

Subject: Strengthening Our Community: The Role of GROW Ellsworth County

Dear Ellsworth County Commissioners and Residents,

We, the Board of Directors of GROW Ellsworth County, appreciate the opportunity to address the questions raised regarding the value of our organization and the importance of the tax funding we receive. It's vital to provide a clear understanding of the work we do on behalf of the county and why this support is essential to the growth and sustainability of Ellsworth County.

Our Mission and Impact

At GROW Ellsworth County, our mission is to enhance the economic health of our region by supporting businesses at every stage—from creation, construction, and expansion to operation and transition. We act as both stewards and catalysts for growth, guiding businesses through each phase of their journey. While much of this work occurs behind the scenes, its impact is significant and far-reaching.

Economic Development: It's not an "or"; it's an "and"

Our approach to economic development is comprehensive, focusing on business development, community growth, tourism, and improving the quality of life. Economic development today means creating vibrant communities where people want to live, work, and play. Many of the most impactful efforts are often unquantifiable—finding someone a job, bridging two projects, or making the right connection at the right time. These often-unseen efforts drive growth across the county, and we are proud to support them.

Direct Financial Support and Strategic Partnerships

As a board, we've seen the tangible value of the financial assistance GROW Ellsworth County provides. To date, the organization has supplied over \$1.3 million in GAP funding to support more than 20 businesses across the county. Many of these businesses would not exist without the financial backing and additional support services provided by GROW Ellsworth County. Our strategic partnerships with local banks address critical funding gaps, ensuring that businesses have the resources they need to grow and thrive, even in difficult times.

The Multiplier Effect of Investment

The investment the county makes in economic development has a powerful multiplier effect that extends far beyond the initial funding. The dollars allocated to GROW Ellsworth County are used to attract new residents, businesses, and increased sales tax revenue, which ultimately reduce the tax burden for everyone. For example, Ellsworth County derives much of its tax revenue from property taxes, and every new construction, business rehabilitation, or property improvement increases property tax valuation, benefiting the entire community by distributing the tax burden more broadly.

Transparency and Communication

GROW Ellsworth County actively communicates its work through social media, blogs, newspaper editorials, and community presentations. While some projects require confidentiality, we maintain transparency in all public-facing efforts. One example of our behind-the-scenes work is the transition of Wilson Foods, which took over four years of guidance and collaboration. Similarly, Robson's Card and Gift Shop transitioned to Raised Rustic after two years of dedicated effort and persistence. Projects like these reflect the organization's long-term involvement in local economic development. Those seeking more insight into our work are always welcome to attend our board meetings, which are published on our website.

Navigating Our Role in Economic Development

We recognize that GROW Ellsworth County cannot be all things to all sectors, particularly in agriculture. While agriculture is undeniably a major economic driver in our region, the organization does not have the resources to provide direct financial support for agricultural producers. Those resources are made available through entities like the Kansas Department of Agriculture and programs such as FSA. However, GROW Ellsworth County does play a key role in supporting agricultural businesses and initiatives within the county. For example, we work closely with businesses such as KanEquip and Great Plains Manufacturing, which help create a fertile environment for agricultural-based commerce to thrive. We are also engaged in the agritourism sector, with exciting announcements on the horizon that will highlight our involvement in promoting this vital industry. Our goal remains to foster a supportive business

environment that strengthens our communities, even when our role is not the first line of defense for agricultural producers.

Fostering the Next Generation

Our commitment to fostering young entrepreneurs is demonstrated through programs like the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge and Lemonade Day. These initiatives help foster innovation and create a pipeline of future business leaders in Ellsworth County. This year, over 300 people shopped downtown during Lemonade Day, driving traffic to local businesses. One young entrepreneur even turned his award-winning lemonade into a small business venture, complete with a logo, marketing materials, and packaging.

The Everyday, Unseen Work

Much of the organization's work happens quietly behind the scenes, without public recognition. Just this week, a critical business transition was finalized that otherwise would not have happened. Though this business is not located in the City of Ellsworth, GROW Ellsworth County was there, ensuring that the transition occurred successfully and without credit or fanfare.

Funding and Sustainability

GROW Ellsworth County's work is sustained by a mix of funding sources, including membership dues, local government support, and targeted allocations such as bed tax dollars for tourism. This diversified funding structure allows us to drive meaningful economic impact without over-reliance on any one source.

