

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.



Aaron White
Executive Director

2700 Vine Street
Hays Kansas 67601
785.628.3102
785.650.7901 cell
aaron@haysamerica.net

Strong Interest in Hays from Retailers

Hays is seeing a strong interest in retail and restaurant space from both private business and national chains.

The Coalition is currently working with a number of retailers, site consultants, and restaurant franchisees looking for space in Hays. Many of the national retailers are starting to recognize that smaller communities with interstate presence and strong retail pull, such as Hays, are the next step in their expansion.

Hobby Lobby was the first store to follow this new trend. The Coalition reached out to their real estate division in late 2013 with a retail demographics package highlighting the value in our market, and a Community Retail Survey that listed Hobby Lobby as the third most requested

retail store. The Coalition was able to attract their interest, and connected them with the owner of their eventual site in the old Walmart store on Vine Street.

With the renovations of The Mall, and the announcement of the Tebo retail development north of I-70, the Coalition is already directing new retail and restaurant leads to the owners.

Downtown Hays is also on our radar. Many of the locally owned small businesses we work with are better suited to the downtown district. They can take advantage of the marketing efforts of the DHDC, Downtown Hays Development Corporation, and the overall draw of the downtown through events and activities. We work



After much anticipation, Hobby Lobby opened their doors in Hays on June 30, 2014.

closely with DHDC staff to provide local resources to small business start-ups and expansion that will call downtown home.

Another redevelopment is in the works with the purchase of the a Vine Street property by local investors. We have worked closely on that project, and the expected redevelopment should provide a number of expansion sites for national clients looking for space to purchase on Vine Street.

Ellis County eCommunity Supporting Small Business



ELLIS COUNTY

The Ellis County eCommunity program recently made it's fourth small business loan in Hays to Peter Mandy's the new Greek Italian restaurant on Vine Street.

The eCommunity program is a revolving loan fund intended to compliment traditional lenders with gap financing, or to partner with other revolving loan funds or microloan funds to help small start-ups that do not

otherwise qualify for traditional bank loans. From interior design to water well drilling, the projects funded through eCommunity are bringing diversity to our local economy

Over \$100,000 is still available for projects in Ellis County. Give our office a call at 785.628.3102 for more information.

Planning for Expansion or Retraining? Let's Talk

The various programs under the Department of Commerce have once again received their funding for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016). This is the time to look at your business plans for the coming year and determine if your company is eligible for any of the various funding programs.

Training in industry/warehouse/transportation has always been a key component of Department of Commerce programs. Whether you are training new employees as part of an expansion, retraining existing employees due to changes in equipment, products, or process, your project may potentially qualify for assistance from the state.

We can help you work through the application process, and even write the full grant on your behalf. This is a service we have offered to several companies. Now is the time to start submitting applications for the coming year. Funding is always limited and awarded on a first come, first served basis. Once funds have been allocated, the programs will stop taking applications until the next fiscal year.

Give us a call to set up an appointment and discuss your upcoming projects.

Short Term Training Courses are Working

With a generous grant from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, NCK Technical College, KansasWorks, Kansas WorkforceONE, Kansas Department of Commerce, and the Ellis County Coalition launched the Welding Employment Training Program in late 2014.

With a curriculum designed and delivered by NCK Tech, and with input from local employers, the course is designed to deliver 45 hours of basic instruction on shop safety, blueprint and measurement reading, and operation of MIG welders. The course is designed to give students a basic understanding of production welding, which is a solid base that employers can build on with on-the-job-training once hired. The students typically have no background in production. We have had 32 students complete the training, and the results have been very positive.

We are now working with our partners to add different skills training in order to serve other industries. We are looking at basic CNC programming, heavy equipment operation, plumbing, etc.

Any employer or industry that has a need for new employees, but struggles to find the right skills is a potential training partner. If you feel that a short course training program could meet your needs to create a better applicant for your jobs, contact the ECC to discuss the possibility of adding a new training program to the mix. We are interested in working with as many industries as possible. Training is paid for through the Dane G. Hansen Foundation grant.



JOLIE GREEN • HAYS DAILY NEWS
Akonkwa Badesire, left, Hays, practices welding beads with instructor Buck Dannar during an entry level welding training course offered by the Hays campus of North Central Kansas Technical College on Nov. 11. The class is at Fort Hays State University.

HAYS HAS JOBS.COM

A Great Source for Finding Employees

At the request of area employers and in partnership with a grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce, www.HaysHasJobs.com was launched as a job posting portal for employers in Ellis County as well as Rooks, Russell, Rush, and Trego counties. This service is completely free to employers and job seekers. We currently have over 300 employers registered on the site and 228 jobs listed.

As an added perk, Hays Post links their employment page directly to the HHJ website, which increases visibility to your job openings. Businesses that have posted openings have had tremendous response!

Each spring, the Ellis County Coalition partners with KansasWorks and other local resources to host the Hays Area Job Fair. In 2015, there were over 30 employers booths and over 120 job seekers attend the event. The ECC has also hosted industry specific job fairs, such as the Manufacturers Job Fair held exclusively for manufacturing jobs. Area and statewide job fair schedules and contacts are listed on the site.

If your company struggles to fill positions, register on the website at www.HaysHasJobs.com or call us at 785.628.3102.

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