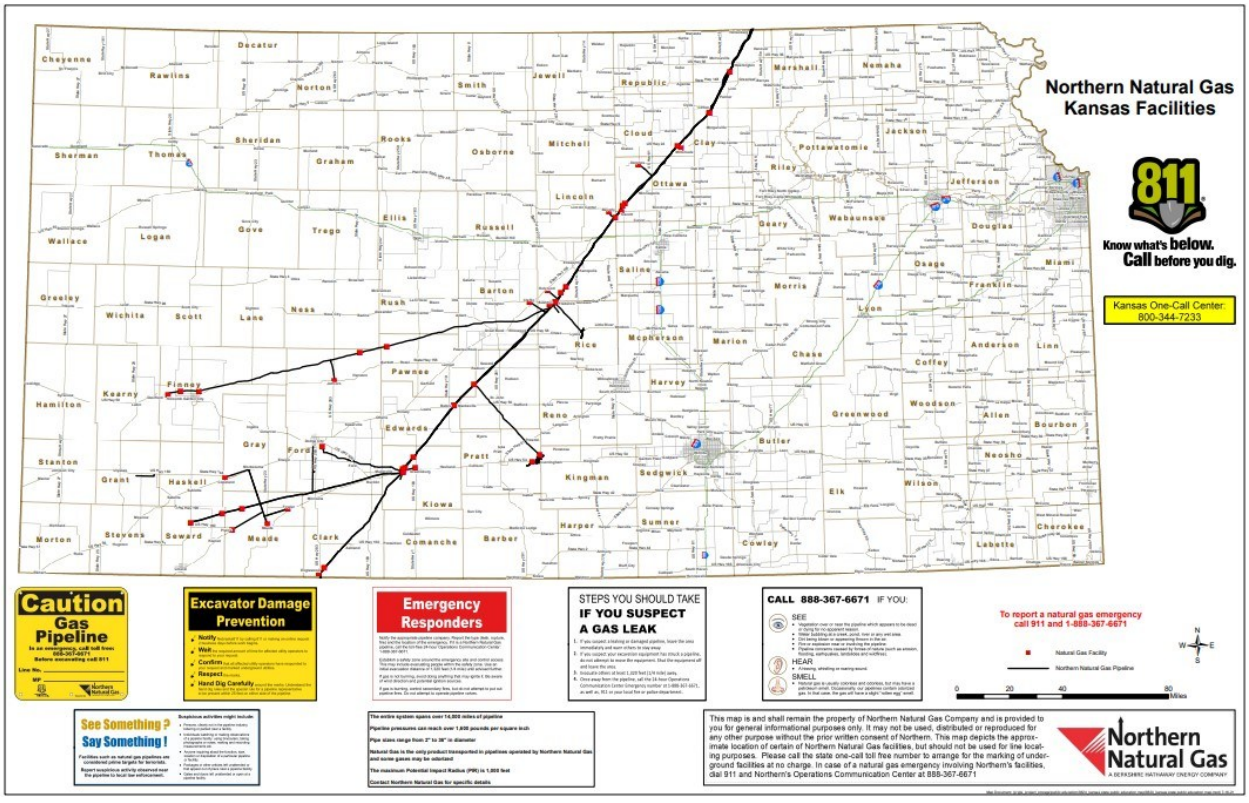
If you want to be one of the best dressed at Convention get ahold of Idntiteez in Marysville at 785-562-2300 or online at https://idntiteez.com

If you have trouble let me know and I can stop in and get things moving for you.




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On the Other Side of the Dozer Blade

by Margaret Smelser



3:40 pm on an 80 degree day. What a change from the 100 degrees we have experienced. What a strange weather pattern we have been in. We've had enough by now to keep the yard, pasture and ponds looking good. The only "wildlife" I've seen are chubby squirrels and several doves.

David & Lee are working on a big pond not far across the hills from us. No 30 mile drive to this job. Nor half days because of the terrific heat. Nor lectures from me about heat strokes. As that time worn saying goes, "been there done that" and I've felt the effects for many years. Not good.

One of the recent jobs was moving that Indian "cabin" again. This time to the Shawnee Mission site. They were on their way to move a machine when they found a stranded semi loaded with 90,000 lbs of fertilizer, the driver in his 70's. He had tried to turn around, realized he made a wrong turn and sat hung up in a driveway. David & Lee unloaded the 963 and got him back on his way. His destination was at a dealer just up the road from us. The driver asked what he owed, David said $100.00, a token payment for that predicament, but that is the way David does. I'm proud of these two, he and Lee are a good team.