Tourism and Broader Initiatives

Tourism plays a crucial role in our county's economy. For example, during the Big Kansas Road Trip, 106 Ellsworth County businesses, attractions, and events were showcased to over 1,000 visitors. The event contributed to a 5.9% increase in sales tax revenue from May 2023 to May 2024. These visitors spent money in our stores, ate at our restaurants, and supported local businesses, proving the essential role tourism plays in boosting our local economy.

Moving Forward Together

As board members, we stand behind the work of GROW Ellsworth County and its critical role in ensuring a thriving, vibrant future for our county. The organization operates with limited resources but consistently maximizes its impact. Our efforts in securing millions of dollars in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds, CDBG-CV (Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus Version), accessing millions of dollars through our competitive application with Network Kansas, advancing housing projects, broadband expansion, and other critical initiatives are examples of the meaningful progress we continue to make.

We are proud to defend the work GROW Ellsworth County does on behalf of Ellsworth County and are committed to continuing this work for the betterment of our community.

Thank you for your time, energy, and continued support.

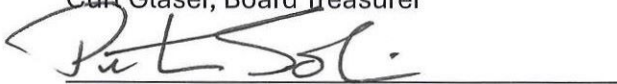
Sincerely,



Justin Lindsley, Board President



Curt Glaser, Board Treasurer



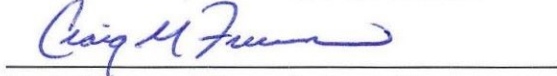
Peter Solie, City of Lorraine



Aubrey Ptacek, City of Wilson



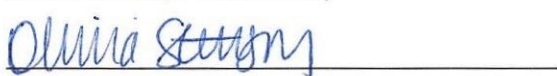
Rachael Barta, Commissioner Bender



Craig Freeman, Commissioner Thomas



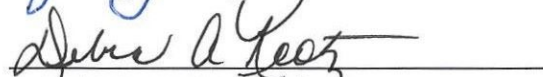
Jim Kirkbride, Membership



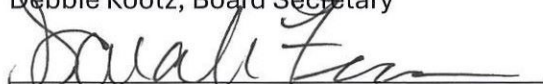
Olivia Stevenson, Membership



Jon Halbgewachs, Board Vice-President



Debbie Kootz, Board Secretary



Sarah Freeman, City of Kanopolis



Sara Oberle, City of Holyrood



Jessica Homolka, Commissioner Rolfs



Colby Richard, Membership



Kregg Clarke, Membership

November 27, 2023

Board of Directors
Grow Ellsworth County
107 W. 2nd
PO Box 321
Ellsworth, KS 67439

RE: 3rd Party Review of Financial Procedures and Transactions

Dear Grow Ellsworth County Board of Directors,

On October 26, 2023, the 3rd Party Review committee met with Grow Ellsworth County Executive Director Stacie Schmidt to review financial procedures and transactions of the organization for the 2023 calendar year to date. The review included an analysis of bank statements, QuickBooks reconciliation reports and discussion with Stacie Schmidt about the procedures used by her and her staff to manage the assets of Grow Ellsworth County.

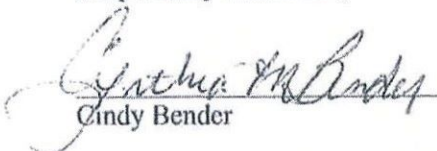
The review committee found no issues with the reports presented and determined that the Executive Director and her staff are taking appropriate actions to report financial data and manage the assets of the organization.

The committee would offer a few recommendations to the Executive Director and Board of Directors to help with future reporting and transactions.

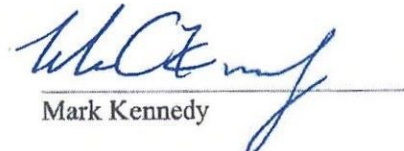
- Division of Duties: We would encourage the Executive Director to split up duties of financial reporting. As an example, the executive director would handle all credit entries and the assistant director would handle all debit entries. We understand the challenge this can present with a limited staff.
- Succession Planning: To protect the financial interest of the organization, we recommend the Board of Directors create a succession plan in the event the Executive Director and Assistant Director are not able to continue in their current capacities.
- Include a copy of the QuickBooks reconciliation with the appropriate bank statement and outstanding checks.
- We recommend the Board Treasurer check invoices when signing checks and initial off on the invoice.
- Create documentation for expenditures if no invoice is available.
- Consider "Virtual QuickBooks" from Long & Associates to assist with data entry.

