



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT **POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY**





“We owe a great deal to the staff at the Pottawattamie County Economic Development Corporation who worked tirelessly getting us an E-Community loan so our business can be open and operating.”

— Gail Wege and Robert Collins  
Owners of Route Step Coffee Barn

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**TERRY FORCE**

**President, Pottawatomie County  
Economic Development Corporation**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

In 2020, I took over as President of the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation from Doug Springer who served for two years. I ended my service as President on December 31, 2021. As luck would have it, COVID hit us March of 2020. This means that during almost my entire Presidency, I held the office during the pandemic. I handed over the gavel to Lanny Bosse, President of Kaw Valley State Bank. I owe a great deal to my Executive Committee with the outstanding support of Dirk Riniker of Ebert Construction, Jane Wiltse Pringle of Bayer Construction, Casey Butler of Champion Teamwear, Lanny and Doug.

Naturally, we had to cancel our Annual Meeting, but we recorded our Annual Report and awards presentation at Blue Valley Technologies. Their staff also recorded videos on site in Wamego and elsewhere. Starting in April the Board of Directors which was meeting strictly via Zoom began holding hybrid meetings at the Wamego Center of Manhattan Tech thanks to the graciousness of their President Jim Genandt and his outstanding staff. By conducting our meetings using the advanced technology of MATC, board members who had restrictions on meeting live could easily Zoom into the actual live meeting and participate. We had three new board members who are Mike Drippe' of Drippe' Homes, Patrick Schutter of BHS Construction and Dr. David Cancelada, surgeon, and an owner at Flint Hills Dental. Also on the board was Chris Johnson of Alarm.com, Jason Moore of Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Korey Klingenberg of ICON Structures, Paul Olsen at Caterpillar and Mike Solida of Evergy with Chad Kinsley, Pottawatomie County Administrator and Jason Smith, President of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce as well as Past President Doug Springer serving in ex-officio positions.

Just prior to the advent of COVID, the board adopted a new Strategic Implementation Plan for 2020-2024 which will have the same goals as the previous five years of Infrastructure and Site Development, Workforce Development, Organizational Development, Business Attraction and Retention (working closely with the Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership), and Small Business and Entrepreneurship. The objectives and strategies have changed slightly but our vision of job expansion and retention, continuously creating jobs, income and wealth in the county remain.

The staff of the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation headed up by Jack Allston, CEcD, FM, HLM, Executive Director and Jessica Venneberg, Executive Assistant have been instrumental in carrying out the programs as dictated in our Strategic Implementation Plan. As you know, Jack came to us in the fall of 2014 with a background of almost 40 years in economic development and twenty of those years in corporate site selection and community economic development consulting with a focus on workforce development. Jack has been particularly active with workforce development programs as well as developing an entrepreneurship culture in Pottawatomie County that is being recognized throughout the state.

Jessica Venneberg, a certified Economic Development Financing Professional, is a life-long resident of Onaga, and came to us in 2014 with a strong background in finance and a degree in Business Administration from Emporia State University. Jessica has been particularly active in the rural areas of our county, especially Westmoreland and Onaga. Because of COVID, meetings slowed but new businesses and opportunities opened in both communities. She is also very involved with young professional activities and youth entrepreneurship and development throughout the county. Jessica also administers our highly successful E-Community loan program. In 2020, Jack and Jessica had to make a paradigm shift to

working on helping companies survive through the pandemic and in 2021 made the transition back to E-Community loans.

In 2020, the team assisted county businesses with grants and loans of approximately 920 thousand dollars of CARES and Community Development Block grant funding, with the county's help. This impacted approximately 360 jobs through the grants and loans and solidifying the businesses' longevity. Of the \$920K of grants, \$310K was targeted towards child-care centers directly impacting parents who are dependent upon child-care services. In 2021, the PCEDC Child Care Task Force reconvened, and the staff reached out to childcare centers to inform them about impact and sustainability grants from Child Care Aware of Kansas. Almost all the centers were granted funds from Child Care Aware of Kansas, and Jack will begin sitting on the organization's Board of Directors in 2022.

Meanwhile, PCEDC is partnering with the Manhattan Area Chamber on a continuous basis with the Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership (GMEP). The two organizations see the aligned benefit having a dedicated web site <https://greatermanhattan.org/> and working together with prospects. Attracting businesses to the region is in great hands with Daryn Soldan, Director of Economic Development of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce along with Rebecca Robinson and her team at K-State Innovation Partners. This team is also part of Knowledge Based Economic Development (KBED) which PCEDC is proud to be a member of the partnership, which includes the Chamber of Commerce, K-State Innovation Partners, the City of Manhattan, KSU Foundation and North Central Regional Planning Commission, along with the President of KSU's office and KSU Research Foundation.

This has led to a greater synergy between the bodies and shared goals and objectives in 2018. The advisory board met several times in 2021.



Because of the pandemic, in 2020 GMEP decided to expand its bio-security marketing campaign with an additional contract with New Boston Creative Group. Through GMEP's partnership with KBED, we have generated a substantial number of leads for companies potentially looking to invest in the region, in either partnerships, licensing, or real estate in the GMEP target industries. One of them is based out of Canada, which has a partnership and officers at KSU and has located its manufacturing in Pottawatomie County and will be making an announcement at KSU early in 2022. Another Manhattan based company housed with KSU is looking at sites throughout the area to employ over sixty people. Since May, Daryn and Rebecca have been leading a major effort with the Kansas Department of Commerce to attract an East Coast based, NASDAQ traded bio-technology company that could employ hundreds.

Our organization, which was founded on real estate development, is running out of developed land, so, the PCEDC Board took the bold step to build out the utilities and road just south of Bluestem Electric Cooperative headquarters off Southwind Drive in the Wamego Industrial Park. The new road is named Shanote Lane and is approximately 455 feet long which will give businesses immediate access to twenty-seven acres owned by PCEDC. We paid approximately \$300 thousand for their improvements as well as funding the needed infrastructure a few years ago in St. Marys for the expansion of the Sandy Hook Industrial Park.

We are now exploring opportunities to develop a new industrial/business park in the city of Wamego within the next few years. We hired Olsson Associates to conduct a probable cost analysis on extending utilities and the road near our industrial area. It is inevitable that PCEDC will have to ask public bodies for infrastructure money in the future if we are to continue growth and development.

The projected growth of the Manhattan area has

been a concern for us as we support county efforts to enhance the infrastructure on the west side of our county yet keep our mill levy the second lowest in the state. We were involved with the Pottawatomie County Comprehensive Plan which was completed in 2019. In 2021, we saw construction projects taking place along Highway 24 near Manhattan that are needed. Seeing that growth needs to be manageable throughout the county, the Board of Directors authorized the investment of \$5,000 in the St. George Comprehensive Plan, which was completed by the Flint Hills Regional Council. Meanwhile the Council assisted us through the Joint Land Use funds from Department of Defense to conduct a Green Valley Transportation Study which will analyze traffic for years to come.

For the sixth year, with the assistance of all four high school administrations in Pottawatomie County, we have been able to offer Work Keys to all high school juniors who are now all registered with the Kansas Department of Education. Work Keys is a test of the cognitive and foundational skill of the individual rather than focusing on their academic aptitude. Since 2014, over 1,300 Pottawatomie County residents including students and those seeking work have taken the Work Keys testing. This is a major mark in ensuring our business community that our school administrations are solidly behind the implementation of the ACT Work Ready Community framework, and the business community and academic community are on the same page. Subsequently, high schools like Wamego, have built Work Keys scores into the Individual Plans of Studies. The scores were used as a guide for students at Wamego High participating in a new internship program that ran all through the school year of 2020-2021 and is being expanded in 2021-2022.

