

# 2019

Comprehensive Economic  
Development Strategy (CEDS)

For Allen, Anderson, Bourbon,  
Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Labette, Linn,  
Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson, Woodson

Prepared June 2019

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**Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Kansas Economic Development District (EDD) submitted an initial Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) in 1975. This 2019 CEDS serves to update the District's 2014 OEDP/CEDS. It presents new and revised data illustrating both the progress and needs of the region. The 2019 CEDS prioritizes issues that impede economic prosperity and growth on both a regional-specific and county-specific level. Regional- and county-specific strategies for dealing with Priority Issues are delineated in the 2019 CEDS. The 2019 CEDS serves as a resource guide to government officials, community leaders, and development practitioners. The goals and Program of Work represents the efforts of the EDD to collaborate in the use of scarce, natural, human, and programmatic resources. This document reflects the efforts of the region's economic development infrastructure to reduce duplication of effort and realize greater economies of scale in development practice throughout the EDD. The 2019 CEDS will serve to outline activities and program strategies that are to be implemented through the year 2024.

The EDD operates as the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission (SEKRPC). The SEKRPC is an association of county governments established by inter-local agreements under Kansas Statute 12-716 in 1974. The designated counties include Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Coffey, Labette, Linn, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson, and Woodson.

The SEKRPC's active membership consists of twelve counties as well as 66 communities. The SEKRPC Executive Committee consists of twelve members, one from each membership county, and one at-large member appointed by their County Commission. The listings for the Executive Committee and General Commission members are contained within the document. The SEKRPC General Commission consists of four delegates and one alternate from each county. The Regional CEDS Committee was appointed by the Executive Committee and the respective Board of County Commissioners to oversee the 2019 CEDS process. Additionally, each county was asked to form a CEDS Review Committee. These committees were made up of a diverse selection of the population from local government, private sector business, industry, and education. A list of the regional and county CEDS committee members is also enclosed.

The district's economic base continues to be a proportional mix of agriculture and industry. Economic factors presented in the 2019 CEDS will demonstrate that the region continues to lag substantially behind the State of Kansas, and the nation as a whole, in key economic indicators such as wages, household income, and unemployment. Based upon the presented factors affecting economic prosperity and growth in southeast Kansas, the SEKRPC and the CEDS Committees have adopted an active strategy designed to meet the short- and long-term economic development and growth goals and objectives. The program emphasizes coordination of local action with assistance from State and Federal agencies in addressing major development issues in the district. The CEDS considers the needs and resources of all counties within the EDD.

## GENERAL COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST

### 1. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (51-65%)

Elected officials and/or employees of general impose unit of state, local, or Indian tribal government who have been appointed to represent the government.

Name	Government	Position
John Brocker	Allen County	Past County Commissioner appt by Comm
Julie Turnipseed	Anderson County	Eco Devo - appt by Comm
Jerry Howarter	Anderson County	County Commissioner
Dean Register	Anderson County	County Commissioner
Lynne Oharah	Bourbon County	County Commissioner
Janet Miller	Cherokee County	Eco Devo - appt by Comm
Neal Anderson	Cherokee County	County Commissioner
Stacy Haines	Coffey County	Eco Devo - appt by Comm
Don Meats	Coffey County	County Commissioner
Tom Moody	Crawford County	County Commissioner
Jeremy Johnson	Crawford County	County Commissioner
Lonnie Addis	Labette County	County Commissioner
Dan Peterson	Labette County	Appt by Commission
Jim Zaleski	Labette County	Eco Devo - appt by Comm
Jessica Hightower	Linn County	Eco Devo - appt by Comm
Mike Page	Linn County	County Commissioner
Larry McManus	Montgomery County	Independence County Clerk - appt by
Trisha Purdon	Montgomery County	Eco Devo - appt by Comm
Paul Westhoff	Neosho County	County Commissioner
David Orr	Neosho County	County Commissioner
Kris Marple	Wilson County	County Coordinator - appt by Comm
John Weseloh	Woodson County	Past County Commissioner appt by Comm
Total - 22		

**2. NON-GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (35-49%)**

**A. Private Sector Representatives:** Senior management official holding key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise.

Name	Company/Enterprise	Position
Charlie Newell	Orizon Aerospace	Owner
Mike Hill	Arts & Irons	Owner
Tony Tabares	The Red Pepper Restaurant	Co-Owner
Tom Studebaker	Studebaker Refrigeration	Owner
Dudley Feuerborn	Feuerborn Funeral Homes	Co-Owner
Total - 5		

**B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives:** Executive Directors of chambers of commerce, representative of institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development groups, or labor groups.

Name	Organization	Position
Bill Maness	Allen County Thrive	Executive Director
Susie Ellis	KDOC SEK Workforce Dev.	Manager
Jean Pritchett	Columbus Chamber	Executive Director
Carol Ann Sager	Iola Chamber	Executive Director
Julie Smith	Girard Chamber	Executive Director
Tim Dawsey	Pittsburg State University	Tech Dev Center Director
Matthew Godinez	Chanute Area Economic Dev. Agency	Executive Director
Blake Benson	Pittsburg Chamber	Executive Director
Brenda Krumm	Neosho County Comm. College	Workforce Director
Brian Inbody	Neosho County Comm. College	President
Linda Moley	Coffeyville Community College	President
Cindy Lero	Erie Chamber	Executive Director
Jason Sharpe	Labette Community College	Dean
Total - 13		

**C. At-Large Representatives (0-14%)**

Others who represent economic interests of the region.

Name	Areas of Interest	Background
Jeff Cantrell	Chanute City Manager	City Management
Don Alexander	Alexander Manufacturing	Owner
Lonnie Larson	Chairman	SEK, Inc.
Total - 3		

<u>CALCULATIONS:</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent%</u>
Government Representatives	22	51
Non-Government Representatives	18	42
Private Sector	5	
Stakeholder Organization	13	
At-large Representatives	3	7
<b>Total Board Membership</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Applicable Regulations:**

CFR Part 304.2(c):

*The District Organization must demonstrate that its governing body is broadly representative of the principal economic interest of the Region, and, unless otherwise prohibited by applicable State or local law, must include at least one(1) Private Sector Representative and one (1) or more of the following: Executive Directors of Chambers of Commerce, or representatives of institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development groups or labor groups, all of which must comprise in the aggregate a minimum of thirty-five (35) percent of the District Organization's governing body. The governing body shall also have at least a simple majority of its membership who are elected officials and/or employees of a general-purpose unity of State, local or Indian tribal government who have been appointed to represent the government. Upon the District Organization's showing of its inability to locate a Private Sector Representative to serve on its governing body following extensive due diligence, the Assistant Secretary may waive the Private Sector Representative requirement. The Assistant Secretary shall not delegate the authority to grant a waiver under this paragraph.*

**THE CEDS PROCESS**

The process of revising the southeast Kansas CEDS began in the Fall of 2018. The foundation of this document comes from the local strategic planning efforts of each of the twelve counties of the EDD. The issues and strategies developed in this document represent a synthesis of the priorities established through these local strategic planning efforts. The County CEDS Committees, the respective governing bodies of the twelve counties, the Regional CEDS Committee, and the Executive Committee of the SEKRPC have each responded to opportunities to provide information, submit amendments, or otherwise refocus or reformat the CEDS.

Each county’s governing body has adopted a resolution of support for the CEDS. That action represents a culmination of the efforts of local citizens in the development of a regional consensus. The Regional CEDS Committee and the Executive Committee of the SEKRPC have affirmed these local efforts by their acceptance and adoption of the CEDS.

There will never be a final draft of the CEDS. From the start, the objective has been to provide a dynamic useful document. The County CEDS Committees and the Regional CEDS Committee will continue to assess changing economic conditions on a local and regional level. The CEDS will be revised annually to reflect the changes in issues and strategies that impact the region’s economic growth and prosperity.

The CEDS document is intended to be useful to development practitioners, public officials, and the general public. It is intended to be a tool that can be used by anyone who desires to improve their community and their region. It is inconsequential how many governing bodies or agencies approve this document if it is not helpful to people and communities. How can we improve the CEDS? Let us hear from you.

**Strategy Committee Roster, 2019**

**1. Private Sectors Representatives (At least 51%)**

Any senior management official or executive holding a key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise.

Name	Company	Position
David Bideau	Law Firm	Partner
Jerry Howarter	Service Business	Owner
Nicholas Galemore	Service Business	Owner
Joe Sinnett	Kansas Gas Service	Manager
Terry Graham	Family Farming	Co-Owner
Gary Houston	Houston Ranch	Owner
Marsha Wallace	Empire District Electric	Director of Economic Development
Tom Studebaker	Studebaker Refrigeration	Owner
Gary Lambert	Prestige Industries	HR Manager
Bruce Fairbank	Labette Bank	Director of Economic Development
Ken Lickteig	Bank of Commerce	Vice President
Tony Tabares	Chili Pepper Restaurant	Co-Owner
Bob Kmiec	Kmiec Farming	Owner
Mary Walker	Burlington Place Apartments	Manager

**2. Representatives of Other Economic Interests (No more than 49%)**

Person who provides additional representation of the main economic interests of the region. These may include, but are not limited to: public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

Name	Area of Interest	Position
Mary Benningfield	Chamber of Commerce	Iola Chamber
Jessica Hightower	Economic Development	Director
Rachel Pruitt	Economic Development	Director
Kathryn Richard	Institution of Higher Education	Director
Craig VanWey	Workforce Development	Director
Jim Zaleski	Great Plains Development Authority	Director
Tom Ragonese	County Government	Project Manager
Jodi Hoener	Economic Development	Director
Mike Brown	County Planning	County Developer
Kris Marple	Local Government	County Coordinator
Jane Brophy	Chamber of Commerce	Director
Aaron Heckman	Local Government	Director
Lindsey Madison	Chamber of Commerce	Director

<u>CALCULATIONS</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Private Sector Representatives (at least 51%)	14	52%
Representatives of Other Economic Interests (no more than 49%)	13	48%
<b>Total Committee Membership</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Applicable Regulations:**

13 CFR Part 303.6(a):

*The Planning Organization must appoint a Strategy Committee. The Strategy Committee must represent the main economic interests of the Region and must include Private Sector Representatives (as defined above) as a majority of its membership. In addition, the Planning Organization should ensure that the Strategy Committee includes public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.*

## **REGIONAL CHARACTERISTIC & RESOURCES**

This section summarizes the area's general description, natural resource attributes, environmental issues, political geography, population and labor force, economy, infrastructure services and planning, and economic development activities.

