



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.



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Executive Director

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*The Ellis County Coalition
is funded in part by
Ellis County and the City of Hays*

Logistics: An Important Component of Business

As a community centrally located in the U.S., we recognize the value of being able to move products out to customers, and move raw materials in to our manufacturers in a timely manner. Recent announcements are going to help improve the movement of freight in this region for the betterment of many companies. First, KDOT has announced that they will assist in two transload facility developments. One will be located in Great Bend, the other in Garden City. Transload facilities move freight from rail to truck and vice versa. This brings access to rail shipment in areas that did not have access to it before. A company can bring in bulk material to Great Bend, then move it to trucks for shipment to Hays. Rail access can generate considerable savings over moving the product by truck alone. KDOT has committed to investing \$5 million in infrastructure to help launch these two transload facilities.



Second, I recently returned from a trip with three colleagues from Northwest Kansas to the Port of Catoosa in Oklahoma. This is the farthest north, year round, ice free port in North America. They currently ship 2 million tons of freight through the barge system to and from the Gulf of Mexico. Catoosa management reached out to me last year to discuss how they can help our regional manufacturers utilize the port system to move freight more efficiently. For companies that export finished products or import raw materials, this could be a tremendous savings in freight cost to the Gulf. We will host a group from Catoosa in the Northwest Kansas area in January with the intent to connect them with potential customers in this region. The group will be prepared to discuss what services they can provide and how it might benefit employers in our region.

If you have questions regarding these new freight opportunities, please give our office a call.



Who owns the Icehouse?

A Program on the Entrepreneurial Mind

Aaron White, Executive Director of the Ellis County Coalition, recently completed a training program to allow him to deliver the Icehouse Entrepreneurial Mindset training program.

Inspired by the life story of Pulitzer nominee Clifton Taulbert, this program is designed to train people to look at problems with the mindset of an entrepreneur: an attitude of resilience, and open to identifying problems and the best solution.

Although designed for those seeking to launch their own business, the program has also been adapted to help engage employees in their role as an employee. This is critical as employers look to adapt new business strategies, look to improve efficiency, and deliver better service to their customers.

The program can be delivered in a variety of formats and is suitable for a variety of industries. Contact the Coalition office for more details if you are interested in this training for your company.

2015 Community Retail Survey

The Ellis County Coalition has recently completed compiling the data from our 2015 Community Retail Survey. This year, we had nearly 1,300 responses through the link posted on Nex-Tech's site, which we promoted through social media. Overall, we still see responses indicating that residents of this region do a lot of their shopping outside Hays, primarily Salina. Clothing of all types is the number one sector people shop for, particularly at department store type retailers. Although we have recruited some of the store types requested in the 2012 survey, we still see gaps in the area of shoes, organic/all natural type groceries, a good steakhouse, fine dining, and general sit-down type restaurants. We will provide this data to local developers and property owners to assist them in recruitment strategies aimed at filling the gaps. Detailed survey results can be found at www.HaysAmerica.net by clicking on the Retail link.

Retail recruitment, although not a major focus of economic development is an often overlooked segment that impacts growth of primary employers. Quality of life (including retail store choices) impacts our ability to recruit employees to the area, and workforce development is the #1 concern of employers looking at expansion in our area. Our retail pull factor has dropped the last two years, which is of concern to a community that relies heavily on sales tax for the general fund.

HaysHasJobs.com is a Great Recruitment Tool

Through a grant partnership with the Kansas Department of Commerce, the HaysHasJobs.com website was launched in 2007. A free job posting website maintained by the Coalition, the site has posted jobs from hundreds of employers in Ellis and surrounding counties.

Employers are seeing the value of reaching out to the local workforce through web-based media, which is the preferred media of today's job seekers.

An effective job recruitment strategy is more than just placing an ad on the right website.

The Ellis County Labor Basin Study conducted by the Docking Institute identified a number of key indicators that attract potential employees. Here are the top 5 key benefits identified in the study, by order of importance:

- Good health benefits
- Good retirement benefits
- OTJ (on the job) or paid training
- Good salary/hourly wages
- Good vacation benefits

With this in mind, job advertising should focus more on benefits packages and skills they will learn on the job rather than wages.

Wages do come into play for attracting a commuting workforce. Hays attracts labor from a long distance, but our primary commuting distance is within 40 miles. Wages and fuel prices have the biggest impact on how far a potential employee will travel for work.

If you are looking to tap into the labor market of surrounding counties, you need to be competitive in wages.

Every spring, the Coalition hosts an annual job fair in partnership with KANSASWORKS, Kansas WorkforceONE, and Big Creek Crossing (formerly known as The Mall). This event is well attended, attracts a lot of job seekers, and highlights a variety of industries. The ECC has also partnered on job fairs for targeted industries, such as manufacturing or even single businesses with positive results.

If your business is interested in holding or participating in a job fair, please contact our office.



Tips:

Don't forget to check your postings, to see if they are still current, edit as needed and remove your filled positions in a timely manner.

Delete and repost old job postings. Job seekers are looking for new or recently posted positions. Even though you are still hiring for a certain position, the posting date may hinder the number of applicants you are receiving.

Details! Job seekers look for specifics regarding what job responsibilities, education or experience you are looking for and the company benefits offered. The more details you put in your job listing, the more responses you will receive.

As an added perk, Hays Post links their employment page directly to the HHJ website, which increases visibility to your job openings. The HaysHasJobs.com site also spiders or feeds out to the Western Kansas job board www.westernksjobs.com and also www.nationjob.com. Your posting will appear on their sites for more visibility.

Still not sure? Just try the site. Businesses that have posted openings have had tremendous response!

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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