Related to workforce development progress, Manhattan Tech purchased the old Bluestem Electric building on Highway 24 and has successfully put in classrooms in the front office building. The second building is being completed

to build more classrooms for building trades and lab space for emergency technicians. The Board of Directors of PCEDC decided to invest \$6,000 in the MATC-Wamego effort so on Match Day MATC Foundation was granted another \$3,000 in 2020. After many meetings and deliberations, Manhattan Tech received enough financial backing to build out the third building and retrofit that building into welding classes which will benefit Caterpillar and other manufacturers in the area starting in 2022.

In 2017 we were recognized by ACT as having successfully established a sustainable, county-based Work Ready County effort. In 2018 we achieved the Maintenance Status after only one year of being certified. In 2019 we became Double Maintenance Status. Our workforce system is enjoying established performance metrics and documented return on investment that can be leveraged to integrate and connect current workforce development efforts and to jump start new initiatives. In December of 2020, we reached Quadruple Maintenance Status. Only the second county in the nation to accomplish this feat, proving that our county is Work Ready.

In 2019 and 2020, Jack chaired the Diversity Committee for the Human Resource Management Network and formed a community and HRMN based effort. In 2021, Jack agreed to chair Membership for HRMN and participated in dozens of discussions with HR managers on dissemination of information on multiple COVID issues with workforce.

PCEDC has maintained and grown an excellent small business loan program through Network Kansas, and in 2017 PCEDC was given Level One status which has allowed us to make loans of up to \$50K with flexible terms. In addition, unlike other E-Communities in the state and because of her financial skills, Jessica Venneberg administers the entire program in house saving PCEDC thousands of dollars in our portfolio. As of the end of 2021, the PCEDC Financial Review Board has made forty-nine loans and loaned out \$1.944 million dollars

with thirteen loans fully paid off. This has helped to create \$17 million in capital investment and 303 jobs. To accentuate our small business development program, we ran TV commercials again in 2021 with eleven past and current E-Community clients.

In 2021, along with the support and hard work of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, K-State Innovation Partners, along with the financial backing of Network Kansas, we embarked on a program to run entrepreneurship classes with Spark of Manhattan. Spark is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with a vision to connect, resource, and successfully launch entrepreneurs and promote a dynamic and inclusive culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in the Greater Manhattan region. One class that was chosen was Flint Hills Business Launch. This immersive, 8-week entrepreneurship education program features the nationally recognized Kauffman FastTrac® business curriculum, created to equip new entrepreneurs and business owners with the tools needed to succeed.

The other set of classes is Entrepreneur Business Basics (EBB). The EBB program prepares the entrepreneur to understand the basics of entrepreneurial mindsets, business structures, financial statements, branding and marketing. Participants are equipped to successfully complete a business plan throughout the course and determine business feasibility. This 12-week program was designed with a focus on minority business owners and entrepreneurs in our region who have been disproportionately affected by persistent inequities in wealth and access to capital. The goal of the program is to reduce these barriers and promote the achievement of sustainable and scalable success for minority businesses. Residents and businesspeople from Pottawatomie County attended the classes and were extremely pleased with the results. It is our hope that we will continue this partnership with Spark and have Pottawatomie County residents and businesses continue to attend classes and start and grow new business.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Meanwhile, with Spark's documented success, NetWork Kansas has a newly designated Entrepreneur Business Basics (EBB) in Kansas City, KS as a board certified program. Like all other board-certified programs, it will qualify for the use of E-Community grant funds to cover registration expenses for participants in the organization's 66 Kansas Entrepreneurship E-Communities.

Lastly, we want to congratulate Dora and Miguel Garcia of the Natural Choice Company of St. Marys. In October, they won the award for Kansas Manufacturing Minority Business from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Governor Laura Kelly! Natural Choice is a Small Business Development Center, Network Kansas, and PCEDC client that has been working on developing their business with PCEDC and our partners. Natural Choice is a manufacturer and processor of essential oils and soaps and now towelettes with stores in St. Marys and the Manhattan Town Center Mall.

It was another busy and challenging year, but regardless, we made progress. We want to thank the entire PCEDC Board of Directors, all the PCEDC investors (Advance Pottawatomie), as well as the Pottawatomie County Commission. Without their financial support, we would not exist. As you can tell by this report, the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation is extremely involved in a number of ways throughout the County. None of this would be possible without the tireless efforts of Jack and Jessica. I want to personally thank them for their involvement with the Corporation and their dedication to the County. They have been wonderful to work with and they both are a tremendous asset to the County!! Keep up the great work!!

Sincerely,

Terry Force, PCEDC President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

**Terry Force**, *Force Land Surveying*

### Members

**Mike Drippe**, *Drippe Homes*

**Patrick Schutter**, *BHS Construction*

**Tim Winter**, *USD 320*

**Dr. David Cancelada**, *Flint Hills Dental*

**Chris Johnson**, *Alarm.com*

**Jason Moore**, *Bluestem Electric Cooperative*

**Korey Klingenberg**, *ICON Structures*

**Paul Olsen**, *Caterpillar*

**Mike Solida**, *Evergy*

### Executive Committee

**Dirk Riniker**, *Ebert Construction*

**Jane Wiltse-Pringle**, *Bayer Construction*

**Casey Butler**, *Champion Teamwear*

**Lanny Bosse**, *Kaw Valley State Bank*

### Ex-Officio

**Chad Kinsley**, *Administrator, Pottawatomie County*

**Jason Smith**, *President, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce*

**Doug Springer**, *Past President, Edward Jones*





# GOAL ONE

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SITE DEVELOPMENT



### Develop a Robust Infrastructure Network To Provide High Quality Business and Industrial Parks

#### Progress and New Firms in Wamego Industrial Park

In 2020 Pioneer Seed, a Dow Dupont company which became Corteva Agriscience (NYSE: CTVA) located in the Wamego Industrial Park to occupy the last sizable acreage in the park. Corteva occupies a warehouse for their equipment that they use for experimentation, a testing lab, and offices. They employ approximately 20, and several more during the season.

Meanwhile, despite COVID, the Highland Community College wine incubator, known as 456 Wineries has had great success in attracting young wineries. At the end of 2021 they had four tenants with space for two more.

#### Completion of Shanote Lane (Wamego Industrial Park)

When Bluestem Electric Cooperative built their new headquarters and warehouses in Wamego, Shanote Lane had to be eliminated, and became a right of way south of the Bluestem property. PCEDC owns 27 acres immediately east of Bluestem and had been showing that property to industrial prospects, but the infrastructure was not complete. Early in 2021 the PCEDC Board of Directors decided to pay for the utilities and road to be extended to the east side of the Bluestem property making the 27 acres a more desirable location for prospects that can now start construction immediately. In December 2021, the construction was completed with a substantial investment made by PCEDC.

#### Completion of Shanote Lane (Wamego Industrial Park)

The new route Industrial Commerce Boulevard is almost complete which will remove heavy truck traffic and wide, heavy industrial, agricultural, and commercial loads from the downtown core of Wamego and:

- Improves downtown environment for education, retail, services, entertainment, dining, pedestrian, and recreational traffic, etc.
- Removes heavy truck traffic congestion throughout the core of the community
- Eliminates heavy industrial traffic on south boundary of heavily used city park

The repaving of Valley Street will begin in the Spring of 2022, and the bridge work will begin in January.

Meanwhile, the target date for completion of the widening and improvements of KS Highway 99 is July 4.

#### St. George Comprehensive Plan

The demographics of St. George are interesting and represent a growing trend: 340 new people between, 2010 and 2018, 64% of the households have children under eighteen, the median age is 29.8, 33% have a bachelor's degree and 12% a masters, and the median income (not household) at \$39,167. The Comprehensive Plan for St. George was completed and approved in 2021 and PCEDC contributed to paying for the plan which was written and facilitated by the Flint Hills Regional Council.

A Capital Improvement Plan Committee has been formed in late 2021, and workshops will begin in the beginning of 2022.



