

# 2026 SPRING CONFERENCE

## DODGE CITY, KANSAS

*Professional development, local history, and collaboration in Dodge City*

**DAY 1**

Our AAKC conference kicked off with true frontier flair at the historic Santa Fe Depot, where the echoes of the Old West still seem to ride on the Kansas wind.



CVB Director Megan Welsh welcomed the group with a tour and presentation, sharing Dodge City's story like a seasoned trail guide around a campfire.

From the depot, we boarded the trolley for a rolling ride across town, with Jo-Ann Knight leading the way and painting the journey with tales and local color fit for any wagon train stop.





As the sun settled low on the prairie, we gathered at Central Station for supper, where hearty fare, warm fellowship, and a generous helping of Western hospitality and pink cotton candy wrapped up the evening in fine cowboy fashion.



**DAY 2**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



*Welcome!*

From the moment folks stepped through the doors, the conference had all the polish of a well-run frontier gathering, with Western decorations that set the scene and thoughtful touches around every corner. The snacks were laid out like welcome provisions on the trail—plentiful, inviting, and sure to keep every rider fueled for the day ahead.



CM Nick Hernandez



#### Well-being Culture Matters

**25%** of employees are considering leaving their jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The top-reported reasons employees are thinking of quitting:

1. Low compensation
2. Toxic work environment
3. Job negatively affecting mental health
4. Feeling undervalued at work
5. No clear career path or career development

**81%** of workers reported that they will be more likely to stay at workplaces that support mental health.

The training sessions on Day 2 delivered practical knowledge with purpose, giving attendees useful tools to take back home to their own towns and offices. Kate Nygren, KU Public Management Center, focused on developing our skills and leadership potential.



# DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR



## MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Terice Watts presented Holly McGinnis with the Nancy Crain Municipal Administrative Professional of the Year award.

Congratulations Holly!



Terice Watts presented Jennifer Gutierrez the 20 Years of Service Award.

Congratulations Jennifer!

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to AAKC!!