### **The Physical Environment**

The Southeast Kansas EDD, about which this report is compiled, consists of the twelve counties in the extreme southeast corner of Kansas. This location places southeast Kansas in close proximity to the three neighboring states of Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, and it is this locational advantage which has played an important role in the development of the district.

### **Geography**

The Southeast Kansas District is where the Ozark Mountains transition into the rolling prairies of the west, made up of rolling and broken plains and wooded stream valleys, and lies in the physiographic unit known as the Osage Plains Section of the Central Lowlands. A very small portion (approximately 50 square miles) of the Ozark Plateau extends into the southeast corner of Cherokee County. This area constitutes the border of a westward dipping structural plain, which is essentially flat and is part of the Tri-State lead and zinc districts.

Sloping from the northwest to the south and to the east, elevation in the twelve-county area ranges from slightly over 1,000 feet above sea level in Woodson and Allen Counties to less than 700 feet above sea level in Montgomery County. The lowest elevation in the state is three miles south of Coffeyville where the Verdigris River flows into Oklahoma.

All of Coffey, Anderson, Linn, Woodson, Wilson, Montgomery, Allen and Neosho Counties, the western and northern portions of Labette and Bourbon Counties, and the northwest corner of Crawford County lie in the physiographic unit known as the Osage Cuestas. The topography is characterized by a series of northeast-southwest "cuestas", or uplands with a short steep descent, or escarpment, on one side and a long gentle slope on the other, which are developed by differential erosion in slightly tilted alternating hard and soft shales and limestones. The escarpments range in height from approximately 50 feet to more than 200 feet. Whenever the escarpments are bold and the underlying shale is thick, mounds commonly exist to the southeast of and parallel to the escarpment proper. The Kansas, Marais des Cygnes, Neosho, and Verdigris Rivers flow in a general east and southeast direction transverse to the direction of the escarpments and against the dip of the rock formations. The major streams flow in valleys from one to several miles wide with their flood plains from 100 to 200 feet below the cuesta summits.

The remaining 1,000 square miles of Bourbon, Crawford, Cherokee and Labette Counties lie in the Cherokee Plain. The Cherokee Plain is an erosional plain in which the surface slopes to the west at an average rate of ten feet per mile. The total relief of this physiographic unit is 250 feet. The surface is undulating except for a few erosional remnants capped by resistant sandstone. The valleys are wide, shallow, and flat-bottomed. Neosho and Spring Rivers and Drywood Creek, with their tributaries, drain the Cherokee Plain.

## **Climate**

The three major climatic types found in Kansas are Humid Subtropical, Humid Continental with warm summers, and Middle Latitude Steppe (semi-arid). Of these, portions of two are classified by Trewartha's System Humid Subtropical (Cf) and Humid Continental with warm summers (Dca) and cover the southeastern nine counties of the state.

The Humid Subtropical climate covers the majority of six of the twelve counties, including Montgomery, Labette, Cherokee, Crawford, Neosho, and the southern half of Bourbon County. In these areas, the growing season (frost-free period) averages from about 195 days in the northern four counties to a little over 200 days along the southern tier. Winter temperatures are fairly mild, with January's average staying above the freezing mark. Although sub-freezing and sub-zero temperatures occur, really cold weather is of only short duration. Most precipitation falls in summer, but some cyclonic storms do take place during the cool season.

Summers are temperate, with 100 plus degree days only happening a few times and the average for the warmest month, July, staying around 80. Humidity is high during this time of the year, with the nights remaining hot and sticky. Most of the area's 25 to 42 inches of rainfall comes between March and October as a result of diurnal temperature changes and strong convective cooling.

The warm summer variant of the Humid Continental climate prevails along the northern boundary of southeast Kansas. It covers almost all of Coffey, Anderson, Linn, Woodson, and Allen Counties and parts of Bourbon, Wilson, and Neosho. As would be expected, climatic characteristics are quite similar on both sides of this arbitrary line. The Dca type climate is typically found to the north and west of subtropical humid areas and is notable for its more severe conditions. The growing season tends to be a bit shorter, and both winter and summer averages are more excessive--producing a broader annual range. While this characteristic of "continentality" is certainly discernible, it is probably of less importance to area residents than local variations in the two general climatic types.

## **Natural Resources/Agriculture**

Since World War II, agricultural production has been increasingly concentrated into a smaller number of farms, a smaller number of farm operators, and a larger average acreage

per farm. Modern technology has enabled farmers and ranchers to more efficiently manage larger farm acreages. These advances in technology have increased yields per acre but have also increased capital outlays. During this same period, the unit price of agricultural commodities has generally declined. The resulting movement towards fewer farms and ranches has impacted southeast Kansas, causing a general out-migration of people from rural areas.

The counties of southeast Kansas are unique unto them, but bear similarities in climate, physiography, and other land use patterns. As is typical of most of Kansas, land in southeast Kansas is primarily privately owned. Montgomery, Linn, and Coffey Counties have small amounts of federal land.

Natural vegetation is one of the most significant features of any landscape. It is important because our utilization of all land is often dictated by the natural vegetation, especially with regard to crop production, range management, forestry, land use planning, and ecological research. There is an intimate relationship between plant communities and their physical and chemical environment. Vegetation is not simply the end result of given climatic and edaphic conditions; it directly affects and modifies the surrounding environment.

The primary land cover use in southeast Kansas is cropland (other categories include rangeland, pastureland, miscellaneous, rural transportation, forest land and water).

With the exception of Woodson and Montgomery Counties, all of the counties of southeast Kansas have more than 200,000 acres of prime farmland. According to the most recent information from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), half of the twelve counties of southeast Kansas have less than 10,000 acres registered in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The state of Kansas lies entirely within the prairie province of the United States. The dominate vegetation of southeast Kansas is tall prairie grasses. Bluestem grasses, most common in the eastern third of Kansas, are dense stands of tall and medium-tall prairie grasses which require more available rainfall than shorter prairie grasses.

Although Kansas is considered a prairie state, the southeastern portion originally contained some fine stands of hardwood trees. Hardwood species native to Kansas include cottonwoods, white elm, ash, honey locust, sycamore, box elder, black walnut, red cherry, oak, red birch, maple, hickory, and pecan. Of these hardwood species, hickory and pecan are uniquely native to the southeast corner of the state.

## Recreation

Recreational facilities may not always be viewed as economic development resources; however, they are important to the personal well-being of southeast Kansas residents. Recreational facilities provide jobs to residents of the southeast Kansas region, but recreational facilities also attract people and dollars from other areas of the state and nation. A wide variety of recreational facilities are available in southeast Kansas. Recreational opportunities can be divided into three categories: tourist-orientated, city recreational areas, and water resource areas. Tourism opportunities available in southeast Kansas include museums, historical sites, and seasonal events.

Examples of these attractions are listed below:

### Museums

Dalton Defenders Museum	Coffeyville
Osa & Martin Johnson Safari Museum	Chanute
Bender Museum	Cherryvale
Heritage Center & Museum	Baxter Springs
Old City Jail Museum	Iola
Stone House Gallery	Fredonia
Osage Mission/Neosho County Historical Museum	St. Paul
Humboldt's Historical Society Museum	
1919 Clock Tower & Museum	Columbus
Historic Museums & Historic Courthouses & Other Buildings	Coffey, Linn, Wilson, Woodson, Labette, Crawford, Cherokee Counties
Buffalo Historical Society & Museum	
Veteran's Memorial	Girard & Cherryvale
Historical Depots & Museums and Other Buildings	Chanute, Cherryvale, Burlington, Fort Scott
Art Galleries	Chanute & Garnett
Iron Horse Museum	Route 66

### Historic Sites

Old Civil War Fort	Fort Scott
General Frederick Funston Home	Iola

Big Brutus Mining Shovel	West Mineral
Civil War Monument & Military Cemetery	Baxter Springs
Historic St. Francis Church	St. Paul
Historic Courthouse Square	Yates Center
Norman No. 1 Oil Well	Neodesha
The Brown Mansion	Coffeyville
Iola's Civil War Soldier Statue	Iola
Little House on the Prairie	Independence
National Registry of Historic Places	Fort Scott
Civil War Mine Creek Battlefield	Pleasanton
Shrine of St. Philippine Duchesne	Linn County
Historic Gold Dust Hotel	Fredonia
Marais des Cygnes Massacre Site	Lin
Iola's Veteran's Memorial	
Fort Scott Downtown Business District	
Route 66	

### **Attractions**

Kansas Crossing Casino	Pittsburg
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### **Seasonal and Annual Events**

AAUW Square Fair	Garnett
Altoona Days	Altoona
Artist's Alley	Chanute
Balloon Regatta	Columbus
Biblesta	Humboldt
Buffalo Homecoming	Buffalo
Cherokee County American Legion Fair	Columbus
Columbus Days	Columbus
Cowtown Spring Fling	Baxter Springs
Farm City Days	Iola
Flint Hills Opry House	Burlington
Galena Days	Galena

Good Ol' Days	Fort Scott
Homecoming Festival	Fredonia
Horse Racing	Coffeyville
Inter-State Fair & Rodeo	Coffeyville
Jayhawker Fall Festival & Crafts Shows	Mound City
Katy Day's	Parsons
Little Balkan Days	Pittsburg
Little Bear Days	Neodesha
May Daze	Burlington
Mexican Fiesta	Chanute
Moran Day	Moran
Neewollah, Kansas' Largest Annual Festival	Independence
Old Soldiers & Sailors Reunion	Erie
Saddle Club Rodeo	Columbus
Safari Family Fun Days	Chanute
Toronto Days, Fourth of July	Toronto
Yates Center Days – Memorial Day Weekend	Yates Center
Yearly county fairs & rodeos	Labette, Wilson, Crawford, Allen, Linn, & Coffey Counties
Yellow Brick Road Festival	Sedan

Within the 13-county region of southeast Kansas, which includes Sedan in nearby Chautauqua County, there are 41 lakes, four major reservoirs, three state parks, one National Historic Landmark, three state-owned historic sites, more than 53 National Register sites, and 25 museums. And that's just the beginning of tourist attractions, recreational parks, zoos, and festivals found in southeast Kansas.