# \$600K

of PCEDC funds invested in infrastructure in Wamego and St. Marys Industrial Parks

**PCEDC Board Contemplates New Industrial/Business Park**

Pottawatomie County’s annual property tax revenue from PCEDC’s three industrial parks is \$1,053,239, and Pottawatomie County’s revenue of sales tax paid by the three Industrial Parks’ employees is approximately \$900,000. Meanwhile, the calculation of direct and indirect jobs from the industrial parks is 3,284.

In late 2021, Olsson Associates completed a preliminary cost analysis on a potential future industrial site. Olsson had conducted a site identification study in 2015 and is familiar with potential sites and their strengths and weaknesses. Discussions with municipal officials and the Flint Hills Regional Council for grant writing will continue in 2022.

**Regional and County Planning Efforts**

In 2020, the Flint Hills Regional Council was granted another \$518,246 for Joint Land Use Study II through the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) including a Green Valley Transportation Study which has a project value of \$117,600. In addition, the Council secured up to \$600,000 of

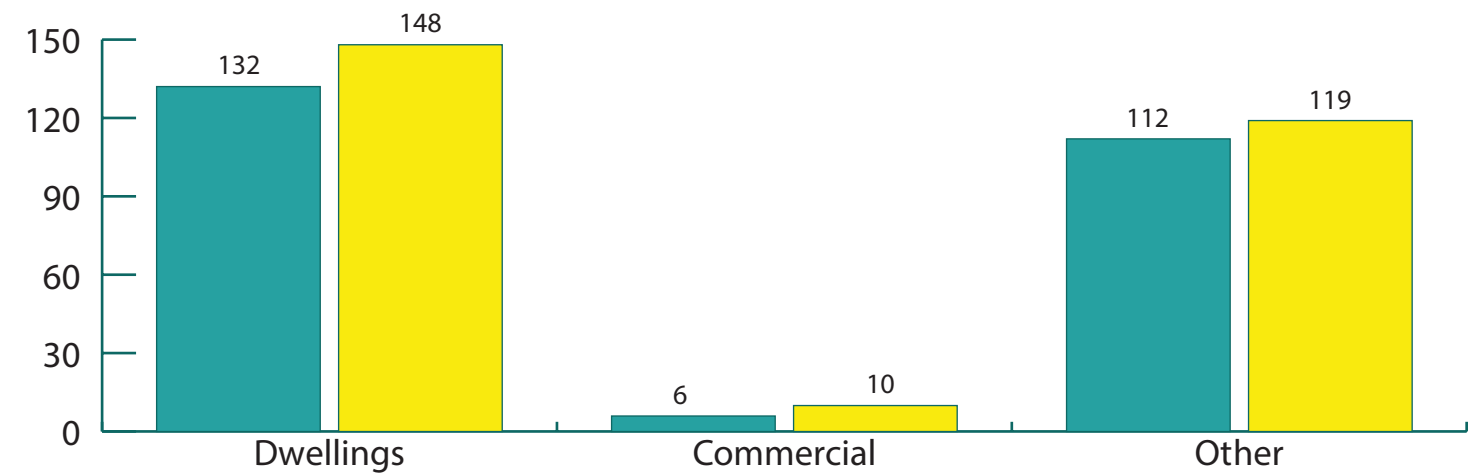
EPA Brownfields Assessment funds to reimburse entities for cleanup of hazardous substances and petroleum. To date, \$25,000 has been used for a business in Pottawatomie County.

In 2021, the county had an exceptionally good year with \$8 million in development applications, and 119 building permits issued that are not new dwellings, while 149 new dwelling permits were issued. The average value of those new dwelling permits in 2021 was \$342,575, up \$30,000 from 2020.

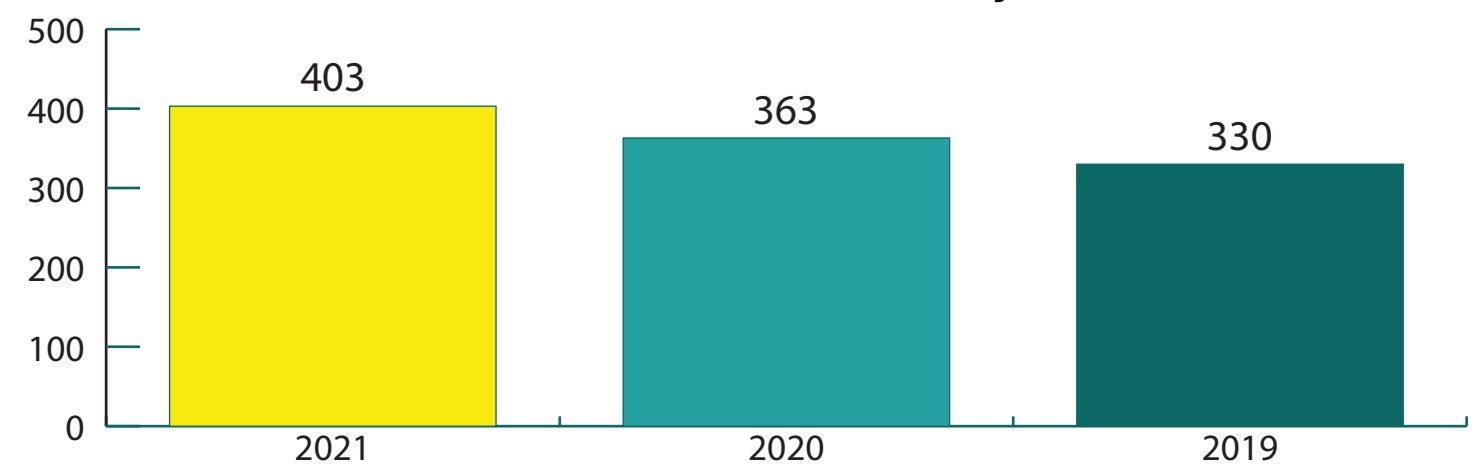
Major county projects included:

- The whole suite of Highway 24 projects (24 and Green Valley Road intersection, Crown C and Highway 24 improvements) allowing for better traffic flow.
- Two complete bridge replacements, Overland Road and McDonald Road
- Large scale bridge repair plus deck replacement on Military Trail Road.
- Structure replacement on Victory Road
- Completion of Fleet facility/county shop
- Blackjack Estates drainage project

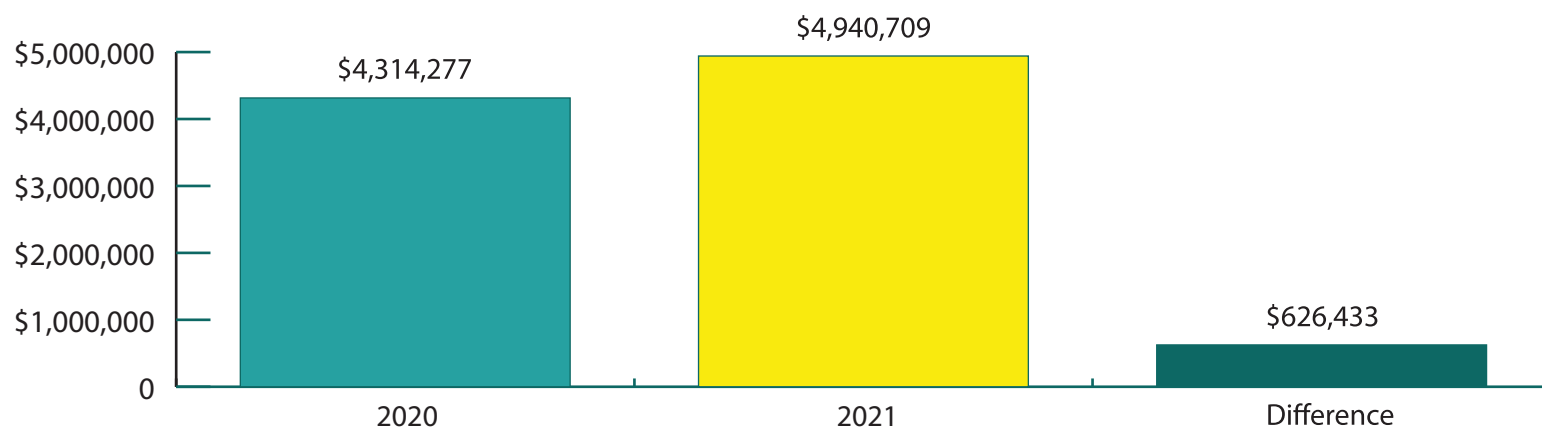
**Building Permits 2020 vs. 2021**  
**“Building Permits Up in the County”**