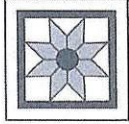
As the body that oversees all aspects of Grow Ellsworth County, you should be pleased with the success of the organization and proud of the manner in which the staff carry out their duties and direction from the Board of Directors.

Respectfully Submitted,


Cindy Bender


John Thiemert


Mark Kennedy



978 ARAPAHO ROAD
INMAN, KANSAS 67546
620.585.2374
marci@kansassampler.org
www.kansassampler.org

K A N S A S S A M P L E R F O U N D A T I O N

June 28, 2024

Dear Ellsworth County Commissioners,

I had the pleasure of working with Stacie and Michelle for a year to help organize and stage the Big Kansas Road Trip. This time together gave me some insights into the capabilities and qualities of Grow Ellsworth County (Ellsworth County Economic Development).

We chose Ellsworth County as one of the counties for the 2024 Big Kansas Road Trip (BKRT) because we were attracted to the excellent graphics on the social media posts and e-newsletters that promoted projects of Grow Ellsworth County, the cooperative and collaborative nature of the office, and Stacie's reputation. We knew Grow Ellsworth County would work well with Lincoln County's economic development staff, as well as Lucas.

Of the six years we've done the BKRT, not one of the previous fifteen counties could mobilize all the cities in their county as Stacie did. Capacity is an issue in our smaller cities and finding a champion in each to pull a community together for an event like this was a feat that was admired. It is good to see the office so connected to each city in the county.

In many rural counties that don't have enough transient guest tax to have a convention and tourism bureau office, the economic development office handles tourism. As proven by the BKRT, Ellsworth County is rich in tourism opportunities and has potential to build those assets. Especially since Covid, the public has become very interested in exploring places that are more remote and rural-community oriented. But note that to take advantage of all the opportunities this industry provides, it takes additional time and effort and connection with and knowledge of yet another network.

We are currently going to every incorporated city (625) in Kansas, a trip I've done twice before. This working knowledge has allowed me to compare and contrast different organizations around the state. I trust you see what a gem you have in Stacie. The diversity of her skills include conceiving and organizing relevant events for all ages, writing and reporting on complicated grants, having relationships with innumerable state and non-profit agencies, as well as peers, promoting the county to locals and beyond through quality social media efforts, and more. Add all the work behind-the-scenes to make these things happen and it's a formidable task.

The key to progress is a supportive board, a budget that matches the opportunities and vision, and a capable, willing and enthusiastic staff.

Sincerely,

Marci Penner, co-director
Kansas Sampler Foundation



September 10, 2024

Stacie,

Formalizing our huge THANK YOU for all that you have done for us in Ellsworth County is long overdue. We never could have pulled off single family affordable rental housing without your help, guidance, and all the introductions to the various community leaders. We remind ourselves often that this housing project was originally slated to be a countywide workforce housing development. We were not expecting to be limited to Ellsworth and Kanopolis when we submitted our application for financing to the state. I'm sure you will remember, we not only proposed single family rental houses in Ellsworth (12 houses) and Kanopolis (2 houses) but we expected to also build in Wilson (6 houses), Holyrood (6 houses) and Lorraine (6 houses) for a total of 32 single family houses in Ellsworth County. We also committed to building a future second phase. This was the plan until the KS Housing Finance Agency decided that they would cut the number of Ellsworth County communities and instead fund 10 houses in Girard. So, the development changed drastically due to no fault of ours and economies of scale among the various Ellsworth County communities were never fully realized. The future phase then succumbed to COVID restrictions on travel, material and labor prices, material and labor shortages, and all things every industry suffered from for years following the pandemic.

So while we feel we let you and the County down, you continue to be of great help to us and for this we are truly thankful. I have dealt with no less than 50 economic development directors in MO and KS and you are one of the few who understand the true meaning of partnership.

You can rest assured that these rental houses in your community will convert to "for sale houses" in a few years, as promised, and for the working folks in your community these houses will serve as their first home purchase. This remains a great First Time Homebuyer Program and your citizens who benefit from the low rents today are eligible to benefit from homeownership in a few years.