Recreational areas within cities include all tot-lots, neighborhood parks, city parks, R.V. parking, special-use recreational areas, and city/regional parks administered by city governments. There are 119 city-administered parks and recreational areas in the region that comprise 8,351 acres of outdoor recreational land. A large amount of park land is undeveloped. There are 1,428 acres of developed recreational land within cities of the region, which is 17.1 percent of the total. This proportion of developed to undeveloped recreational land is not an undesirable situation. The margin of undeveloped land will allow cities to expand their park facilities as funding permits. According to the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism (KDWPT), southeast Kansas has an adequate supply of recreational facilities to meet minimum standards of recreational opportunities for the next 20 years.

## **Industry & Mining**

The development history of southeast Kansas is unique from other regions in the state. Although southeast Kansas is currently the most economically depressed region in the State, the region was once the most industrially advanced in Kansas. In the early 1900's, southeast Kansas became the center of industrial commerce, based largely upon the presence of large deposits of metallic, nonmetallic, fuel, and non-fuel materials in the area. The region was perhaps the first, and only, area in Kansas to experience industrialization, the type which transformed portions of New England, Middle Atlantic, and Great Lakes states into the industrial heartland of the world.

Huge coal deposits, primarily in Cherokee and Crawford Counties, have been mined since before the Civil War. Large quantities of zinc and lead ore were located in Cherokee County. Southeast Kansas also became a center for clay-related industries, not only because of the existence of suitable clays, but also because of the proximity to fuel sources, primarily coal. Abundant limestone deposits permitted the growth of the Portland cement industry in the region. Today, southeast Kansas is known world-wide as one of the leading producers of Portland cement.

The abundance of natural mineral resources in southeast Kansas provided the raw materials for a very intense, albeit short-lived, industrial boom in the region. Zinc mining and smelting was widespread throughout the region, primarily because of a large and easily accessible fuel supply. For a brief period, southeast Kansas was one of the top zinc-smelting centers in the nation. By 1910, however, the Portland cement industry bypassed zinc smelting in terms of the economic, value-added benefits to the region. Although zinc smelting has all but disappeared in the area, cement production remains a viable regional industry which enables Kansas to be ranked twelfth nationally in Portland cement production.

Industrial activity, especially those associated with or dependent upon natural resources, has declined in the district. One reason for this decline is attributable to an overall depletion of natural resources. The most obvious and rapid depletion of a resource was that of natural gas. The gas reserves discovered at the turn of the century were effectively exhausted within twenty years. This constituted a major setback for continued industrial activity because many firms, during the twenty-year span, had converted their operations to a natural gas-fuel base supply. When new reserves could not be found to meet the demand for fuel, many operations went bankrupt or moved elsewhere.

Another factor in the industrial decline of the district was external influences. Perhaps the most important example of this is found in the production of lead and zinc. Market forces

outside of the district (combined with the depletion of natural gas) essentially drove the zinc production industry out of Kansas. Improvements in technology and transportation moved the locational advantages of zinc production from the resource-base to the consumer-base, which is located in the eastern United States.

In conclusion, a combination of the depletion of natural resources and external market forces (including advancing technology) worked to check, and eventually reverse, the trends of industrialization which were once evidenced in southeast Kansas.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Extensive explosive contamination exists at the Great Plains Industrial Park. The explosive decontamination is the responsibility of the US Army and remediation will span approximately 10 years. Additionally, clean-up of other contaminants is the responsibility of the US Army (Asbestos, lead base paint, and pesticides in the soils, and heavy metals in drainage ditches).

### **Sewage Treatment/Wastewater Disposal**

Wastewater treatment facilities in southeast Kansas are fewer in number than are municipal/county water supplies. Smaller communities are more likely to be without wastewater treatment facilities because they are without the financial resources, population number, and density to accommodate treatment facilities. For persons living in these communities, septic tanks, pit privies or old-fashioned outhouses continue to be utilized. Wastewater facilities of this type may spread disease-carrying organisms and pose potential hazards for ground water pollution. The SEKRPC assists small communities within the district that wish to apply for financial assistance to improve wastewater facilities. Sewage and wastewater disposal has become one of the most basic of services required for an acceptable quality of life in small communities. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) no longer funds projects for upgrading community infrastructure to comply with state or federal regulations. Larger community and county projects may apply to the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) Revolving Loan Fund for financial assistance. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program of the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDC) continues to be a source of financial assistance for small communities who are unable to introduce sufficient capital to fund an entire sewer/wastewater treatment project.

The introduction of county/rural sewer districts has enabled a large number of rural residents and persons living in unincorporated areas, to receive quality wastewater treatment.

## **Floodplains**

Floodplains are low and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters inundated by a 100-year flood. A 100-year flood is a flood with a one percent or greater chance of recurring in any given year or a flood of magnitude equaled or exceeded an average of once in 100 years.

Southeast Kansas has numerous areas that are subject to 100-year flooding. Many of the smaller communities are not sufficiently staffed to provide zoning or building permit services. When flood plain data is locally unavailable, information may be obtained through the County Emergency Management Office in each county.

## **Wetlands**

Due to topographical and climatological characteristics there are numerous wetland areas throughout the southeast Kansas region. Detailed information regarding wetland areas may be obtained through the KDWPT or the U.S. Parks Department.

## **Water Supply**

There are two critical types of water supply systems that exist in southeast Kansas; municipal water systems and rural water districts. There are fewer municipal water systems than rural water districts, but the municipal water systems produce and distribute a much greater volume of water. Not every community has a municipal water system nor are all rural areas supplied by rural water districts. These other areas must rely upon local surface water supply or private wells. An adequate water supply is not only necessary for domestic usage, but it is an essential resource for industrial development. There are two criteria that a municipal water system should meet. The first is the ability of the water system to produce at least the maximum daily consumption, which represents the largest domestic and industrial demand that can be placed upon the water system. Second, a water system should provide storage capacity for an equivalent volume of the maximum daily consumption. There are approximately 61 rural water districts in southeast Kansas, serving over 30,000 people.

## **Groundwater**

Most of the groundwater in the region is found in alluvial deposits along major streams and in shallow aquifers of Ordovician age. Water quality throughout the region is highly variable, with areas that are locally polluted by abandoned lead-zinc mines or improperly plugged oil and gas wells. In addition, some areas are naturally highly mineralized. The groundwater in the region is generally moderately-hard to hard. Groundwater provides a

water source for domestic, stock, and public supplies, but most municipalities utilize surface water sources.

### **Hazardous Waste**

Currently, the district has two EPA Superfund Sites where past dumping of hazardous waste is being cleaned up. This problem will require continued monitoring through the National Environmental Policy Act.

### **Industrial Parks and Sites**

There are a number of factors that influence rural economic development. Developed industrial parks and sites is one such factor. Industrial parks, sites, and available speculative buildings can be an important inducement to rural economic development. Over one-half of the expanding industrial firms in the U.S. are investigating prospects of locating in rural sites. Supposedly, only cities with populations of 10,000 to 15,000 persons are being considered because these are the communities that can offer reasonable living conditions, required specialized services, and adequate financial assistance. Recently, however, many of the smaller communities have demonstrated not only the willingness, but also the ability to offer similar advantages to prospective industries.

In general, rural areas can provide a number of advantages. First, the cost of land is likely to be a fraction of that charged for industrial land in the metropolitan areas. Also, there are normally fewer site development restrictions in rural areas. Other advantages include the availability of low-cost, productive labor, the availability of transportation links between small communities and the consumer-base, and the opportunity for growth and expansion of a new firm in a smaller community. Expanding or relocating industries establish written or unwritten priorities for potential site characteristics. Examples of priorities are such things as local fire and police protection, processed industrial water supply, industrial sewage processing, solid waste disposal, availability of natural gas, pool of unskilled/skilled workers, transportation costs, and the availability of a "spec" building. Economic development in southeast Kansas is driven by local city or county economic development organizations. The effectiveness of these organizations is not only measured by job creation but also by retention and expansions of the current industrial base.

Organizations in southeast Kansas involved in recruitment of industry include the KDC and local county or community Economic Development groups. Recruitment activities may range from establishing promotional campaigns to developing industrial parks and sites, thus attracting new industries to southeast Kansas.

## **Endangered Species of Plants and Animals**

K.S.A. 32-957, et seq., 32-1009, et seq., and 32-1033, the Kansas Non-game and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975 (Act), protects threatened and endangered species and their habitats. The Act must operate within the context of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, which covers species threatened or endangered throughout the United States, including mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and plants.