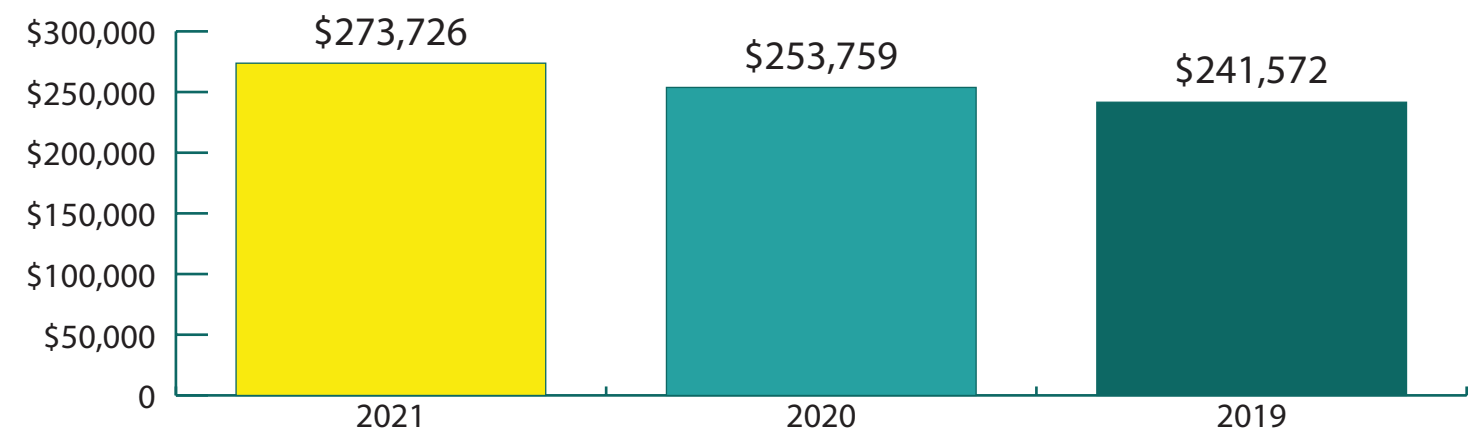
**Pottawatomie County Number of Home Sales**  
**“70 More Home Sales in Pottawatomie County than Pre-COVID”**



**Pottawatomie County Sales Tax Revenue**  
**“County Sales Tax Revenue Up \$600K”**



**Pottawatomie County Average Home Sales**  
**“Average Sales Price of Homes Increasing”**





# GOAL TWO

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



**Develop long-term programs designed to enhance partnerships between businesses, education, and training officials**



### Strategic Workforce Implementation Plan

The Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC) formed a Business Education Workforce Development Roundtable in 2015. The Roundtable consisted of the education and training community, human resource managers (SHRM chapter), and other industrial leaders. In 2016, we completed the Strategic Workforce Implementation Plan (SWIP) and we have been moving toward accomplishing those very long-term objectives and strategies.

The goals of that plan are to:

- Enhance employability skills
- Continue to assist in developing career clusters and pathways
- Recruit talent
- Enhance opportunities for individuals with disabilities and disenfranchised
- Childcare development
- Legislation for enhancing education.

In 2018, we took a stronger look at our workforce by completing a Strengths and Weaknesses/Labor Analysis for Pottawatomie and Riley Counties. In 2020, we completed a similar analysis which was released in 2021. Most of those interviews with industry leaders were completed virtually in concert with the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce as part of the Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership (GMEP). The survey results have not changed drastically since the first conducted in 2014, but COVID has had an impact on availability.

### Manhattan Tech Expands Physical Location in Wamego

The Board of Directors for the College supported the effort for administrators to seek funding options to acquire the Bluestem property as well as phase one renovation costs. The College arranged financing and purchased the existing Bluestem site and began renovations in early 2020. PCEDC invested \$9,000 of which \$6,000 was from its Advance Pottawatomie investor fund in the Fall of 2020.

The main building has been renovated for office space, all-purpose classrooms, and testing capabilities. The building to the north of the main building has been partially renovated and currently offers courses in certified nurse assistant and emergency medical technician training. Science labs, auto technology instruction capabilities, and additional classroom/community meeting space is already being developed to complete the renovations to that facility.

PCEDC and MATC worked continuously in 2021 so that the rest of the current facilities will be renovated in 2022 to include welding, electrician training, construction technology, and more. Classes will be offered at the center, at some of the area high schools, online, and in hybrid format with the main campus and operations of the college remaining in Manhattan. Planning discussions are occurring towards potential expansion of additional educational opportunities to include CDL and diesel mechanics training. Special thanks are owed to Rep. Ron Highland and Caterpillar Work Tools.





**Certified Work Ready: Pottawatomie County**

Pottawatomie County became a Certified Work Ready County through ACT by leveraging the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), closing the skills gap, and building common frameworks that link, align, and match our workforce development efforts. To date, over 1,200 residents have completed the NCRC. Meanwhile, Pottawatomie County became only the third county in the state to be certified Work Ready in late 2016 and has received Maintenance Status four times. Pottawatomie County is only the second county in the nation to achieve 4X Maintenance.



Now, because of many efforts, including PCEDC's, Work Keys is now offered to every 11th grader in the state of Kansas, funded through the school financing legislation for 2019. This saves PCEDC several thousand dollars even though PCEDC is helping to build the Work Keys Curriculum into the high school programs.

PCEDC was asked to sit on the Advantage Kansas Coordinating Council which is an Executive Order of Governor Laura Kelly. The Executive Director was specifically appointed to the Talent Ready group to lend his knowledge of Work Keys and its applicability to industry. Jack is also Vice-Chair of the ACT State Council.

**Career and Technical Education and Career Pathways**

PCEDC has been active in many areas with the schools, promoting career and technical education as well as general learning activities to enhance youth knowledge and awareness. This is evident in the promotion and co-sponsorship of the Classroom to Careers program in cooperation with the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce and the Wamego Chamber of Commerce. This program

is designed for fourth graders and was held back in 2020 because of COVID but ran in 2021-22 with six classes in Wamego, four in St. George and two in Onaga. Meanwhile, Manhattan schools having twenty-seven classrooms participating. Each classroom has a corporate sponsor with individuals visiting the classrooms.

PCEDC is also active not only in financially supporting the Peer Chamber program in Wamego High School but also now the Peer Chamber program in Westmoreland for Rock Creek High students. COVID held back the program this year, as well as the Senior Interview Day at Wamego High, but Wamego High held its first Wamego High School Internship program where students worked at businesses during the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021. At the end of spring 2021, Wamego High School had forty-five students in internship programs. PCEDC has been heavily involved in the process and judging.

**Human Resource Management Network of Manhattan**

Because of the importance of workforce in the region, PCEDC has been active in the Human Resource Management Network (HRMN) of Manhattan, a SHRM affiliate. We have been actively involved with all human resource managers in the area, serving as an advisor on an ongoing basis for workforce issues in this decade. PCEDC Executive Director Jack Allston will be entering his sixth year as a member of the Board of Directors.

**Youth Entrepreneurship Programs and Business Plan Development**

For the last seven years, Jessica Venneberg has been a business plan advisor for Wamego's youth entrepreneurship program. For the third year the Wamego students got to compete in the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) series. The YEC Series is a Network Kansas program (Network

Kansas is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization). This year's local competition was held in March and the winner got to go on to compete at K-State's YEC for a chance at more rewards and prize money.