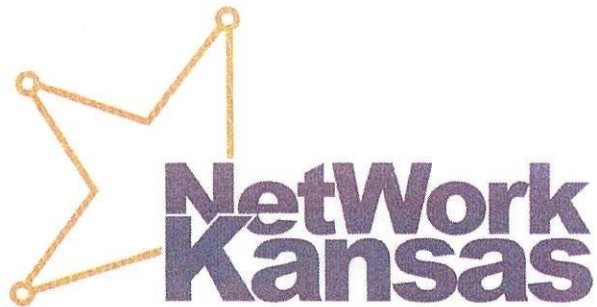
We wish you well, Stacie, and appreciate all that you did to bring the First Time Homebuyer Program to your community.

Respectfully,

Deb Giffin
Deb Giffin



This firm is an equal opportunity provider and employer



Dear Ellsworth County Commissioners,

I hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship dba NetWork Kansas, I am writing to express our strong and enthusiastic support for Grow Ellsworth County Economic Development and the incredible work they have done to strengthen the local economy and support entrepreneurship in the region.

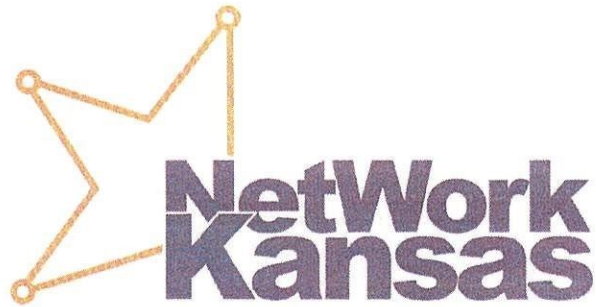
Ellsworth County became an E-Community in 2020 under the guidance of Stacie Schmidt. This is a competitive and elite process awarded to communities who are committed to prosperity and entrepreneurship growth. Since 2020, Grow Ellsworth County has facilitated \$828,350 in E-Community loan funds, providing critical financial support to local businesses. In total, more than \$1 million has been disbursed across all loan programs, benefiting 13+ businesses with an average loan size of \$63,719. These numbers represent not just the financial impact, but the tangible results of empowering local entrepreneurs, creating jobs, and fostering sustainable economic growth.

To put more sustainable numbers to the impact of Economic Development, the College of Business Administration at Kansas State University facilitated a capstone report showing the economic impact per dollar loaned:

- An estimated Gross Output of \$52.81 for every \$1 loaned by NetWork Kansas.
- A Value-Added Return on Investment of 155.38%.
- The generation of \$6.28 in wages for every \$1 loaned by NetWork Kansas.
- The generation of \$3.82 in sales tax for every \$1 loaned by NetWork Kansas.
- The generation of \$2.34 to the bank in interest revenue per dollar loaned.

With over \$1M in NetWork Kansas loan dollars being deployed since 2020, you can see there has been substantial revenue and financial impact to the county through the Economic Development office. Every dollar allocated to Grow Ellsworth County is an investment I urge you to continue. Real data and real numbers show the value.

However, these loan figures are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the overall impact Grow Ellsworth County has had. Through the leadership of Stacie Schmidt, the organization has offered invaluable programs and training to entrepreneurs, ensuring they have the knowledge and resources necessary to succeed. Beyond the local programs, Grow Ellsworth has built strong statewide connections, giving businesses in Ellsworth County access to a broader network of support, expertise, and opportunities.



Under Stacie's guidance, Grow Ellsworth has become a pillar of economic development, not only helping businesses grow but also ensuring that the spirit of entrepreneurship thrives across the county. The ripple effects of this work are evident, and NetWork Kansas is honored to partner with Grow Ellsworth in its efforts to drive sustainable economic vitality.

We wish we could attend and show support in person, but please know we wholeheartedly support Grow Ellsworth County's continued efforts and believe their work will continue to shape a prosperous future for Ellsworth County. We look forward to continuing our partnership and working together to create lasting, positive change in the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important initiative.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah LaRosh".