The state Act covers the same types of species as the federal law, but it does not include plants. Any publicly-funded development projects or projects requiring a state or federal permit must undergo review by the KDWPT to ensure that the project:

1. Poses no danger to the continued existence of any designated threatened or endangered species.
2. Prevents destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat for those species.
3. Prevents causing or contributing to the taking of an endangered or threatened species of plant, fish, or wildlife listed under either the federal or state endangered species acts.

Lists of endangered and threatened species and species in need of conservation are available from the KDWPT. These lists are updated every five years, with the last update occurring in 2016.

Before many construction projects begin, HUD, EPA, USDA Rural Development and KDHE require an environmental review be completed for the site. This review identifies endangered species and habitats of plants and animals to be found in the area. If endangered plants and/or animals are encountered, the project is delayed until the appropriate environmental regulating agency is contacted. Construction will not resume until steps have been taken to assure that no endangered species of plants and animals will be unalterably affected.

The staff of the SEKRPC has extensive experience in conducting environmental assessments. At this time, no projects have been stopped due to endangered species of plants and animals.

Environmental concerns shall be foremost in consideration of any new development projects. District staff will seek additional training whenever available in recognizing potential environmental impacts of planned development.

## **POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**

The District is comprised of twelve counties and 66 incorporated municipalities, all having taxing authority. Each county is further divided into townships. These townships have taxing authority however; it is usually limited to road work and fire protection. Most townships contract with private individuals and the county in which they are located to do road blading and construction. In fact, most townships also contract with the nearest community for fire protection.

Thirty-seven public school districts, one four-year university and six two-year colleges operate within the district. There is a total of fifteen accredited non-public elementary/secondary schools within the district that are not tax supported. There are additional non-public schools that are not accredited for one or several reasons. The public districts have taxing authority, while the non-public schools do not. The State-supported universities do not have individual taxing authority; however, they are supported with tax dollars raised via the State.

The district has public water districts that may assess fees to cover operation and maintenance expense. There are three Solid Waste Authorities within the district. Generally, these have no taxing authority even though they have derived powers through Inter-local Agreements between counties. Those districts that operate regional landfills may generate revenue through user fees. With approval of the counties involved, these special districts may also possess limited ability to incur debt and issue revenue bonds for needed infrastructure improvements.

## **REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

The district's economy is beginning to show signs of recovery after a period of no economic growth and numerous closures and layoffs.

### **Population Change**

Population changes in Kansas can generally be characterized by strong growth in metropolitan areas, slight declines in mid-sized counties (populations greater than 10,000) and substantial declines in rural counties (populations under 10,000). As is shown in the following tables, the majority of the counties within the district have lost population during this

time period. Woodson County had the largest percentage loss of population (12.6%) within the district, while Crawford County experienced minor growth (2.3%).

Area	2000	2010	2017	Percent Change			
				2000 -	2010 -		
				2010	2017		
Allen	14,385	13,371	12,519	-7.0	↓	-6.4	↓
Anderson	8,110	8,102	7,833	-0.1	↓	-3.3	↓
Bourbon	15,379	15,173	14,754	-1.3	↓	-2.8	↓
Cherokee	22,605	21,603	20,115	-4.4	↓	-6.9	↓
Coffey	8,865	8,601	8,224	-3.0	↓	-4.4	↓
Crawford	38,242	39,134	39,034	2.3	↑	-0.3	↓
Labette	22,835	21,607	20,145	-5.4	↓	-6.8	↓
Linn	9,570	9,656	9,726	0.9	↑	0.7	↑
Montgomery	36,254	35,471	32,556	-2.2	↓	-8.2	↓
Neosho	16,997	16,512	16,015	-2.9	↓	-3.0	↓
Wilson	10,332	9,409	8,675	-8.9	↓	-7.8	↓
Woodson	3,788	3,309	3,147	-12.6	↓	-4.9	↓

Death rates exceed birth rates for several of the counties in our region, which explains some of the decline in population. Crawford and Linn Counties gained from the in-migration in our region as shown in the above table. Crawford County is the only county in our region to increase in population, and the region as a whole is anticipated to decrease by 10.9% by the end of 2040.

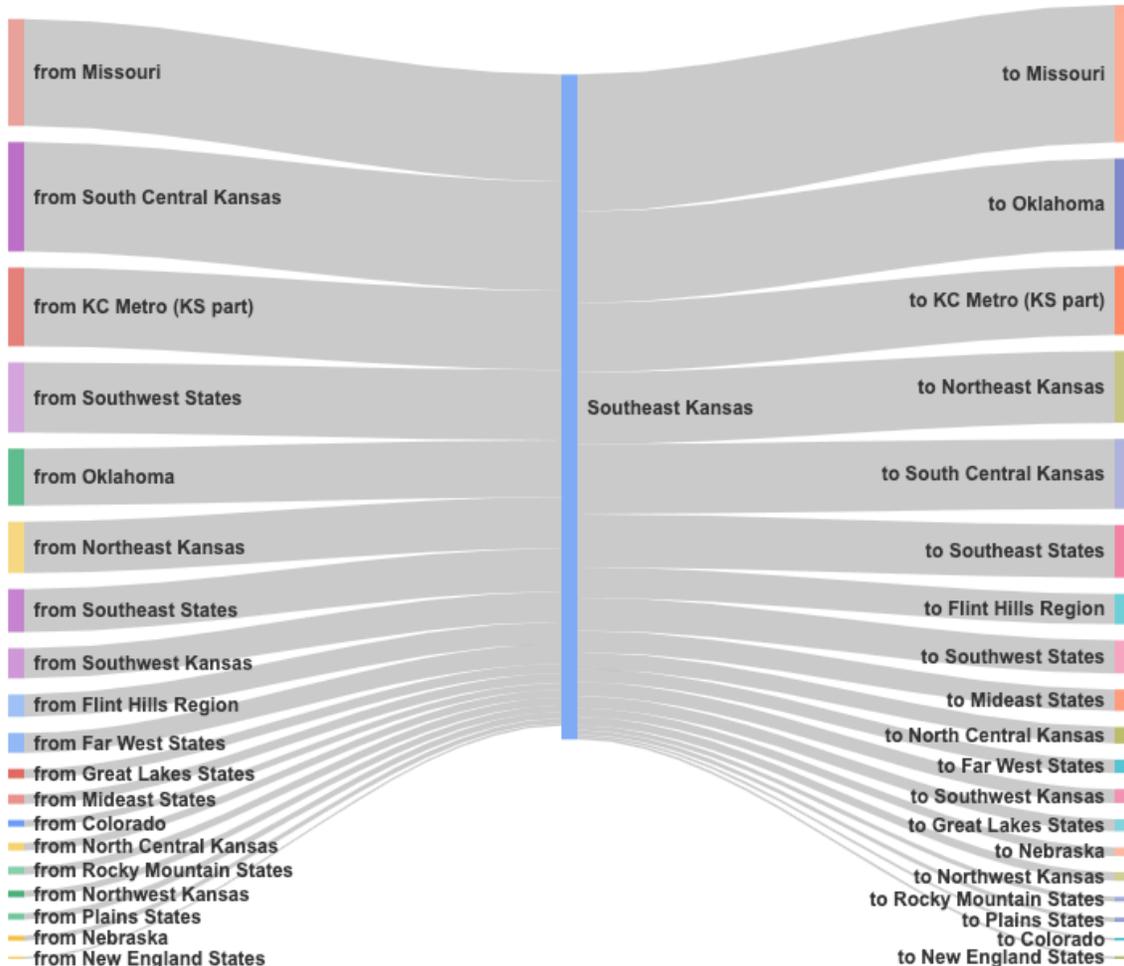
Every county within the district experienced a decline in population from 2000 to 2010, except for two of the regions twelve counties that increased in population. These counties were Crawford and Linn. As illustrated in the *Population Change and Net Migration in Southeast Kansas, by County* table that follows, the population of the district decreased from a 2000 population of 207,362 to a 2010 population of 201,948, which is a decrease of 5,414

of the district's population. Compared to the statewide increase from a 2000 population of 2,688,824 to a 2010 population of 2,853,118, which is an increase of 164,294 in statewide population.

The population of the district had been anticipated to decrease from a 2010 population of 201,948 to a projected population of 197,054 in 2020. This decrease was expected to continue into the future, with eleven of the district's twelve counties expected to experience decreases in population from the years 2010 to 2040. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Crawford County is the district's most populous county with 39,134 residents. Montgomery County is close in population with 35,471. The largest city within the district is Pittsburg, located in Crawford County, with a 2010 population of 20,233. The regions 2010 county populations range from 3,309 in Woodson County to 39,134 in Crawford County.

**Southeast Kansas Migration, 2011-15**

Incoming Movers: 8,970  
 Outgoing Movers: 9,162  
 Net Migration: -192  
 Movers within Region: 3,594



## Age of Population

The average median age of the district's population in 2010 was 41.2 years of age compared to the statewide average median age of 36.0. The district's median age in 1960 was 37.7 compared to the statewide average of 26.9. The population of individuals over age 65 within the district in 2010 is 39,765, compared to a statewide total of elderly population at 435,434. The district's total population within the 18-64 age group in 2010 was 297,230, compared to the statewide population in the same age group of 4,125,895. These two comparisons indicate that the region is losing its young population and reflects the lack of youth migration within the district. The median age in the district ranges from 36.2 in Crawford County to 48.2 in Woodson County. No county in the district has a median age less than that of the state average, except for Crawford County. Again, this reflects the effects of out-migration of the population.