Since PCEDC is an e-community with Network Kansas, they can use this program for free with Wamego's entrepreneurship class. Students are required to give an elevator pitch, executive summary, and a 4-minute PowerPoint presentation about their business. They are also paired up with business plan advisors in the community to help them with any questions they may have about their business plan. The Wamego Young Professionals play a huge role in volunteering to be the BPA's.



**Wamego Young Professionals**

For the last five years, Jessica Venneberg has sat on the young professional board and has overseen the membership committee. For the past 2 year's Jessica has been the YP President. Young Professionals is a group of members from the community that want to grow personally and professionally, network with other young professionals, and discover ways to get involved in their community. They host lunch-and-learns every other month and socials four times a year. As a way to give back, the YP group sponsors an Adopt-a-Family during Christmas. The YP's also work with the Wamego Peer Chamber on programs and events that interest the group. In the past we have helped with resume building and the peer chamber meet and greet. The YP's will also help run the beer garden at the Tulip Festival and Oztoberfest.

**Child Care Task Force**

In 2016, under the leadership of Erin Tynon, K-State Research and Extension Agent, PCEDC established a Child Care Task Force, which works on critical issues and identifies weaknesses in childcare in Pottawatomie County. In 2017, K-State Research and Extension and the College of Human Ecology conducted a study that reported on the demand and supply for childcare in the county which gave a baseline so three additional centers located were built in the county.

In 2020 the staff was directly involved in attempting to support childcare centers through COVID. Working with the county staff, PCEDC assisted in grants of \$310,000 targeted toward childcare centers. In 2021, PCEDC stayed in contact with the childcare centers and helped to promote the Child Care Aware of Kansas Sustainability Grants. Some of the grants were up to \$30,000. In 2022, PCEDC Executive Director Jack Allston sits on the Board of Directors of Child Care Aware of Kansas and will have immediate access to their programs.

“Several years ago, I was given the opportunity to buy this business from a family friend. I attended some classes co-sponsored by the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation. Then the bank and PCEDC gave me a loan to buy this business.”

— Troy Ross  
CR's Tire and Automotive





# GOAL THREE

## ORGANIZATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The hallmark achievement over the last six years in organizational development and partnerships has been the formation of the Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership (GMEP). Our discussions started in 2017 and the announcement came in early 2018.

Meanwhile, KBED (Knowledge Based Economic Development) is a partnership between seven entities from K-State and the Manhattan community working to support the growth of knowledge-based companies in the region by providing access to world-class university research, a talented workforce, facilities, business services and capital. KBED works to recruit companies to relocate or expand to Manhattan to grow their relationship and collaboration with K-State, fostering a strong entrepreneurial environment, focusing on companies that complement K-State's existing research strengths.

Since Pottawatomie County is already projected to grow even not taking the Immaculata into account, the county is positioned for growth and can handle up to 100 new families per year which would have another \$4.7 million impact with new home building taken into consideration.

### Enhanced Communication and PR Efforts

Efforts to enhance the PCEDC message have increased throughout the year. We continue to use our monthly newsletter and as COVID eased we made substantial public appearances at three chamber of commerce meetings and events as well as the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Through our newsletter, which goes out monthly, PCEDC has been able maximize Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation's visibility and funding and enhance public relations programs by informing Advance Pottawatomie investors about PCEDC accomplishments and strategies. Utilizing social media and other sources, PCEDC has informed the general public with news releases and joint venturing with the Wamego Chamber of Commerce on various programs, including a yearly luncheon on the progress of PCEDC.

For the previous four years, PCEDC held an investor breakfast or reception to inform investors firsthand on PCEDC developments and strategies and seek input. In 2021, because of COVID, we recorded a special Annual Report event video and sent the link to our investors and the media.



### Pius X Immaculata Impact Analysis

At PCEDC's request, the Topeka Partnership conducted a project impact analysis on the construction, operations and population growth on the \$32 million Society of Saint Pius X's new Immaculata. The impact analysis concluded that the Immaculata's construction impact for the three counties (Riley, Shawnee, and Pottawatomie) is over \$64 million.



**Develop PCEDC by enhancing private and public collaboration, building partnerships, and working closely with regional entities and chambers**



“A few years ago we approached PCEDC about an E-Community Loan. They worked with Network Kansas to get us two loans and help us through COVID.”

— *Manual Rada*  
*Paramount Wine and Spirits*



**Jeffrey Energy Center - Pottawatomie County GDP Analysis**

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by county is a measure of the value of production that occurs within the geographic boundaries of a county. It can be computed as the sum of the value-added originating from each of the industries in a county. PCEDC asked Dr. Eric Higgins of KSU von Waaden Chair of Investment Management to conduct an analysis on the GDP and why it has fallen so dramatically in the last few years. After the analysis was complete it showed that while there was economic growth in the county with additional housing starts, sales tax revenue and more jobs and income, the value of goods and services produced had decreased because of Jeffrey Energy Center producing less percentage of goods and services. That amount has dropped from 40% of GDP in 2011 to 23% in 2019. This analysis serves as an indication that Pottawatomie County must continue to add manufacturing or good producing industries so that the tax base is not as negatively impacted as Jeffrey winds down after the next few decades.



Formed the **Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership (GMEP)** with the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce to be a strongly funded and operating business attraction program with an advisory board and full-time staff.



Continue to build partnerships with **Kansas State University** through **Knowledge Based Economic Development (KBED)** through GMEP resulting in businesses locating in Pottawatomie County.

Building partnerships and relationships in all communities; Wamego, St. George, Onaga, Westmoreland, St. Marys, and Society of Saint Pius X by completing and **economic impact analysis** that the **Immaculata** will have on the county.



“Several years ago, we bought this property and began to restore it while attending entrepreneurship classes sponsored by PCEDC. New ideas were envisioned including a pet cemetery and indoor venue.”

— *Mark and Caron Berges*  
*Valley View Memorial Park Cemetery*





# GOAL FOUR

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

### Partnership: The Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership (GMEP) and Knowledge Based Economic Development (KBED)

PCEDC owes a debt of gratitude to the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce for the model partnership that we have developed. The Chamber and its leadership clearly that a location by a company benefits both Riley and Pottawatomie Counties. This also demonstrates to our county leadership the true partnership between the two organizations. The synergy between the Chamber and PCEDC is quite evident and communication between the staffs is every day and joint meetings on strategy are constant.

Since its inception in 2018, GMEP has had an advisory board and Nancy Burton of BBN Architects, and a Wamego resident has been chairperson for the last few years. Also on the advisory board are Casey Butler of Champion Teamwear who resides in Green Valley, Korey Klingenberg of St. George and ICON Structures and Doug Springer of Wamego and Edward D. Jones. GMEP operates by a two-thirds – one-third operational formula whereby MACC invests two-thirds of the budget and PCEDC 1/3 and MACC, therefore, PCEDC can have a \$150K business attraction program and invest only \$50K. Additionally, MACC has staff devoted to GMEP which lessens the staff hours PCEDC has to budget. Since the addition of Jason Smith as President of MACC and the hiring of Daryn Soldan as Director of Economic Development the activity has increased immensely and GMEP is responding to proposal when the requests fit. On all responses, the staff of K-State Innovation Partners (KBED) is assisting. As of January 2022, GMEP-KBED have five active projects are seriously considering locating in the Manhattan area.

For instance, GMEP and the KSU Innovation

Partnership worked on the location of Canadian based company in partnership with the Physics Department at KSU in Pottawatomie County. The project will be formally announced by the university this winter. The company is now on the Canadian Stock Exchange (CSE).