Sarah LaRosh

Director of E-Community Engagement

slarosh@networkkansas.com
785) 346-4978



P.O. Box 107
Ellsworth, KS 67439-0107

Phone: (785) 472-5501
Fax: (785) 472-6365
ecfi@ks.gov
www.doc.ks.gov/facilities/ecf

Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

Donald C. Langford, Warden

Ellsworth County Commissioners
c/o Ellsworth County Clerk
210 N. Kansas Avenue
Ellsworth, KS 67439

September 12, 2024

Dear Ellsworth County Commissioners,

It has come to my attention that you are needing information on how we as local employers have benefited from our ongoing relationship with Grow Ellsworth County. Since we have been the recipient of many of those benefits, it is my pleasure to share with you.

Ellsworth Correctional Facility currently has over 300 employees, which includes uniformed, non-uniformed, and contract staff. In late 2021, Ellsworth Correctional Facility was struggling to fill our security officer vacancies, with our vacancies as high as 59 positions, or 37%. This was not due to the pandemic, we as an organization had not kept up with the processes necessary to promote our organization, attract the quality employees we needed, interview the applicants, and hire them in the most efficient time possible. We hired Marketing Angle, and to best present not only our organization, but the community, Stacie Schmidt made herself available on several occasions to share valuable information and resources available in our community.

Another way that Grow Ellsworth County provided assistance to ECF was with the Workforce Incentive Program. This program provided \$500 to new employees who relocated to Ellsworth and an additional \$500 if they remained. Ellsworth Correctional Facility employees received \$11,000 through this program to provide to 15 of our employees. This not only assisted ECF with recruitment, but also assisted with retention.

Stacie has also made herself available when we have dignitaries come to ECF. Stacie has come to ECF on several occasions, sharing her knowledge of the Ellsworth Community, the history of Ellsworth, and the many other opportunities within this community. We have been so proud to have Stacie Schmidt and Grow Ellsworth County on our team!

Sincerely,



Don Langford
Warden



P.O. Box 107
Ellsworth, KS 67439-0107

Phone: (785) 472-5501
Fax: (785) 472-6365
ecfi@ks.gov
www.doc.ks.gov/facilities/ecf

Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

Donald C. Langford, Warden

Ellsworth County Commissioners
210 N. Kansas Avenue
Ellsworth, KS 67439

September 12, 2024

Dear Ellsworth County Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my personal experiences with Grow Ellsworth County, not only as an Administrator of Ellsworth Correctional Facility, but also as a 32-year resident of Ellsworth. I have several very positive examples I will share each.

First, in 2020 I had the opportunity to participate in the Leadership program with Kansas Leadership Center, I only had to choose between Grow Ellsworth County participation, or KDOC participation. I chose to participate with Grow Ellsworth County to not only achieve this high level of leadership skills, but to also network with other leaders from Ellsworth County, not only for that immediate time, but for many years to come. Since that time, I have utilized these networking relationships and skills many times, benefiting Ellsworth Correctional Facility, and the community of Ellsworth. In fact, I included our class picture with this letter, as many have been promoted several times since then, further benefitting Ellsworth County. Since 2014, Stacie Schmidt and Grow Ellsworth County have provided the KLC Leadership program to 112 leaders. What an incredible achievement!

Second, Warden Langford mentioned in his letter that ECF hired Marketing Angle to rebrand our organization, define our target market, and design an entirely new marketing and recruitment program that assisted ECF in decreasing their security officer vacancies from 37% to 8%. We learned of Marketing Angle through a networking relationship that I gained through Grow Ellsworth County, and it was one of the best decisions for our organization! That, partnered with Grow Ellsworth County's Workforce Incentive Program helped us in replenishing our security workforce. It is also noteworthy to mention, that Workforce Incentive Program was made available through the Innovation Center, and only communities who applied and scored well had access to these funds. Thank you, Grow Ellsworth County, for applying for and scoring well to make these funds possible for ECF and Ellsworth!

Another way that Grow Ellsworth County helped Ellsworth Correctional Facility was by presenting ECF with the Innovation Award at the 2023 Annual Banquet. This was awarded for "innovation in navigating new challenges, pioneering recruitment in the corrections industry, and creating an employee-centered culture". It was extremely rewarding for our team to celebrate our success with this group, but it also provided many opportunities to share with other local businesses exactly what steps were successful for ECF and might prove successful for them as well.