**Median Age of Persons in Southeast Kansas, by County  
1960-2010**

<b>County</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Allen	36.5	37.4	33.1	35.5	38.8	40.8
Anderson	36.8	37.2	35.8	38.1	39.6	42.1
Bourbon	39.6	39.5	35.4	36.8	38.0	38.2
Cherokee	36.0	34.6	34.0	35.8	37.0	40.5
Coffey	39.9	43.0	33.1	36.2	39.2	43.0
Crawford	37.9	32.9	33.3	34.4	33.8	32.6
Labette	35.9	33.7	32.3	35.0	37.9	40.5
Linn	40.8	42.2	37.8	39.3	40.8	44.8
Montgomery	34.8	37.0	33.4	36.5	39.1	39.9
Neosho	35.0	34.7	33.4	36.3	38.4	40.2
Wilson	37.4	41.1	35.7	39.1	40.6	43.1
Woodson	41.4	43.6	41.1	41.4	44.1	48.2
<b>Southeast Kansas Average</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>41.2</b>
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>36.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics: Kansas* (PC(1)-B18); 1980 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics: Kansas* (PC-1-B18); 1990 Census of Population and Housing, *Summary of Population and Housing Characteristics: Kansas* (CPH-1-18); Census 2000, *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics* (DP-1), <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/dp1/2kh20.pdf> (accessed December 1, 2005); 2010 Census, *Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010* (DP-1).

**Population in Kansas, by Age and County  
2010**

<b>County</b>	<b>All Persons</b>	<b>Under 5 Years</b>	<b>18 years and over</b>	<b>21 years and over</b>	<b>65 years and over</b>	<b>85 years and over</b>
Allen	13,371	880	10,223	9,528	2,445	406
Anderson	8,102	563	6,045	5,770	1,633	288
Bourbon	15,173	1,120	11,287	10,473	2,628	420
Cherokee	21,603	1,398	16,214	15,447	3,448	456
Coffey	8,601	491	6,514	6,244	1,483	221
Crawford	39,134	2,486	30,409	27,428	5,463	1,022
Labette	21,607	1,498	16,345	15,404	3,587	612
Linn	9,656	539	7,146	7,157	1,867	240
Montgomery	35,471	2,437	27,072	25,228	6,156	1,065
Neosho	16,512	1,137	12,430	11,665	2,866	463
Wilson	9,409	611	7,116	6,869	1,813	289
Woodson	3,309	178	2,651	2,565	750	144
Southeast Kansas	201,948	13,338	153,452	143,778	34,139	5,626
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>2,853,118</b>	<b>205,492</b>	<b>2,126,179</b>	<b>1,999,716</b>	<b>376,116</b>	<b>59,318</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 (DP-1).

### **Labor Force**

Both long- and short-term local economic development trends are important indicators of a region's economic health. The following table shows the size of the district's labor force. The district's unemployment rate has remained higher than the statewide average. In 2019, the disparity between the district and state unemployment rates was greater, with the district averaging a 3.94 percent unemployment rate as compared to the state average of 3.5 percent, for a difference of .54 percent. Unfortunately, the district continues to experience unemployment rates that are higher than the state average.

## Civilian Labor Force

Area	Percent Change			
	2013	2017	2013 - 2017	
Allen	6,890	6,298	-8.6	↓
Anderson	4,238	4,144	-2.2	↓
Bourbon	6,868	6,860	-0.1	↓
Cherokee	10,498	10,164	-3.2	↓
Coffey	4,943	4,124	-16.6	↓
Crawford	19,282	19,123	-0.8	↓
Labette	10,728	10,350	-3.5	↓
Linn	4,334	4,355	0.5	↑
Montgomery	17,835	14,987	-16.0	↓
Neosho	6,733	6,053	-10.1	↓
Wilson	4,110	3,998	-2.7	↓
Woodson	1,627	1,589	-2.3	↓
<b>Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission</b>	<b>98,086</b>	<b>92,045</b>	<b>-6.2</b>	<b>↓</b>
<b>State of Kansas</b>	<b>1,485,917</b>	<b>1,478,783</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>↓</b>

## Property Valuation

Property valuation is a measure of the fixed investments or assets that exist within a county. To allow for comparison, this variable is normalized using county population. A less-populated county can benefit from either an attractive natural resource base such as the largely oil and gas rich southwest or the presence of a large power plant or industrial facility. Evidence shows that eight of the top ten counties in per capita property valuation are rural counties in southwest Kansas. Rural counties, as a group, fared far better in this particular category than metropolitan or mid-size counties. However, part of this is due to the high value

of undeveloped land coupled with small populations. This also explains the difference between the southwest's high value in this category and those of the remaining regions. The decision to build large industrial facilities in rural areas, such as a power plant, can provide counties with a base to build a stronger economy. Coffey County, which is home to the Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant, has consistently ranked in the top eight in this report for many years. The presence of public structures can cause counties to rank lower than would be expected. Admittedly, substantial economic benefits result from the presence of these facilities. In 2019, the average property valuation per capita in southeast Kansas was \$12,241.

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

### Education

The *SEK Regional Education Characteristics* table below illustrates educational attainment of persons 25 years and older. During these years, all counties within the district had educational attainment levels that were lower than the statewide average.

#### POPULATION AGE 25 AND OVER

Highest Completed Level	2012	2017	Percent Change
Less than 9th grade	5,741	4,483	-21.9
9th-12th grade, no diploma	10,213	8,851	-13.3
High school graduate, inc. equivalency	44,386	41,561	-6.4
Some college, no degree	34,350	35,212	2.5
Associate degree	13,036	13,156	0.9
Bachelor's degree	16,729	16,971	1.4
Graduate or professional degree	8,469	9,156	8.1
Percent completed high school or higher	88.0	89.7	1.9 
Percent completed bachelor's degree or higher	19.0	20.2	6.5 

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Income

The per capita income for the State of Kansas for 2017 was listed at \$48,559. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, southeast Kansas counties per capita income was \$37,848. This is a difference of \$10,711. There were seven counties in the Southeast Region that had incomes less than \$38,000. Only Coffey County has a per capita income above the State at \$50,407. The county with the lowest per capita income was Woodson County with it being \$34,012. Based on this information, the per capita income within the district has steadily declined compared to the State average, except for Coffey County.

Area	2013	2017	Percent Change	
			2013 - 2017	
Allen	35,793	38,253	6.9	↑
Anderson	39,080	37,848	-3.2	↓
Bourbon	36,186	39,604	9.4	↑
Cherokee	33,468	37,606	12.4	↑
Coffey	57,784	50,407	-12.8	↓
Crawford	33,527	35,591	6.2	↑
Labette	37,017	40,043	8.2	↑
Linn	31,980	34,694	8.5	↑
Montgomery	34,421	35,172	2.2	↑
Neosho	35,068	37,792	7.8	↑
Wilson	38,653	43,056	11.4	↑
Woodson	36,624	34,012	-7.1	↓
<b>Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission</b>	<b>35,981</b>	<b>37,848</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>↑</b>
<b>State of Kansas</b>	<b>45,826</b>	<b>48,559</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>↑</b>

The *Per Capita Personal Income in Kansas* table also shows an analysis of resident income from 2013 to 2017 within the district. As is apparent, the district has consistently experienced incomes that are lower than the state average. All counties within the district have consistently had per capita incomes that fall below the state average during these years. In 2010, the district's per capita income was \$32,291, compared to the state average of \$38,787. This is a difference of \$6,496, which is nearly 16.8 percent below the state average. In 2012, the district's per capita income was \$34,162, compared to the state average of \$43,015. This is a difference of \$8,853, or nearly 21 percent, below the state average.

Based on this information, the per capita income within the district has been steadily below the state average, with the exception of Coffey County. In 2013 - 2017, Coffey County per capita income was higher than the district average and the state average.

The 2007 – 2011 American Community Survey indicates that the average median family income for the district was \$41,442, compared to the state average of \$64,731.

#### PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME

Area	Percent Change		
	2013	2017	2013 - 2017
Allen	35,793	38,253	6.9 ↑
Anderson	39,080	37,848	-3.2 ↓
Bourbon	36,186	39,604	9.4 ↑
Cherokee	33,468	37,606	12.4 ↑
Coffey	57,784	50,407	-12.8 ↓
Crawford	33,527	35,591	6.2 ↑
Labette	37,017	40,043	8.2 ↑
Linn	31,980	34,694	8.5 ↑
Montgomery	34,421	35,172	2.2 ↑
Neosho	35,068	37,792	7.8 ↑
Wilson	38,653	43,056	11.4 ↑
Woodson	36,624	34,012	-7.1 ↓
<b>Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission</b>	<b>35,981</b>	<b>37,848</b>	<b>5.2 ↑</b>
<b>State of Kansas</b>	<b>45,826</b>	<b>48,559</b>	<b>6.0 ↑</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>44,826</b>	<b>51,640</b>	<b>15.2 ↑</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

## Racial Composition

The *Persons by Race and Hispanic Origin SEK Counties* table illustrates the racial composition of the district's population for the 2010. The data indicates that the district's population is predominately white, with approximately 90.9 percent of its population falling within the white, non-Hispanic origin racial category. These percentages are higher than the statewide average of 83.8 percent. The region shows 7,063 Hispanic population or 3.5 percent of the total region population, compared to the Statewide Hispanic population of 300,042 persons or 10.5 percent of the total statewide population. The 2010 U.S. Census figures indicate that the district has approximately 2.5 percent of its population as being black, compared to the statewide percentage of 5.9 percent.

The percentage of the district's population within the American Indian, Alaskan Native category in 2010 was 1.8 percent, compared to the state average of 1.0 percent. The percentage of the district's population falling under the Asian and Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander category was .60 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively. This compares to the state average of 2.4 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively. As is indicated, the district has a slightly higher percentage of white non-Hispanic population than the state average, and lower percentages of blacks and persons of Hispanic origin.