### Marketing Campaign

When COVID hit in 2020, articles appeared in national publications about the National Agro Bio Facility being a future source to examine and prevent pandemics. Therefore, switched gears and asked New Boston to set up a Campaign to Build Awareness of Regional Biosecurity Expertise. The goal has been to have a content-marketing campaign will build local, national, and international awareness of the Greater Manhattan Region's expertise in biosecurity research (specifically zoonotic), especially where it overlaps with prevention of future pandemics and protection of global food systems. The campaign supplements collateral material for GMEP which is on the GMEP website.

Because the campaign launched July 2020, it is hard to compare 2020 to 2021. Growth is apparent even for a July-November timeframe. Campaign efforts directly contributed to a substantial amount of website traffic, and it is even more, as some social traffic is attributed to direct traffic and



**To attract value-added target industry and retain existing industry accounting for \$30 million in capital investment and 500 jobs at living salaries and wages**



content marketing efforts enhance organic search performance.

Key Takeaways:

- Significant growth in website traffic since content marketing campaign launched July 2020
  - Users: 10,635 (up 162% from 2020)
  - Sessions: 12,218 (up 158% from 2020)
- Campaign efforts have directly contributed to 60% of the traffic (by users) both years
- Campaign efforts have boosted non-campaign traffic (attributed to direct and organic search)
- Higher activity in Q3 vs Q4 both years could indicate seasonal trends in industry

These are some excellent indications that key site selectors are looking at our site and at the biosecurity campaign.

Via Searches there were 2.1M impressions and the terms most sought after were biosecurity, animal science, epidemiologist career. With emails sent by GMEP-New Boston the open rate was 20%.

**Business Retention Visits And SWOT-Labor Analysis**

From the fifty interviews PCEDC did with the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce in 2020, we have compiled excellent and meaningful data. In early 2021 PCEDC completed its third Strengths and Weaknesses, and Labor Analysis and sent out to all interviewees and investors in Advance Pottawatomie.

These interviews were mostly done virtually and were very impactful whether they were live or virtual. PCEDC owes a debt of gratitude to the Manhattan Area Chamber staff for setting up many of these meetings.

**National Marketing Efforts/Team Kansas**

PCEDC maintains a Fellow Member status in the Industrial Asset Management Council (IAMC) which has several hundred member companies and the world's most significant site selectors. Included in the IAMC leadership is a Global Vice President of HanesBrands, the owners of one of the largest private sector employers in the county, Champion Teamwear. PCEDC has also had discussions with Caterpillar at these national conferences about the Wamego Industrial Park. PCEDC attended the Spring Forum in Ft. Worth and the Fall Forum in Kansas City, where Team Kansas hosted a suite at a Sporting Kansas City soccer match for sixteen site selectors and a dinner at the Governors mansion the next evening for twenty-five site selectors. These were premium events paid for by the Greater Manhattan Economic Partnership.

PCEDC, as part of GMEP, attended a dinner for premium site selectors in Chicago and Daryn Soldan went to lunches and dinners in New Jersey, Los Angeles and Washington, DC. Jason Smith went to New York City. GMEP is able to attend these many functions because GMEP is a platinum member of Team Kansas and often attends these events with Lt. Governor and Secretary of Commerce, David Toland.



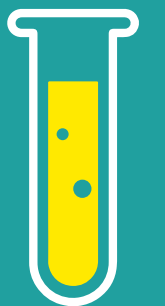
business retention and expansion visits and interviews over a **7 year** period resulting in several expansions, along with **3** comprehensive labor analysis.



Working with GMEP and New Boston Creative Group to greatly enhance the Manhattan area's **marketing effort** in attempting to attract new investment. Those efforts include promoting the National Agro-Bio Facility (NBAF) to firms **around the world**.



This activity **including** the locations of Corteva Agriscience, Sarto Countertops and Natural Choice Company and the expansion of Green Dot Bioplastics.





# GOAL FIVE

## SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Our biggest challenge in 2020 and continued to be in 2021 was preserving our small businesses. When COVID hit us all in mid-March 2020 our staff went remote and used its resources to contact businesses about the **Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)** and soon the **Payroll Protection Program (PPP)**. In 2020 the Kelly Administration had established the Hospitality Industry Relief Emergency (HIRE) Fund to provide bridge loans for Kansas' hospitality sector during the COVID-19 crisis at no more than \$15,000 for three years, zero interest with the first three months principal free. As a result, eight firms in Pottawatomie County received HIRE funds which was a very high percentage for a county of 25,000. In 2021 the state converted that debt into equity for those firms, so all loans were forgiven.

### Network Kansas and the E-Community Revolving Loan Fund

As you know, E-Community loans through the administration of Network Kansas can be used for a variety of business purposes, including equipment, inventory, and working capital. Natural Choice, a manufacturer of essential oils and soaps and now sanitizing wipes was a recipient of a loan in 2020 and became the winner of the Kansas Department of Commerce Minority Manufacturer of the Year Award in 2021. The loans to Brilliant Beginnings were critical because soon after the loan was made some employees tested positive resulting in the closure of the child care center for two weeks impacting dozens of families. In 2021 with Network Kansas's assistance, we were able to consolidate their loan to a 10 year note through the Kansas Health Initiative Fund saving the center several hundred dollars per month in payments.

At the end of the year, we made a E-Community loan to Viva La Fiesta, which opened a full-service

Mexican restaurant on Commercial Circle off Highway 24 in Wamego in the Spring of 2021. In addition, lifelong resident of Wamego, Jean Carley opened a coffee shop on Lincoln Avenue in Wamego named the Brew Coffee Shop with substantial building improvements imminent with an E-Community loan.

In Onaga, PCEDC made an E-Community loan to Army veterans and farmers Gail Wege and Robert Collins purchased the old hardware building and have turned it into the Route Step Coffee Barn which also sells honey, goat milk, soaps, and oils, as well as livestock feed.

Wamego businesspeople Darin Miller and Jason Toll also received a loan to help start up Kansas Solar which provides a local solution for solar on homes or businesses.

Lastly, manufacturer Dymax purchased a building in the Wamego Industrial Park, received an E-Community loan and a special EDA COVID Revolving Loan through Network Kansas. Altogether, the E-Community Financial Review Board made \$195K worth loans (counting Viva la Fiesta), accounting for seventy-nine jobs and many more thousands of dollars in capital investment in the county.



**Supporting programs for small businesses, as well as their efforts in advocacy and working closely with existing resources**



**49 LOANS**

made by PCEDC through the E-Community Partnership with Network Kansas, resulting in **\$1.9M** worth funds loaned, creating capital investment of an estimated **\$17M** and an estimate of **303 jobs**.



**PCEDC: Level One Status**

Network Kansas replenishes our fund, so we have approximately \$135K to lend on a yearly basis as long as we retain our Level One status, which means PCEDC must continue to make loans and operate programs such as Kansas Ice House, Destination Bootcamp, and the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Since we operated the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) with Wamego High last year and this year, we retain Level One status at least until through 2022. In 2021 we intensified our programs by teaming with the new entrepreneurial program Spark.

**Spark and New Entrepreneurship Education Programs**

In an intensive effort to establish a strong small business and entrepreneurship effort the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce contracted with a new organization named SPARK. As part of our area partnership PCEDC decided, instead of attempting to operate entrepreneurship education programs on our own during COVID, we negotiated with the Manhattan Area Chamber, Spark, and Network Kansas to run Kauffman Foundation programs. The programs chosen were Flint Hills Business Launch and Entrepreneur Business Basics (EBB). The EBB cohort is normally geared to assisting/educating minority businesses.

The classes which run several weeks, one night per week for a few hours, normally costs in the \$700 range, but with the sponsorships of the Manhattan Chamber and PCEDC and the financial support of Network Kansas the registration fees were in the \$100-\$200 and those fees were waived or returned if the participant attended every class. The EBB classes ran in the summer and the Flint Hills Business Launch in the fall.

