

University Center Project Update

Hennessy Hall - Dodge City, KS

January 2020

Progress continues with the University Center at Hennessy Hall through the newly formed 501(c)(3) non-profit Rural Education and Workforce Alliance (REWA). From the construction and remodeling aspects of the project to continued coalition building and securing financial needs, the Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation (Development Corporation) and REWA are continuing to pursue local, regional and national partnerships that make it possible to bring this project to life and create an asset to our region's educational portfolio.

Securing funding has been and will continue to be key to the progress of the University Center. To date, there has been partnerships with the City of Dodge City, Ford County, the Development Corporation, the Kansas Health Foundation, the Scroggins Foundation and USDA.

The following funding was secured for the University Center in 2019:

- \$130,574 USDA Rural Business Development Grant for construction costs
- \$25,000 Scroggins Foundation for classroom furniture
- \$190,546 USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant for initial technology costs at Hennessy Hall and 5 other frontier communities and special equipment for the FHSU Masters of Social Work Program
- \$250,000 over two years from Ford County to help match grants and provide startup funds for REWA
- \$473,926 from the City of Dodge City in the form of contributions, remodel costs, in-kind rent and staff commitment from many departments

Construction bids have been awarded, and the Development Corporation has been able to pursue Bachelors and Masters level programs to be offered at the University Center. Workforce training, especially healthcare, has been a top priority for the project since it's

inception. This is still true for most of the recruitment being done, however there are other areas of training that we have interest in. So far, there has been program commitment from Fort Hays State University (FHSU) and the University of Kansas' Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center (KLETC) with additional interest from the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and Newman University.

In 2019, the Development Corporation has assisted in recruiting or expanding the following programs:

- Newman University Para to Professional Teaching Degree
- KU Masters of Social Work
- FHSU Bachelors of Social Work Cohort – 23 students started August 2019
- FHSU Masters of Social Work – beginning August 2020
- FHSU Bachelors of Nursing – beginning August 2020
- KLETC Regional Training Center – opening June 2020
- KU Med's Bachelors of Respiratory Therapy – partnered with SCCC and working to bring to DCCC and GCCC

Additional areas of interest that have arose are Manufacturing and Data Analytics programs from Kansas State University. Representatives from K State Technology Development Institute and Global Campus have toured all 5 community Colleges in the region and are working on prioritizing workforce needs. They will be revisiting the area with potential partnerships to bring more opportunities to our workforce training offerings.

As we move forward, the Development Corporation and REWA will continue to build coalitions across the region and state that bring attention to Southwest Kansas' workforce issues. It is imperative that our communities continue to work together to "Raise the Region".

This project is being made possible through funding in part by the USDA Rural Business Development Grant, the Arthur and Cornelia Scroggins Foundation Fund at the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas and the Kansas Health Foundation.



For more information about the University Center Project contact the Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation at 620-227-9501