Persons by Race and Hispanic Origin SEK Counties									
County	Total Population	Total Hispanic	White	Black	American Indian, Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	Other	
Allen	13,371	392	12,478	249	108	28	2	131	
Anderson	8,102	123	7,843	40	39	37	1	42	
Bourbon	15,173	309	14,115	427	114	69	5	89	
Cherokee	21,603	424	19,513	118	876	64	65	114	
Coffey	8,601	176	8,298	47	59	36	0	29	
Crawford	39,134	1,762	35,685	785	354	476	79	730	
Labette	21,607	875	19,024	1,008	467	77	5	153	
Linn	9,656	186	9,307	43	63	30	6	59	
Montgomery	35,471	1,844	29,561	2,059	1,188	205	38	670	
Neosho	16,512	686	15,542	197	179	83	6	180	
Wilson	9,409	217	8,995	31	99	36	5	34	
Woodson	3,309	69	3,161	12	37	2	0	33	
<b>Southeast Kansas</b>	<b>201,948</b>	<b>7,063</b>	<b>183,522</b>	<b>5,016</b>	<b>3,583</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>2,264</b>	
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>2,853,118</b>	<b>300,042</b>	<b>2,391,044</b>	<b>167,864</b>	<b>28,150</b>	<b>67,762</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>110,127</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census  
Summary File 1, Tables P5,P8,PCT4,PCT5,PCT8, and PCT 11

## Housing

According to the 2010 Census Data, the regions housing units continues to grow at a rate of slower than the state average by almost 2.5% The 2013-17 median housing value for our region is \$80,133, compared to the State at \$139,200.

Area	Percent Change						
			2000 -		2010 -		
	2000	2010	2017	2010	2017		
Allen	6,449	6,226	6,330	-3.5	↓	1.7	↑
Anderson	3,596	3,720	3,735	3.4	↑	0.4	↑
Bourbon	7,135	7,167	7,119	0.4	↑	-0.7	↓
Cherokee	10,031	9,890	9,865	-1.4	↓	-0.3	↓
Coffey	3,876	3,964	4,095	2.3	↑	3.3	↑
Crawford	17,221	17,801	18,137	3.4	↑	1.9	↑
Labette	10,306	10,092	10,049	-2.1	↓	-0.4	↓
Linn	4,720	5,446	5,614	15.4	↑	3.1	↑
Montgomery	17,208	16,578	16,476	-3.7	↓	-0.6	↓
Neosho	7,461	7,513	7,742	0.7	↑	3.0	↑
Wilson	4,937	4,682	4,657	-5.2	↓	-0.5	↓
Woodson	2,076	2,022	2,020	-2.6	↓	-0.1	↓
<b>Southeast Kansas Regional Planning</b>							
<b>Commission</b>	<b>95,016</b>	<b>95,101</b>	<b>95,839</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>↑</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>↑</b>
<b>State of Kansas</b>	<b>1,131,395</b>	<b>1,233,215</b>	<b>1,273,742</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>↑</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>↑</b>

<b>Housing Stock Summary, 2010</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>SEK Region</b>	<b>Kansas</b>
Units built pre-1980	45.3%	72.3%
Units built pre-1939	33.9%	20.1%
Total Housing Units	86,518	1,131,200
Source: 2010 US Census Data		

Age can affect the reliability of a home because there can be higher rates of structural or system problems in older homes. In southeast Kansas, 33.9 percent of the home were built prior to 1939 as compared to 20.1 percent in the state of Kansas during the same time period. The presence of lead-based paint can also be a problem in older homes.

In 2011, only 247 building permits were issued in our region compared to 5,386 in Kansas. Nearly all of our counties in the region have indicated a need for more housing units or better housing conditions in order to attract residents and maintain housing availability necessary to maintain a steady workforce.

## **THE REGION'S ECONOMY**

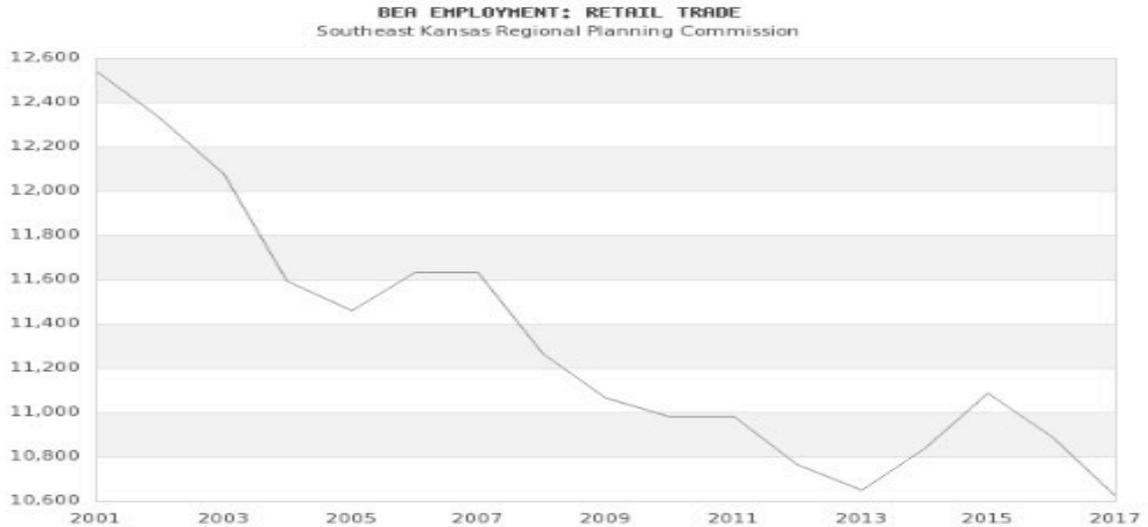
One issue that has changed for the region is now there are more higher paying career possibilities in the region than in recent memory. With the current economy finding available highly skilled employees is a struggle for all employers large and small, white collar and blue collar. All employers are in highly competitive positions for each position. For our local economic developers, quality of life, recruitment of quality employees, and creating and in-migration of professional youth continue to be the largest challenges.

## COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

Area	Natural Change		Net Migration	
	(births-deaths)		(inflow - outflow)	
	1990- 2000	2000- 2010	1990- 2000	2000- 2010
Allen	-61	-97	-192	-917
Anderson	-108	67	415	-75
Bourbon	-139	299	552	-505
Cherokee	70	-29	1,161	-973
Coffey	4	-100	457	-164
Crawford	339	870	2,321	22
Labette	-158	39	-700	-1,267
Linn	-275	13	1,591	73
Montgomery	-278	121	-2,284	-904
Neosho	-105	145	67	-630
Wilson	-292	-140	335	-783
Woodson	-261	-235	-67	-244
<b>Southeast Kansas Regional Planning</b>				
<b>Commission</b>	<b>-1,264</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>3,656</b>	<b>-6,367</b>
<b>State of Kansas</b>	<b>142,276</b>	<b>158,716</b>	<b>68,960</b>	<b>5,578</b>

In 2013, there were 154 retail trade establishments, 1,283 service establishments, and 1,088 manufacturing establishments in the region as shown on the next page. This equates to 1,461 retail trade jobs, 21,724 service trade jobs, and 29,176 jobs manufacturing jobs. The annual sales for all firms in the region for 2007, was \$9,464,520 compared to the State of Kansas annual sales of 303,581,134. As you can see from the below chart, retail trade appointments continue to be a steady decline after a brief spike in 2015.

Manufacturing establishments have been at the center of the business recruitment target in southeast Kansas for several decades. The manufacturing sector has been growing over the past several years.



Source(s): U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

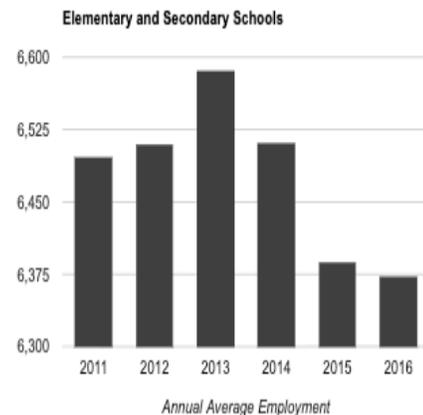
## TOP INDUSTRIES

Top Industries by Employment	Percent		
	2011	2016	Change
All NAICS Industry Groups	77,033	75,851	-1.5
Elementary and Secondary Schools	6,498	6,374	-1.9
Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support	4,304	4,322	0.4
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	4,408	4,322	-2.0
Individual and Family Services	571	2,882	404.6
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	2,703	1,688	-37.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics. LED data are designed to preserve employment trends while protecting the data of individual firms. Data are suppressed where they do not meet publication standards. Use caution when using individual counts by industry.

Also see:

## Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission



Source(s): [Institute for Policy & Social Research](#), The University of Kansas; data from [U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics](#).

Notes: The Local Employment Dynamics (LED) partnership is a cooperative venture between the U.S. Census Bureau and state agencies. Partner states voluntarily submit quarterly data files from existing administrative record systems, which are combined with a range of other data sources to generate a public use, longitudinal database covering over 95% of U.S. private sector jobs. Examples of jobs that are not covered include some agricultural jobs, railroad employment, self-employment, federal employment, and other exceptions that vary from state to state. LED data are designed to preserve employment trends while protecting the data of individual firms. Data are suppressed where they do not meet publication standards. Use caution when using individual counts by industry.