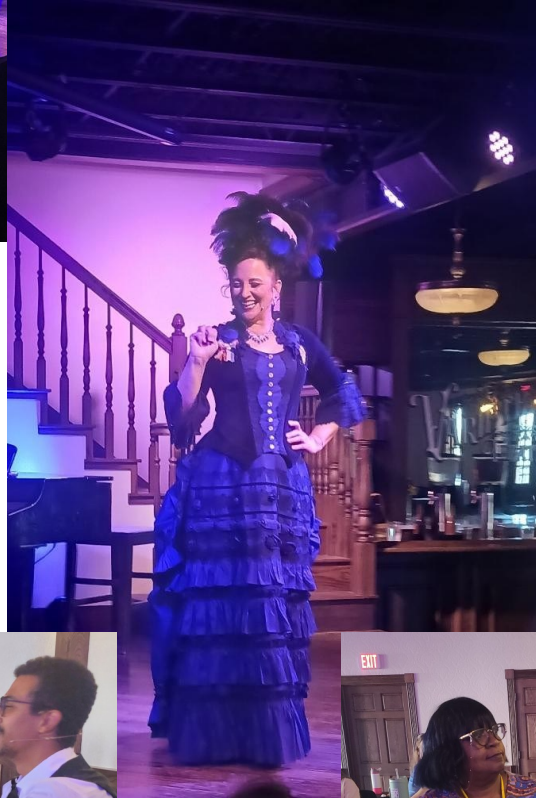


# EVENING FUN

## THE LONG BRANCH VARIETY SHOW



*Miss Kitty, Mr. Beeson and  
the Can-Can girls*



*Buckshot Betty*

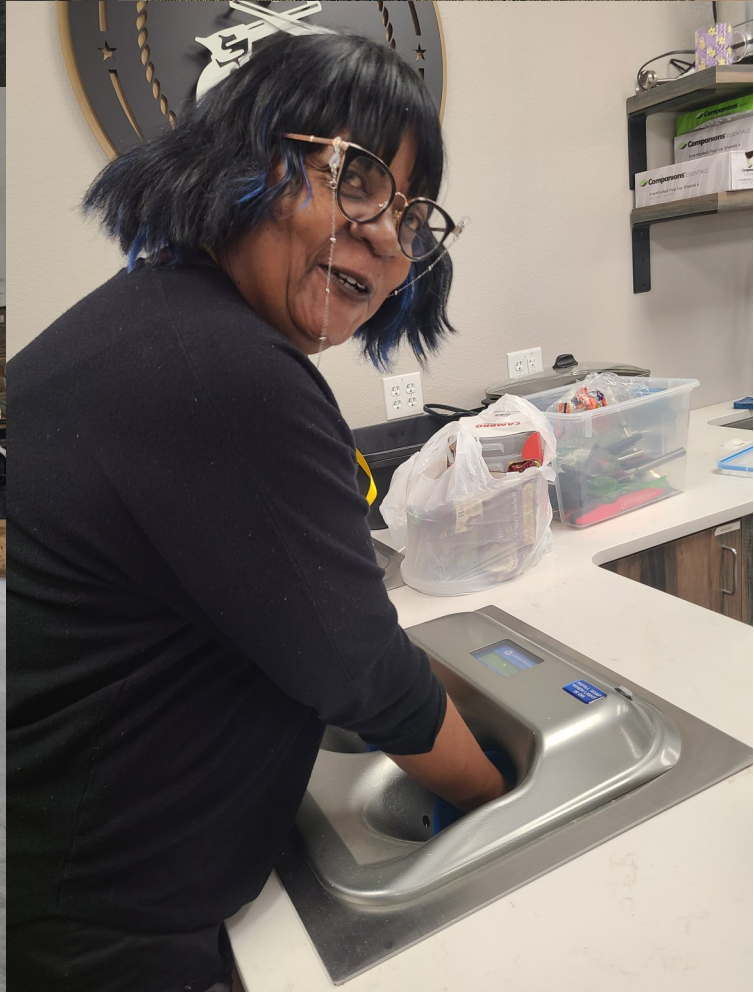


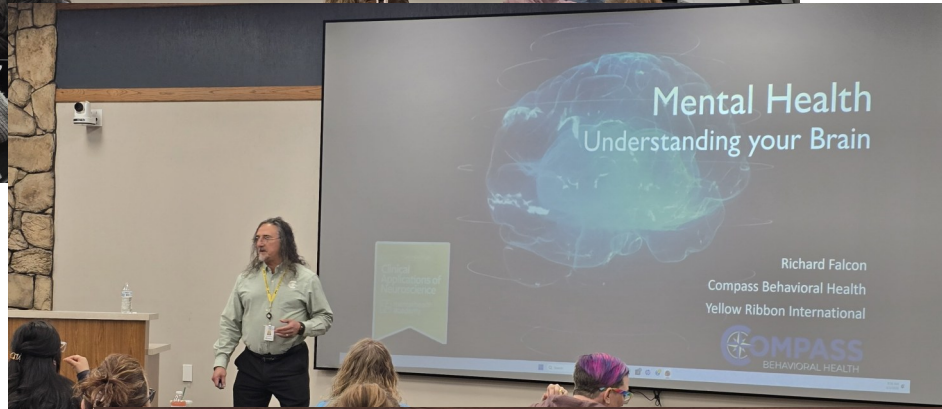
2 men, 2 proposals, 2 many choices. Shelly was such a great sport!

DAY  
3

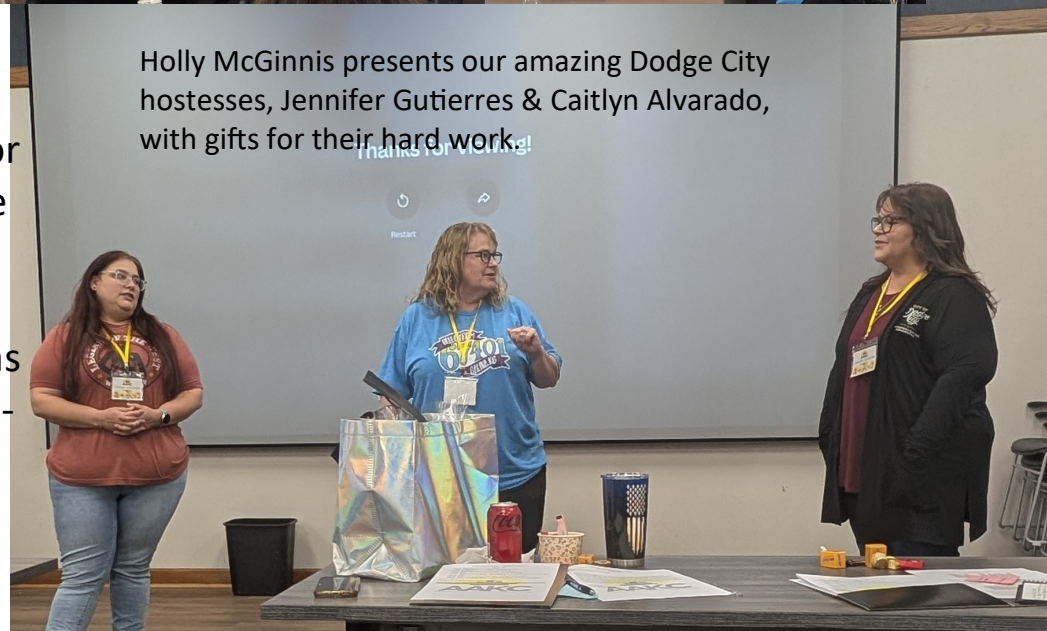


City Hall which was shinier than  
a brand new Sheriff's badge.





What truly stood out was our hostesses sharp eye for detail; every piece was planned with care, making the whole event run as smooth as a stage-coach on an open Kansas plain.



Holly McGinnis presents our amazing Dodge City hostesses, Jennifer Gutierrez & Caitlyn Alvarado, with gifts for their hard work!

# Group Pictures

