



**POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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Talking Points

Senate Economic Development Committee

House Economic Development Committee

- I. Introductions
- I. Organization Background: Based in Pottawatomie County, Non-profit 501c6, 22 years in operation, public/private budget, jurisdiction is all of Pottawatomie County
- II. Regional Background: 3 county region; Geary, Riley, Pottawatomie Counties
 - Regional population approximately 125,000 - 130,000
 - Includes Junction City, Manhattan, Wamego, as well as adjoining county areas
- III. Regional Economics (Recent)
 - Our region did not experience worst of 2008 downturn
 - 50+ % government based regional economy helped soften the effect
 - Fort Riley
 - KSU
 - Federal government (other)
 - State government
 - County governments
 - Municipal governments
 - K-12 districts
 - MATC
 - Community Colleges
 - Agriculture and related services, equipment sales and service also remained strong throughout
 - Manufacturers and Construction Industry took the worst of the downturn for about 18 - 24 months

- Community bank lending was constrained due to economic conditions and new regulatory burdens

IV. Regional Economics (Present)

- Returned to reasonable growth, especially of private sector
 - Caterpillar Work Tools - 40 million investment; 125 new employees
 - MS Biotec - 3 million dollar investment; 17 new employees
 - Vet Med Pharma Lab; 3.5 million investment; 18 new employees
 - National distributor in St Marys; 500k investment; 25 - 50 new employees
 - GTM - several million dollar investment; 600 new employees
 - Civics Plus; up to 30 million dollar investment; 200 new employees
- Future of public sector uncertain at every level
 - Fort Riley?
 - KSU ?
 - K-12?
 - MATC?
 - Community Colleges?
 - County/City governments?
 - Federal/State governments?

V. Issues of Regional Industry Concern (especially manufacturers)

- Workforce
 - Workforce availability
 - Workforce readiness; preparation and training
 - Workforce housing
- Transportation
 - Highway 99; Wamego to I-70 and beyond
 - Marlatt Avenue Second Crossing; intertie with Highway 24 in Blue Township
 - Highway 177
 - Expansion of Manhattan Regional Airport
 - Completion of Highway 18 project

VI. Issues of rural concern

- Broadband expansion and sustainability
- Rural K-12
- Rural health care
- Rural economic expansion prospects
 - Specialty Services (e.g. First Trust)

- Value-added ag
- Niche crops and livestock
- Ag tourism
- Outdoor recreation tourism
- (Oddly?) Manufacturing and transportation

VII. Regional Challenges (from recent Flint Hills Leaders Retreat)

- Competitiveness for new industries
 - Brand
 - Land and Infrastructure (shovel - ready)
 - Workforce
 - Cooperative Marketing Strategy
 - Incentives
 - Speed of ability to respond to recruitment opportunities
- "Core" Opportunities
 - NBAF + derivatives/associated industries
 - Other potential industries derived from ongoing KSU research
 - Manufacturing expansion and recruitment
 - Bioscience generally
 - Ag Industries including services and value-added
 - Alternative/Renewable Energy
 - Health care/education
 - Tourism

Summary:

Our county and region has largely recovered from the economic downturn. We have significant opportunities to expand our private sector and some significant recent successes. We will face challenges in all public sectors and need to continue to improve our ability to compete as a region. Workforce availability, workforce training, workforce housing, land and infrastructure readiness and continued transportation upgrades are needed to continue to improve our competitiveness.

Thank you for this opportunity to share information with you. Your interest and courtesy is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bob Cole
Director