## **AVAILABILITY OF HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAINING**

As a whole, the region does a good, if not excellent, job of educating its population. The Technology Center at Pittsburg State University (PSU) is truly a regional asset. The Kansas Technology Center provides a modern and flexible learning environment. The building includes over 13 computer labs with approximately 260 workstations and close to 70 technical laboratories for student learning. The labs throughout the facility feature up-to-date equipment, much of it provided by industry and corporate partners of PSU. Approximately \$26 million dollars worth of equipment has been secured through donation, equipment loan or purchase.

This \$20+ million facility offers advanced technical education and research capacity in a state-of-the-art environment. The Higher Education Advancement Team synergizes the assets and talents of PSU, Emporia State University, Allen County Community College, Ft. Scott Community College, Labette County Community College, Independence Community College, Coffeyville Community College, and Neosho Community College for the purpose of facilitating regional development.

However, the need for a trained workforce continues to emerge as a priority issue in southeast Kansas. Many of the students trained in these institutions do not remain in southeast Kansas upon graduation. The income and career expectations are often unmet by regional employers. The life style and social amenities desired by these educated young adults are not found in many communities within the region.

The Center for Innovation & Business Development (CIBD) at PSU is a regional outreach center for business planning, financing, training, management consulting, technology consulting, and technology-based research and development. The CIBD is thought to be the only organization in the country with all of these services under the same umbrella.

The CIBD serves as a link between the academic community of PSU, the resources of State and Federal programs, and the finance, management, and technology needs of business, industry, and units of local government.

The Kansas Polymer Research Center (KPRC) at PSU is one of the world's leading centers specializing in vegetable oil-based polymer research and development. KPRC scientists work with industrial partners, state and federal agencies, and producer associations on developing and commercializing PSU's intellectual property. The KPRC has partnered with Cargill, a leading agribusiness company, in the global commercialization of a line of soy polyols that have applications in the automotive, construction, and home furnishing industries. Core funding is provided by the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC).

The KPRC research team brings combined 100-plus years of experience among their twelve polymer scientists. The team also includes several undergraduate and graduate students from chemistry and plastics engineering technology. Research contracts over a 12-year period have provided the basis for KPRC further developing its expertise in bio-based polymers.

Located in a new state-of-the-art research facility, the KPRC can provide a full range of research and development services in several bio-based product areas. In addition, researchers have access to plastics industry production equipment as part of their collaboration with PSU's four-year nationally accredited undergraduate degree program in plastics engineering technology. Assistance in engineering product design and development is available from the College of Technology engineers and faculty. Supporting research capabilities are also provided by the PSU Departments of Physics and Chemistry.

Neosho County Community College in Chanute, Labette Community College in Parsons, and Forth Scott Community College in Fort Scott have construction technology and vocational technology programs that's curriculum is directly influenced by local industry.

## **AVAILABILITY OF CAPITAL**

The number of banks has decreased in the last 15 years although the number of banking offices has increased during the same period. SBA lenders are available within the region and in the Kansas City, Wichita, Tulsa, and Joplin metropolitan areas that adjoin or lie within an hour's drive of the respective corners of the region. A regional business loan fund is also operated by the Southeast Kansas Prosperity Foundation. In addition, many communities and counties have become E-Communities through tax credits with Network, KS.

The SEKRPC operates an EDA revolving loan fund. Local and county revolving loan funds are available to several communities across the region. The impact of the Federal Reserve's policies regarding the continuation of low interest rates is a positive factor in both business and personal credit capacity of the region. The goal of many of our communities is to utilize gap financing through all of the various regional programs.

Several of the region's communities have taken an active roll in developing business expansion projects. Industrial Revenue Bonds are frequently used by these competitive communities to attract and retain businesses. Numerous communities have taken action by creating Neighborhood Revitalization Zones, Rural Opportunity Zones, and aggressive incentive programs.

The Kansas Legislature has enacted provisions that will allow Tax Increment Financing of qualifying development projects. This allows the jurisdiction to allocate the difference in the taxes collected on an unimproved property versus taxes collected on the same property with improvements to the amortization of the costs of the improvements, such as streets, utilities, etc. One problem with this financing option is that startup or relocating businesses often ask for tax abatement for several years. If taxes are abated, they cannot be collected to amortize improvement costs. To offset some of these potential losses, many communities have adopted Tax Rebate programs in the form of Neighborhood Revitalization.

Many of the region's counties and communities operate so near to their spending limits that development activities are impossible to finance without the assistance of the various federal grant programs offered by EDA, HUD and USDA RD. Some find it difficult, if not impossible, to meet the matching fund requirements for these grant programs.

Several communities within the region own their utility systems, and thus, have the ability to accumulate funds for development activities without the need for collecting additional taxes. In addition to creating jobs within the community, the municipally-owned utility can also expand its customer base and increase its revenues by offering development incentives. Many of our communities' partner with utility companies such as Evergy to expand utility networks. As we continue to grow our needs and capacity demands will need to grow with us.

## **ECONOMIC TIES TO THE SURROUNDING REGIONS**

There are no metropolitan areas within southeast Kansas; however, the center of the region is somewhat equidistant from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Joplin and Kansas City, Missouri and Wichita, Kansas. The extremities of the region are generally within an hour's drive of one of these cities. Cherokee County virtually adjoins the city limits of Joplin, Missouri.

The border counties experience the give and take of the economies of these metropolitan areas. These cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas impact the regional labor pool by attracting employees from the region. In some instances, they also enhance the region's labor pool. Oklahoma is improving its highway system to the Kansas state line. This means that Kansans will have easier access to Oklahoma jobs and Oklahomans will have easier access to Kansas jobs.

Although local medical and hospital services are available in close proximity to most communities, advanced medical treatment generally requires a trip to one of the metropolitan areas mentioned above. With rural hospitals closing within recent years, other hospitals in the region continue to try to meet demand with clinics in rural communities.

Limited (but improving) retail shopping opportunities within the region serve to propel the region's consumers to the malls of Kansas City, Wichita, Joplin, Bartlesville and Tulsa in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES – A REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

Additional information about a regional perspective regarding water, waste water treatment, and solid waste is included in the **Regional Characteristics and Resources** section of this document.

### **Water and Sewer**

Most of the larger, more economically competitive communities in the region have addressed the need for safe and sanitary water and sewer infrastructures. One exception to this is the City of Parsons, which is in the process of upgrading their entire system. These communities possess the sewer and water infrastructure necessary to support economic expansion. However, many of the smaller southeast Kansas communities have failed to maintain and/or replace aging water and sewer utilities. Some incorporated communities have no sanitary sewer system and continue to require residents and businesses to use septic tanks or individually maintained lagoon systems. Kansas law provides for the establishment of sewer and water districts. Several unincorporated areas within the region are served by either a sewer or water district, or both.

The SEKRPC has provided technical assistance to many communities in the region in their efforts to install and/or upgrade sanitary sewer and water systems. However, many more communities continue to struggle with the financial realities that are a function of a dwindling and aging population.

The larger more competitive communities will require additional technical and financial assistance to extend specific water and sewer infrastructure to large industrial expansion projects and to facilitate further development of business parks. The smaller struggling communities will require substantial technical and financial assistance if they are to provide safe and sanitary water and sewer services to their existing population base.

### **Gas & Electricity**

The region is served by several major gas and electric utilities. There are many municipally-owned energy utilities. The larger more competitive communities within the region appear to have sufficient infrastructures to meet current and anticipated demand. Additional

gas and electric infrastructure may be required to facilitate specific large industrial expansion projects and to facilitate further development of business parks.

The smaller communities will need to work with rural electric cooperatives and regional gas and electric utility companies in order to determine their capacity for expansion. Many rural areas continue to utilize propane as a primary heating fuel.

Upgrading infrastructure to handle industrial requirements is a financial burden on southeast Kansas communities. Especially for the smaller communities which struggle with infrastructure, are not near major gas pipelines, nor have the general funds to support such projects.

### **Telecommunication and Broadband Access**

The region's telecommunication infrastructure appears to be struggling to keep up with increased uses. Installation of modern switching systems and other enhancements have produced an effective telephone system for most of the region. The region is served by major national providers, regional providers and even local telephone service providers. However, the demands for Internet Capacity and Electronic Commerce are increasing in the region. Much more development is required before the region can be considered to have universal broadband access, especially in the rural areas and small communities.

Stations in Pittsburg, Kansas and Joplin, Missouri provide the bulk of the local television news and information to the region. However, most areas receive Tulsa, Kansas City or Topeka stations either through direct antenna reception or cable services. Low power public access television is available in some communities. There are several locally owned and operated radio stations and newspapers throughout the region. Kansas City, Tulsa, Joplin, and Wichita newspapers also serve sections of the region.

### **Transportation**

Highway transportation is the predominate method of transporting both goods and people in southeast Kansas. There are no commercial airlines operating within the region. Commercial interstate bus service is available in some communities. Major freight lines and package delivery services operate throughout the region.

There are seven US Highways that cross the region, linking it to the surrounding metropolitan areas of Kansas City, Tulsa, Wichita, Joplin, Topeka, and Lawrence. Interstate 35 barely passes through the region's northern extremity on its route through the northern edge of Coffey County. However, the Southeast Kansas Corridor and other enhancements

are predominately two-lane projects. There are very few miles of four-lane highways within the twelve-county region with the exception of the widening off US 69 highway from Ft Scott to Overland Park..

Even with a 65 miles-per-hour speed limit, the region's two-lane highway system is an impediment to maximum economic development. The shortest distance from Kansas City to Dallas is via US 169 Highway, which is a two-lane highway through most of southeast Kansas. PSU is the only Kansas Regents University without an interstate highway connection.

Rail services are in a state of attrition in the region. The reorganization of major rail services by national rail service companies have left much of the region's right-of-way abandoned. Short-line rail service has been established in some areas. However, limited local usage is negatively impacting the continuation of this service in some communities.

