

# University Center Project Update

Hennessey Hall - Dodge City, KS

August 2019

Progress continues with the University Center. The City of Dodge City has recently confirmed that we have received funds for construction of the first classroom through a USDA Grant. The City is working on bid documents, and construction will begin soon. Our next goal will be to work on construction across the hall to remodel a room for an additional classroom/office space for the REWA coordinator.



Recently, the Rural Education and Workforce Alliance (REWA) has received the status of 501(c)3 non-profit by the IRS. Once we can secure funding, we will look to hire a REWA

Coordinator that will continue to build partnerships and coalitions across Southwest Kansas to combat the issues of insufficient access to higher education as well as workforce shortages. The Development Corporation has worked extensively to build the existing coalitions that have helped bring this project to life.

We have been in contact with several higher education institutions, private and public alike, that are interested in offering courses and certifications out of Dodge City across Southwest Kansas. Some programs of interest include Bachelors of Nursing, Masters of Social Work, various finance centered degrees and several others including the existing Social Work Cohort that now has 23 students enrolled through Fort Hays State University.

On August 7th, the Development Corporation was able to host a meeting with the Lt. Governor during his prosperity tour regarding the University Center at Hennessey Hall with some of our local healthcare providers as well as city officials and education representatives. There was great discussion between our hospital CEO, Community College President, School District leaders and City leaders. The Lt. Governor was able to get a more in depth perception of what healthcare issues we have in Dodge City and Southwest Kansas alike, One plausible solution to retaining our workforce was finding employees that are devoted to the community and the workplace and invest in their education so we can grow that employee into someone who holds a key role in their respective workplace.

Being able to work together as a community and region is a critical factor in continuing to bring this project to life, and using it as a tool to help our region combat our shortage in healthcare providers.

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