9/11 was much on our minds this past week. Lloyd and I were in Atchison in the office of Atchison Casting where our grandson works. Darrin had made arrangements for Lloyd to go with him to CAT headquarters in Peoria. We were waiting in the office when the news came on - they made the trip anyway. I hoped they would call it off. I planned to visit Helen Harden in her apartment, we watched in horror of the shocking devastation. We had lunch and a short visit, I wanted to be home where I felt more secure.

A short time later David & Lee were working near Tonganoxie close to Stranger Creek. I went to the job site on an errand and the first thing I saw as I drove across the field was the flag! David had tied it on the boom of the trackhoe. How soon we forget.

We had a different happening recently, a fire in our hayfield. The hay was tinder dry, and when a bearing broke on the baler the fire started. David & Lee were gone, quite a ways from home. Thankfully the McClouth Fire Dept. came out and did a great job. We only lost a little hay, in what could have been an inferno. Had it been one of those strong south winds we have had so much of, all our buildings, including houses were in direct line. How terrible it has been for all the suffering so many have gone through.

Another loss in the KLICA family, Nora Lietz's passing, a grand lady. Thanks to Linda Orear again, for keeping me informed.

Now it is Sunday afternoon, the 27th. A very special day, our Jeannie's birthday. A different to celebrate. She's been my right arm in so many ways. Such an unexpected turn in her life - she's in KU Med, after having a 4-way bypass Friday. A recommended test showed a heart condition she had no idea of. Always active, this was a complete surprise. She was a "walking time bomb" but thank God, was spared from a massive heart attack.

Her family arranged a call on a speaker phone & I got to tell her "Happy Birthday". We never know what tomorrow will bring.

Lee & Rachel's Cora is a real school girl right now - what a bundle of energy she is. She loves animals and the farm, no dull moments when she is around.

It's time to make an appointment with the vet to do the Fall protocols and whatever else for our small herd. I hope our $6,000.00 bull proves to be as good as the last one. It's hard for me not to go out and pretend to be "boss lady"!

It's now 3:00 pm on a beautiful afternoon. David & Lee have been doing shop work. The small rains are making the pond wait.

Time to end this long rambling 3 months in my life. Never dull out here on Dempsey Road.

Count your blessings, life can change in a heartbeat. Without faith in our Lord how can we live otherwise? I care about you all - have a safe Fall. Share a smile and sincerely have a good day.





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Rambling Thoughts of an Executive Director

These are exciting times for LICA members, both on the National and State levels! Our new National Executive Director, Dennis Mikula, and the rest of our LICA staff are busy securing partnerships and benefits for our members. While these benefits provide direct financial savings to our members, as an Executive Director I am excited about the long term relationships that will hopefully come from these partnerships. And while I sit here and type this I just thought of something I need to be working on with our state Associate Members. It might be a reach, but when someone walks into their local Machinery Dealer wouldn't it be cool to see a LICA banner that promotes our partnership and associated benefit? How cool would it be to walk in to your GM dealer and see the LICA logo promoting membership to receive your GM discount? Vehicle/Machinery Discount - $$$; Insurance Discount - $$$; Timekeeping Discount - $$$; Auction Discount - $$$; Logo and Name Recognition by Hundreds of Thousands of the General Public - PRICELESS!

At the state level, we are in the process of partnering with Continental Western Group to provide our members with competitive rates for their Commercial Package insurance needs.

I am excited about this partnership and the opportunity for it to be mutually beneficial to both our members and Continental Western Group. Our goal is to help meet the unique insurance needs of our contractors while also strengthening Continental Western Group's presence and commitment to the heavy equipment industry.

Representatives from Continental Western Group, along with one of their agents from World Insurance Associates, will be at the convention to discuss this partnership and the insurance options available to our members.

While the agent attending the convention will serve as a state point of contact for anyone who would like assistance, any insurance agent who represents Continental Western Group will be able to work with you.

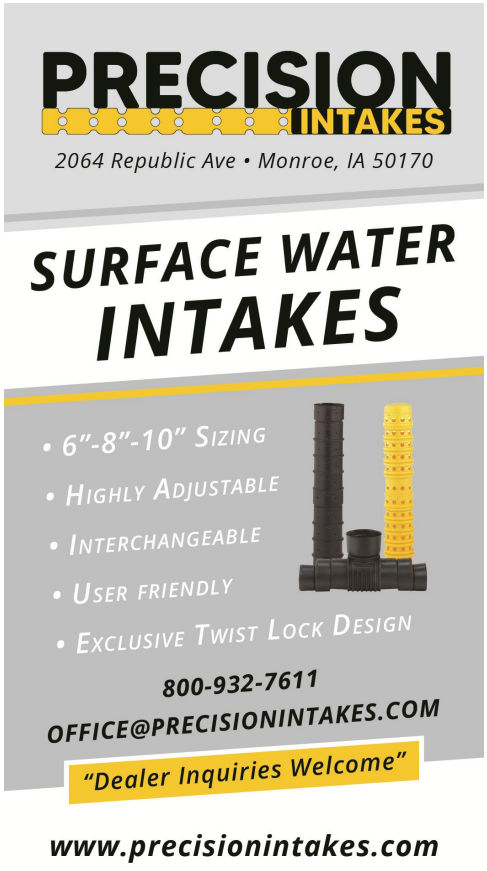
We understand that our contractors value working with people they know and trust—local contacts, friends, and neighbors. We believe having that local connection is a critical part of making this partnership successful and ensuring our members have access to the personal service and support they deserve.