Last, I am so impressed with the amount of gap funding provided by Grow Ellsworth County to benefit our local businesses. Gap funding is the difference in what a bank will loan and what will close the project, besides owner equity or capital. The average gap funding percentage is 48% of the total project. Since 2020, Grow Ellsworth County has facilitated \$1,300,000, and they administer all but \$340,000 in house. Just for your comparison, four neighboring counties have only facilitated \$600,000 or less. Once again, thank you Grow Ellsworth County for facilitating this critical funding to grow and support Ellsworth County businesses!

I hope these examples have provided you with a clear picture of some of the benefits from Grow Ellsworth County, and why it is critical that we continue to support their endeavors, both financially and physically. We are truly fortunate to have this amazing organization within our community, helping us to thrive now and for many years to come!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carolyn Graves', written in black ink.

Carolyn Graves, Policy & Compliance/PIO/PREA Compliance Manager
Ellsworth Correctional Facility



MAICO INDUSTRIES
INC.

P.O. Box 24 / 936 Highway 14
Ellsworth KS 67439

(P) 785.472.5390
www.maicoind.com

September 12, 2024

Ellsworth County Commission Board
210 North Kansas Ave
Ellsworth, KS 67439

To the Board of Ellsworth County Commission:

I understand that the Ellsworth County Economic board is scheduled to meet with you, the County Commissioners, on Monday, September 16. Unfortunately, I will be out of state, so will not be able to attend the meeting.

I am writing to you to let you know that I fully support the Ellsworth County Economic board and all that they do to promote Ellsworth County. In recent months, the economic board has been instrumental in bringing attention to tourism in Ellsworth County by promoting "Bike Across Kansas" and the "Kansas Road Trip". These two events, brought people from all over the state to learn more about what Ellsworth County has available.

Stacie has worked diligently to assist small businesses to help keep their doors open for business, even going as far as getting other parties interested in buying the business. She also supports the larger businesses such as Cashco and MaiCo Industries when she nominated both of these businesses for the "To The Stars" award. It was what she submitted to the committee that brought attention to them and other Ellsworth County organizations, such as Wilson's "Feeding the Children", which also received an award.

The Economic Development has continued to assist in bringing families into our communities by promoting the schools, businesses, churches, housing, and activities that are available. She has been an asset to this community and our county.

Sincerely yours,



Dave Cox
MaiCo Plant Manager

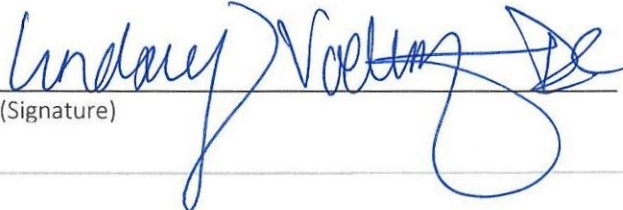


Oak Creek Chiropractic LLC

1512 Aylward Avenue
Ellsworth, KS 67439
www.oakcreekchiro.com

785-472-2625
785-472-2627 Fax
dr.lindsey@oakcreekchiro.com

Stacie Schmit at Grow Ellsworth County has been absolutely instrumental in helping me develop a plan, gather financing including a grant, and actually put forth action in building my new office to further expand my services and availability to serve more patients in my community and those in surrounding communities. This has been a five year plan that she has spent countless hours helping build a projected budget for the 1st year in the new building and really thumb through all of the different expenses as well as figuring out how much income I would need to be bringing in to make a profit to show the bank as well as gap funding lenders showing risk vs reward. She has been through every frustrating step as well as helping me celebrate by assisting me in hosting a grand opening. This endeavor has been one of the hardest, most frustrating, and difficult processes that I have ever been through, including becoming a doctor, and she has been there to listen to my frustrations and help me figure out a solution or at least point me in the right direction. We couldn't find a general contractor in the beginning for the longest time, so she used her contacts within the Economic Development community to find me a list of almost 30 different general contractors throughout the state of Kansas that my architect was able to thumb through and get us settled on a bid that was at least close to our price range. She was there to help explain TIF funding to me and let me know that I would be located on land within one of the TIF areas around Ellsworth. Stacie helped me fill out the application as well as went with me to city council meetings more than once to request money from the TIF funds to help me with development that was on the city easements of my property. She got me into the Neighborhood Revitalization Program to help me get a break on my property taxes for the first few years to help build my business without my property taxes running me dry and causing me to dissolve my business before I can even get going in the new building. She helped me get a small additional loan from her funding through Grow Ellsworth County when I wanted to get my own driveway put in. I had no idea about how to even go about any of this process and Stacie Schmidt not only pointed me in the right direction but actually helped me get there. I could not have accomplished what I have without her expertise and help.