The classes which were virtual had professional certified facilitators and were very well received by participants. The EBB class was so well admired it became a Network Kansas newly designated

**Entrepreneur Business Basics (EBB)** board certified program. Like all other board-certified programs, it will qualify for the use of E-Community grant funds to cover registration expenses for participants in the organization's 66 Kansas Entrepreneurship (E-) Communities. It is the hope of PCEDC that in 2022 we can continue to run these programs with Network Kansas, the Manhattan Area Chamber and Spark.

**Small Business Development Center**

The contract with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) affiliated with Washburn University, but housed at the Manhattan Chamber, has proved massively productive and they have worked closely with the financial institutions and small businesses in the county. In particular, they have been assisting businesses in the rural areas of the county. In 2021 we were without a coordinator for much of the year, but early in the new year it was announced that Nadia Arbelo formerly with the Small Business Technology Development Center in Asheville, North Carolina is the new Coordinator who will assist individuals with business plans.

Through CARES and the county's assistance


**\$563K** granted to county businesses

and worked with the county to award businesses under Community Block Grants

**\$124K**

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Worked with Network Kansas to loan and administer **8 HIRE (Hospitality Industry Relief Emergency)** funds to local businesses of

**\$15K** 

which were all eventually granted.

“We owe a tremendous amount of thanks to the staff of PCEDC who worked with us and helped us obtain an E-Community Loan so that our business could be here to support all of your veterinary needs.”

— *Doctor's Brian and Shawna Davis  
Green Valley Veterinary Service*



“I worked in banking for 30 years, but I did not know what to expect with getting my business going. As soon as I heard about Flint Hills Business Launch (which PCEDC co-sponsored), I wanted to know how to get involved. The real thing I've learned is how to pitch my business, what type of consumer I am trying to attract, and looking at competitive markets, in my case, other antique stores. The other resources that have been helpful were the Washburn Law Clinic, which can work with a business to help set it up. It's also been so valuable to get ideas and feedback from other members of the class, and one of the ideas is creating an additional stream of revenue for us. Also, the facilitator was able to schedule one-on-one time.”

— *Kaylene Plummer  
LisaKay LLC (& Farmers State Bank)*



“The Entrepreneur Business Basic (Co-Sponsored by PCEDC) course has helped me in developing plans fully tailored for the new business idea. Some of her biggest takeaways from the course came from a segment of the program that helped me identify her business' target market.”

— *Laniq Brown  
Thrivent Financial*

# ADVANCE POTTAWATOMIE EXPENSES

# OUR PARTNERS

## Jan 2021 - Dec 2021

Workforce/School Support	\$1,415.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00
Office Supplies	\$1,376.20
Business to Business Events	\$4,852.54
Business Retention/Expansion	\$5,833.00
Publications	\$199.10
Training & Conferences	\$4,416.76
Computer Software	\$2,756.53
Website Domain/Social Media	\$11,140.28
Association Dues	\$685.00
Business Meetings	\$1,540.75
Tourism Asset Development/Promotion	\$10,362.38
Brand and Marketing Development	\$48,628.11
Regional Development	\$18,500.00
Workforce TF Organiz Support	\$380.04
Workforce Academy-Work Keys	\$1,340.43
Washburn SBDC HTC Entrep. Fund	\$8,000.00
<b>Total Advance Pottawatomie County</b>	<b>\$121,426.12</b>

PCEDC would like to give a special thanks to our investors, board members, and our county commissioners for making this year a success. We couldn't have done it without your loyalty and commitment.

### Pottawatomie County Commissioners

Dee McKee  
Pat Weixelman  
Greg Riat

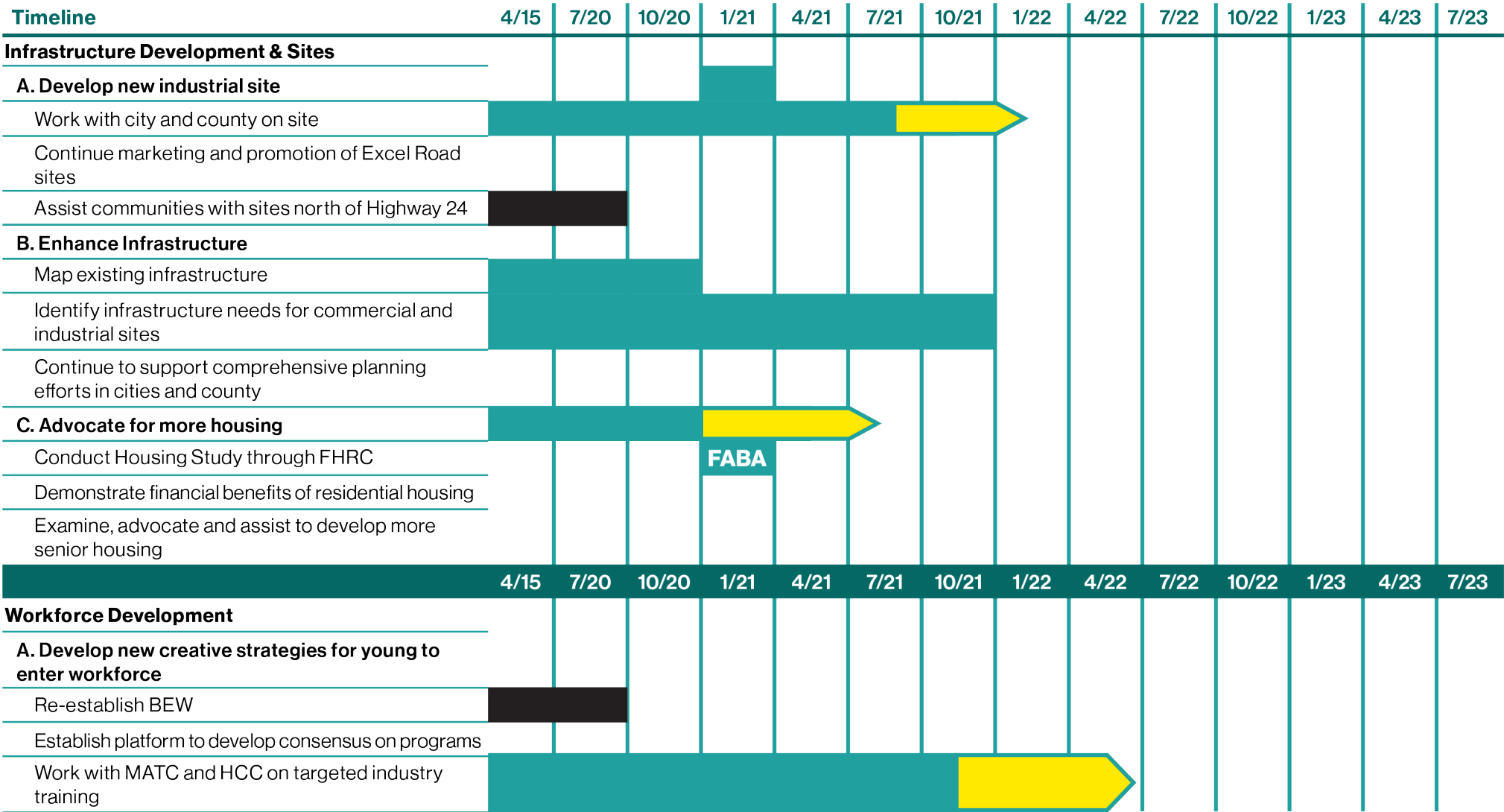
### Pottawatomie County Investors

Anderson Knight Architects	Flint Hills Dental	Reed Company, LLC
Bank of the Flint Hills	Flint Hills RV Center	Reed Investments, LLC
Bartlett & West	Champion Teamwear	Riley Construction
Bayer Construction	Hi-Tech Interiors	RW Milling Company/Spirits of '76
Benchmark Construction	JB Pearl Sales & Services	Shilling Construction Co. Inc.
BHS Construction	Joe Thomas	Stormont-Vail HealthCare/Cotton O'Neil Clinics
Blue Valley Tele-Comm. Inc.	Kaw Valley State Bank	Bennington State Bank
Bluestem Electric	Kevin and Beth Fateley	Farmers State Bank
BBN Architects	Kolde Construction	The Trust Company
Brinks Home Security	KS State Bank	Tim and Marilyn Woodruff
Bruce McMillan AIA Architects, PA	Landmark Bank	Trinium Inc.
Caterpillar Global Work Tools Inc	Lee & Jackie Borck	Union State Bank
Central National Bank	Midwest Concrete Materials	Wamego Drug Store
City of Wamego	Morrill & Janes Bank	Wamego Health Center
Civic Plus	MS Biotec	Wamego Inn
Construction, Inc.	Murdock Chevrolet	Wamego Self Storage
Crossroads Real Estate & Auction	NB03 Technologies,LLC	Wamego Telephone Company
Custom Wood Products	Olsson Associates	Whispering Meadows Development
Drippe Homes	Perry Electric	Worthing Oil
Edward Jones-David Nelson	Pray Inc.	
ESB Financial	Prairieland Partners	
Evergy	Prorenata Consulting Inc.	
	RDA	



