

Ellis County Coalition for Economic Development

Promoting the growth and success of businesses in Ellis County

If you are -

- Starting a new business,
- Expanding an existing business,
- Adding to your workforce,
- Thinking about your succession plan,
- Needing financing,
- Not sure where to start on a problem,

the Ellis County Coalition is here to assist.

Give us a call to find out how we can assist you in your business success.



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The Ellis County Coalition is funded in part by Ellis County and the City of Hays

Is It Time to Look at a Different Business Model?

As the largest oil producing county in the State of Kansas, Ellis County is definitely feeling the effects of historically low oil prices.

Companies often look to new markets as a way to grow their business and even out dips in their traditional market.

There are a number of resources available to assist in this process.

Employee training is one of the first areas that assistance can be found. For any manufacturer changing equipment, products, or processes the Kansas Industrial Retraining program can help. The program provides cost sharing for the retraining of employees that goes along with changes in your products or processes.

Not sure what else you can

produce? MAMTC is a non-profit organization associated with the Kansas Dept. of Commerce. MAMTC offers a number of programs designed to grow and improve manufacturing companies. Services include assisting in implementation of new technology, LEAN manufacturing training, plant design and layout, and innovation engineering. This last service may be very beneficial today. For a company that is looking to diversify into a new industry, MAMTC works with your team to look at your existing operation and help determine what industries you would be suitable to move into, what existing projects have the best opportunity to grow, and help your business move in a new direction.

There are also numerous



companies in the state that have gone through major transitions into new industries. Our companies in northwest Kansas are not alone in this. Many are willing share their stories, talk about challenges and things to look out for, and provide good guidance. They can't write your new business model, but they can tell you what they went through and help you avoid the mistakes they made.

Give us a call if you are not sure where to begin.

Ellis County is a Gigabit Community



Business these days is all about speed: shortening lead times, fast delivery of components, timely delivery

to customers, etc. Speed is also the name of the game in telecommunications, especially in internet speeds. Kansas City is catching all the headlines with their Google Fiber project that will deliver 1 gigabit internet speeds to customers in the Google area.

What many people don't know is that Ellis County is ALREADY a gigabit community. That's right! We

have gigabit internet speeds available across the county. This is big for any business that requires high speed internet access for design, sales, distribution, etc. Many businesses may not even know what advantages high speed internet can give them in their business operation, but our local telecom providers do. We will be talking more about this in later issues.



New Skills Training Coming from our Short Course Program

We have been hearing about another skill that can be difficult to source for local employers: equipment operation paired with a Class A CDL. From earth moving companies to agricultural coops, lumber yards to bottling distributors, prospective employees with a CDL can be hard to source.

Many local companies that require employees have a CDL for some aspect of their job find themselves competing against over the road trucking firms with deep pockets. We are looking at a short course program that delivers a potential employee that knows the basic operation of equipment with hydraulics, job safety, and can recognize when the equipment is not running right.

The course will also walk the student thru the testing for a Class A CDL. The students will not be experienced drivers or operators when they complete the program, but will be basically trained candidates that can complete their training on the job with a new employer. The course curriculum will be driven by employers, and screening will be delivered by KansasWorks, one of our workforce development partners. Program graduates would be ideal for construction, warehouse/distribution, agricultural sprayer/fertilizer, and utility worker positions.

Contact the ECC if you have interest or suggestions for the program. We are also looking for additional in demand skills that can be added as future courses.

Let's Talk Logistics

I touched on logistics in the November newsletter, and wanted to follow up. The Port of Catoosa staff will be meeting with a number of regional businesses this month to talk about their services. Catoosa is the furthest north year round ice free port in the U.S., and moves over 2 million tons of cargo in and out each year. From chemicals and petroleum to grain and fertilizer, lumber to steel, Catoosa is a major supplier of raw material for manufacturing, and an entryway to markets all over the globe through barge and ship transportation. Catoosa is the 5th largest steel supplier in the U.S. and a major source of lumber. With access by truck or rail, the facility can accommodate a variety of freight.

A new component in our region will be the transload facility in Great Bend. A transload facility is designed to move cargo from truck to rail, and from rail to truck. A facility in Great Bend can provide services to area manufacturers looking to utilize rail service. The facility can also tie in with freight moving to and from Catoosa.

As manufacturers look more and more to global markets for shipping their products or bringing in raw materials, facilities such as the Port of Catoosa and the Great Bend transload facility will play an important and expanding role. Contact our office for more information.



**2016 Hays Area
Job Fair!**
Wednesday, April 6th
Big Creek Crossing
(south end)
2918 Vine Street in Hays
3:00 - 6:00pm

April 6th is quickly approaching! The 2016 Hays Area Job Fair plans are underway and employers are signing up!

In 2015, there were over 30 employer booths and over 120 job seekers attending the event.

If you are interested in a booth, please fill out and return the booth registration form found at <http://www.hayshasjobs.com/Portals/0/Booth%20Signup%20Form%202016.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please call Ernee at 785.628.3102 or email ernee@haysamerica.net



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