(Signature)

9/13/2024
(Date)



Ellsworth County Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to address the critical importance of economic development in our county and to advocate for at least continued, and preferably an increased, allocation of funding to support these initiatives. Investing in economic development is not merely a budgetary decision; it is a commitment to the long-term prosperity and well-being of our community. Economic development is vital for several reasons.

Firstly, it creates jobs, stimulates local businesses, and attracts new industries. This leads to increased tax revenues, which can then be reinvested into essential services such as education, infrastructure, and healthcare. A vibrant local economy also contributes to a higher quality of life for residents, as it fosters a dynamic community with diverse opportunities.

Moreover, I would like to highlight the significant advantages of partnering with the Ellsworth County Economic Development (ECED) organization. By collaborating with ECED, Cashco leverages their expertise and resources to enhance our economic development efforts. Their established relationship with the Kansas Department of Commerce provides us with invaluable access to state programs and funding opportunities that can further amplify our local initiatives.

ECED offers dedicated support in navigating a complex landscape of grants, loans, and incentives that the Kansas Department of Commerce provides. This coordination not only helps streamline our efforts but also ensures that we are effectively aligned with state priorities and initiatives that can benefit our local economy. With their guidance, our county can maximize its potential to secure funding and resources that drive meaningful development.

In addition to access to funding, working with ECED allows us to share best practices and utilize their knowledge of successful strategies implemented in other communities throughout Kansas. This collaborative approach enhances our capabilities and helps us to implement more effective and informed solutions tailored to our unique needs.

In conclusion, I urge the County Commission to recognize the critical role that economic development plays in fostering a thriving community. By committing to fund these initiatives and strengthening our partnership with ECED, we can create a sustainable economic environment that benefits all residents of our county. Together, we can build a brighter future, ensuring that our community remains competitive, resilient, and prosperous.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your positive response and support for our county's economic development efforts.

Respectfully,

Clint M. Rogers
President
Cashco, Inc.

Robert CZYSZCZON
210 N Douglas Ave
Ellsworth KS 67439
Robert@PlazaBeach.com

RE: Funding For Economic Development.

Good Morning Commissioners.

My apologies that I am not able to attend your meeting today, Monday, Sept. 16th at 10:00am.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous support we've received from GROW, specifically Stacie, in our efforts to preserve the building at 210 N Douglas. GROW has played an absolutely crucial role in securing the roof grant that has quite literally saved this building's roof from imminent collapse. Without that grant, it's almost certain the roof would have succumbed to the harsh conditions of the past two winters.

I am pleased to share that significant progress has been made on the property. The interior of 210 N Douglas has been gutted and cleaned up, with all items from the building have been donated at no charge to residents of Ellsworth and the surrounding towns. Additionally, new windows have been installed on Main Street, enhancing both the functionality and appearance of the building.

Although renovations have been slower than anticipated due to logistical challenges from our base in Florida, we remain committed to bringing 210 N Douglas back to its full potential. I am also working closely with Stacie to identify a suitable tenant for Pretty Boy Floyd's, aiming to reopen this unique and one-of-a-kind restaurant.

None of this progress would have been possible without the instrumental support from Stacie and the entire GROW team. Their dedication and assistance have been invaluable, and I am deeply grateful for their contribution.

I strongly recommend that you continue to fund and even offer more support for Economic Development. Bringing new residents and new businesses, brings new tax dollars to the economy which only enhances a city and it's budget.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Best regards,



Robert CZYSZCZON

To Whom it May Concern,

Grow Ellsworth County played a pivotal role in the success of K & K Car Wash LLC. Without their gap funding and guidance, our business wouldn't be here today. Stacie Schmidt went above and beyond—attending City Council meetings, meeting with us about the gap funding loan, and even assisting with our proforma. The support we received was exceptional and made a real difference in our ability to open. I cannot emphasize enough how important Grow Ellsworth County is for local businesses and our county's economic development. I believe so strongly in the impact of Grow Ellsworth County that I joined the board of directors after experiencing firsthand how they uplift local businesses. This organization is vital to the growth and prosperity of our counties.

Sincerely,

Sarah Freeman

K & K Car Wash LLC