# 2022 - 2023 TIMELINE

Key: ■ completed ■ no action ➤ Arrow = continuing

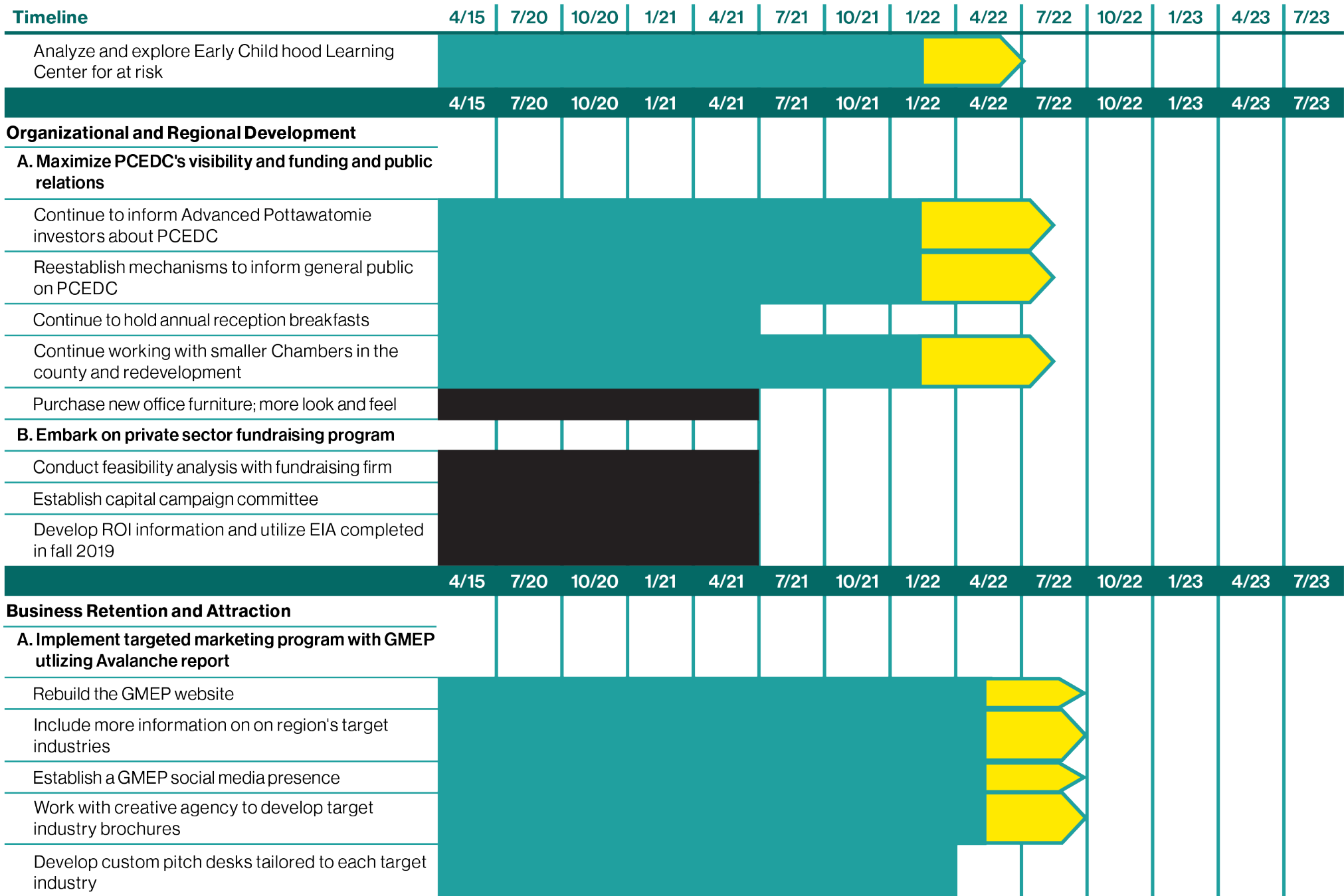


# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Timeline	4/15	7/20	10/20	1/21	4/21	7/21	10/21	1/22	4/22	7/22	10/22	1/23	4/23	7/23	
<b>B. Continue to enhance employability skills</b>															
Continue testing all high school juniors on Work Keys								▶							
NCRCs registered with Kansas Works and ACT								▶							
Enhance scores through Work Keys Curriculum															
Promote Work Keys and NCRC								▶							
Work with other counties in the state on Work Ready								▶							
<b>C. Enhance youth awareness of career and technical education</b>															
Encourage dual credit in career and technical education															
Support and assist in development of internships and youth apprenticeships								▶							
Encourage and develop funding for teacher internships															
Support existing 4th grade Classroom to Careers															
Continue support of Interview Day, and Peer Chamber								▶							
Support high school and Kansas Works job fairs								▶							
<b>D. Continue to work with SHRM Chapter on programs</b>															
Continue to work closely with human resource managers															
Support and promote diversity and inclusion with SHRM Chapter								▶							
Use OPT F-1 Visas to bring into workforce															
Support efforts to employ trailing spouses								▶							
Continue to support efforts in mental health training															
<b>E. Continue the development of new and creative initiatives in child care</b>															
Continue the Child Care Task Force and work with KSU Extension															
Continue to explore financing for child care worker training								▶							



# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Timeline	4/15	7/20	10/20	1/21	4/21	7/21	10/21	1/22	4/22	7/22	10/22	1/23	4/23	7/23
Participate in state and regional organizations: Team Kansas	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
Continue active participation with IAMC and attend forums	[Teal bar]													
Identify geographies with high concentration of target industries	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
Develop a list of metrics for GMEP performance	[Teal bar]													
Include KBED in on GMEP marketing activity	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
<b>B. Continue developing strong business retention program</b>														
Expand the call program with Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce	[Teal bar]													
Refresh existing industry survey with Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
Continue to develop triggered hot response system	[Teal bar]													
Work with existing associations for industry (HRMN) and Flint Hills Builders (FABA)	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
	4/15	7/20	10/20	1/21	4/21	7/21	10/21	1/22	4/22	7/22	10/22	1/23	4/23	7/23
<b>Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship</b>														
<b>A. Continue to work closely with Network Kansas</b>														
Continue to develop use of e-Community loans	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
Promote other Network Kansas programs, Kansas Ice House, etc.	[Teal bar]													
Examine fab lab-maker space feasibility and funding														
Continue funding and use of SBDC in Pott County	[Teal bar]									[Yellow arrow]				
Continue to promote the Value Builder program through SBDC														
<b>B. Support programs to assist tourism, history, and agriculture</b>														
Financially support tourism visitor opportunities that demonstrate value	[Teal bar]													
Support eco-tourism and review grant capabilities w/Flint Hills Regional Council	[Teal bar]													





Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation  
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Wamego, Kansas 66547