We plan to make convention about who KLICA is and what we have to offer. So if you have not been to a convention there is no better time to start attending! And I am challenging ALL contractors attending to bring another contractor you know who is not a member! Have them get in touch with me and we will get them registered.

Finally, our featured speaker, Mark Nutsch. This may be your once in a lifetime opportunity to hear this American Hero speak. DON'T MISS OUT!

SEE YOU IN JANUARY!





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The Power of Sleep

On Nov. 1, clocks fall back an hour, and most people will treat it as a minor inconvenience or maybe an extra hour in bed. However, the time shift is also a good reminder that sleep is one of the most powerful tools for mental and physical health, and there are ways to make the most out of the extra hour.

Sleep isn't downtime. It's when the brain consolidates memories, clears out metabolic waste and regulates the hormones that control mood, appetite and stress response. Skimp on it, and the effects show up almost immediately through shorter tempers, foggier thinking and weaker impulse control. Sleep deprivation is also linked to higher rates of anxiety and depression. Poor sleep and poor mental health tend to feed each other in a loop that's hard to break.

Daylight saving time changes are a small but real disruption to that system. Shifting the clock, even by an hour, affects our circadian rhythm, the internal clock that governs when we feel alert or sleepy. It can take days for the body to adjust fully.

The following tips can help your mind and body adjust to the time change and protect your sleep:

- Try shifting wake time and bedtime by 15-20 minutes in the days before the switch rather than all at once.
- Get morning sunlight exposure (e.g., walk outside, open curtains or turn on indoor lights) to help reset your internal clock.
- Focus on building a consistent wind-down routine to help combat any seasonal mood changes triggered by darker evenings.

In addition, assess how you're doing with basic sleep hygiene (e.g., consistent sleep and wake times on weekdays and weekends, no large meals or alcohol before bed and no electronics before sleeping) and adjust as needed.

Sleep isn't a luxury or a sign of laziness; it's basic maintenance for a healthy mind. As the clocks change this fall, it's worth treating that gained hour as an invitation to protect the sleep you get. For more information on how to improve your sleep habits or to address sleep issues, contact your doctor today.

Provided by Prins Insurance, Inc.

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Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association

Membership Application

Date: _____

Company Name: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address if different: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Business phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Fax: _____ Home phone: _____ Email: _____

Sponsor: _____

Annual Dues:	Contractor	Associate	Special
Circle Applicable Member Type	$325	$250	$40

Contractor Services Provided:

___ CH – Concrete/Hardscaping
___ CR – Crane Service
___ DB – Directional Boring
___ DW – Drainage/Water Mgmt./Irrigation
___ EM – Earth moving/Grading/Leveling
___ EX – Excavating/Land Clearing
___ GR – Gravel/Rock Production
___ LS – Landscaping/Seeding/Sod
___ OD – Open Ditch Work/Dredging
___ PD – Ponds/Dams
___ RP – Roads/Paving
___ SP – Site Preparation/Demolition
___ SS – Septic Systems/Onsite Wastewater Treatment
___ TH – Trucking/Hauling
___ TW – Terraces/Waterways
___ UU – Underground Utilities
___ Dealer/Service Company/Consultant/Insurance/Other

Annual dues are due and payable on a calendar year basis, prior to January 1 of each year.
KLICA dues for new contractor members joining after March 1 are paid up for the next full calendar year.

Return Application to: Jon L. Ungerer, Executive Director
Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association
850 U.S. Hwy 77
Marysville, KS 66508

Contact Phone: 785-221-8697
Email: jungerer@kansaslica.com

Kansas Land Improvement
Contractors Association
850 U.S. Hwy 77
Marysville, KS 66508

Important Dates for your Calendar…..

- January 24, 25, & 26, 2027
  KLICA 75th Annual Convention & Mtg.
  Hilton Garden Inn
  Manhattan, KS

- February 9 - 13, 2027
  National LICA Winter Convention
  Gila River Resort & Casino - Wild Horse Pass
  Chandler, AZ