Most communities in the region are served by some form of public transportation for elderly and otherwise disadvantaged citizens. This is not a "mass transit" system. Publicly provided mass transportation is not provided in southeast Kansas.

## **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS**

Cherryvale, Chanute, Independence, Pittsburg, Fort Scott, Neodesha, and Parsons have organized downtown revitalization efforts around the Four-Point Main Street Approach: Organization, Design, Economic Vitality, and Promotion. Many communities have pushed the development model of Shop Local, Think Global. Other communities participate in the Kansas PRIDE and other volunteer community revitalization efforts that impact the appearance and vitality of the region's central business districts. Yates Center is one of only 59 cities in Kansas to have its entire square on the National and State Historic Registers.

Many communities are exploring tourism-related activities as means for attracting people to their downtown area. The Southeast Kansas Tourism Region, Inc. (SEKTR) serves as a regional resource, encouraging and coordinating these efforts. Historic preservation efforts and tourism marketing activities have had a positive impact on the region's central business districts.

The central business district of most southeast Kansas communities is a place where fiercely independent business persons struggle to maintain the small-town quality of life. They must compete with the shoppers commuting to local metros for large scale purchasing and on-line retail sales.

Every community has some vacant buildings within the central business district. Many of the smaller communities have central business districts that are predominately made up of unoccupied and dilapidated structures.

## **PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

Anderson, Coffey, Cherokee, Linn, Bourbon, and Montgomery Counties fund full-time economic development staff and implement county-specific economic development activities. The Cities of Fort Scott, Pittsburg, Parsons, and Chanute fund positions that are dedicated to economic development. Parsons provides economic development assistance to Labette County and the Great Plains Development Authority. There are other communities in the region that operate combined Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development agencies.

Many communities are exploring tourism related activities as a means of attracting prospective retail customers to their downtown area. The SEKTR serves as a regional resource, encouraging and coordinating these efforts.

The mission of the SEKRPC is to promote the growth and prosperity of southeast Kansas by providing technical assistance, planning and project development services to its members. In fulfilling its mission, the SEKRPC will assist counties and communities by:

1. Developing and maintain a regional economic development plan.
2. Facilitating the development of local strategic plans.
3. Assisting other regional economic development organizations with staffing and technical assistance.
4. Providing technical assistance for the formation and development of public works projects for infrastructure improvements, job creation, and housing rehabilitation/demolition.
5. Developing funding proposals for various types of public works projects from infrastructure improvements, job creation, and housing rehabilitation/demolition.
6. Administering grants and loans that are awarded to fund various types of public works, projects for infrastructure improvements, job creation, and housing rehabilitation/demolition.

7. Providing plant closings and other important economic information to the U.S. Department of Commerce as a designated EDD.
8. Facilitating regional cooperation in addressing economic and community development issues.
9. Serving as a point of contact for accessing the various local, regional, state and federal economic and community development programs.
10. Facilitating educational programs that serve to inform and train community leaders and public officials regarding economic and community development issues.

The SEKRPC operates an Economic Development Administration (EDA) revolving loan fund program. This program is available for regional business expansion or start-up. At present, the predominate focus is upon funding manufacturing job creation. The program is to be used in completing funding packages. It is not intended to be a primary or single-source loan source. Service sector or retail projects that are not in direct competition with other businesses within the county may be considered.

**Area Resource Partners Include:**

The mission of See-Kan Resource Conservation & Development is enhancing the quality of life by providing leadership, education, and communication to help find solutions to community needs; uniting urban and rural concerns through natural resources conservation and economic development.

The Southeast Kansas Resource Conservation and Development District (SEE-KAN RC&D) has worked closely with Kansas State University and local interests in the development of Value-Added agricultural projects. These projects focus on improving the financial viability of the agricultural segment of the region's economy. These projects would also create additional jobs in the manufacturing/processing sector of the region's economy.

The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Agency (USDA RD) serves the southeast Kansas region by providing funding for a variety of housing, public works infrastructure, and job creation projects. USDA RD funds are frequently used to fund public works projects in conjunction with CDBG and other funding sources. This allows many of the region's communities to construct needed improvements while remaining sensitive to the financial limitations of their Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) citizens.

PSU and Emporia State University provide technical assistance to the region through Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). These centers are operated in conjunction with the KDC and provide much needed business counseling and assistance to new and existing businesses within the region. Community Colleges located in Allen County, Bourbon County, Labette County, Neosho County, and Montgomery County also provide business assistance through their Associate Small Business Development Centers.

The CIBD at PSU provides technical assistance and project development services to a multi-state area that includes southeast Kansas.

The \$20 million+ Technology Center at PSU also serve as a regional economic development resource. This state-of-the-art technology training center should ultimately prove to be a substantial business recruitment advantage to the region.

The KDC provides numerous services to the region through its headquarters office in Topeka and through a regional representative housed at the SBDC at PSU.

Southeast Kansas, Incorporated (SEK) is a non-profit economic development organization that has operated in the region. SEK sponsors regional issue-specific action groups that involve business, government, education, utilities and other interested citizens in opportunities to obtain information and take collaborative action regarding a number of issues that impact the economy of southeast Kansas. These groups include: Southeast Kansas Transportation Committee, Work Force Training Action Group, Legislative Council, Economic Development Council and Manufacturers Forum.

Southeast Kansas Prosperity Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 created in 2005 as a result of the Kansas Economic Growth Act. It is a partnership with SEK, Inc., SEKRPC, and See-Kan RC&D. The primary focus is to provide access to capital for existing and startup small businesses through loan funds, and to provide financial support for and partner with local and regional agencies and organizations whose focus is on community and economic development needs.

There are many community and countrywide voluntary economic development organizations that work long, hard hours with local business expansion and retention as well as to recruit new businesses and industries to the area. These groups provide the "grass-roots" economic development that is very desperately needed in many small rural southeast Kansas communities.

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RECOVERY IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS**

Our region is one of six regional homeland security councils the North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC) acts as the fiscal agent. It focuses on enabling our council to achieve respective emergency preparedness and response goals. As a result, NCRPC works with each region and state authorizing agency, the Kansas Highway Patrol as well as the Kansas Department of Emergency Management (KDEM), to develop and maintain a comprehensive account of training done, of equipment and materials purchased and placed across our region and other parts of the state for disaster response and securing homeland safety. It also enables increased inter-regional cooperation, collaboration and development. Cooperation between regions is also able to be strengthened as a result. It is expected at the state and regional levels.

Our region refers more extensive hazard mitigation planning to the KDEM. KDEM conducts the field work with the local officials to finalize plan completion. In short, the SEKRPC supports and encourages its counties and their communities to:

- Engage in pre-disaster recovery and mitigation planning
- At least annually appraise the county-wide risks and susceptibility
- At least annually identify and made ready recovery resources for the county and its communities.
- Confirm allies for recovery efforts, at the local, regional and state levels and keep in mind their capabilities and availabilities
- Practice these facets of response and recovery in the course of active exercises on an annual basis
- Review their immediate evacuation procedures and re-entry procedures

## **SWOT ANALYSIS (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity & Threats)**

In southeast Kansas, as with any other area, there are both positive forces working for economic development and negative forces working against economic development. The district's inability to sustain a viable growing economy can be viewed as the prime negative force in the economic development efforts of southeast Kansas.

**Threat** -- The economic decline has resulted in situations that further detract from the potential of the district, thus perpetuating negative aspects of the economy. Most of the economic problems of the district can be viewed as both symptoms of and contributors to the economic decline. They are the result and the cause of the decline of the economy.

**Threat & Weakness** -- The adverse effects of the past economic stagnation have been widespread throughout the district. The economic decline has resulted in a steadily decreasing population. Southeast Kansas is also characterized as an older population with a very large concentration of elderly and a very low proportion of young adults in the so-called productive years, 20 to 50 years old. Apparently the young adults migrate to other districts with better economic opportunities and the elderly migrate into rural southeast Kansas perceiving it as a healthful location to retire.

**Weakness** – Workforce recruitment, retention, and training have been identified as dominant issues in the region. As a result of the change in education levels needed, and the new technical skills required for manufacturing, southeast Kansas employers have been struggling to fill position vacancies. Even though the Welfare-to-Work initiatives have added to the region's labor force, many employers have found it difficult to fill even the most basic entry level positions.

**Threat & Weakness** -- Filling skilled positions is even more challenging. The economy of the district is further restricted by the blue collar nature of most of its employers. Most of the new jobs created within the region during this period of economic expansion have been blue collar manufacturing jobs. Traditionally, blue collar employment has been the hardest hit by the recession. Southeast Kansas has the lowest income of any district in the state. This has the effect of reducing the liquid capital in the district, which restricts the district's ability to invest in its future.

**Weakness** -- The district is faced with a housing shortage for all incomes and price ranges, with the possible exception of the oldest and most dilapidated units.

**Weakness** – There are few general contractors and speculative housing developers in the district. Few speculative housing units are available to any professional, managerial or other white-collar workers that might otherwise have a desire or opportunity to reside in the region.

**Threat & Weakness** -- To compound the problem, it is difficult to find local contractors or repair persons available to repair or refurbish existing housing units. Modular and manufactured housing units are being used to help ease this housing crunch.

**Threat & Opportunity** – The majority of homes in southeast Kansas was built prior to 1940 and, as a result, requires greater effort to keep them in good repair. Efforts are underway by the SEKRPC to assist communities in obtaining capital for new housing construction, demolition and rehabilitation of existing housing structures. Due to the summer flooding of 2007 and continued flooding in recent years, hundreds of homes were destroyed. Replacement housing has not been built to replace all housing units.

**Threat & Weakness** – The age and condition of the housing stock has a further impact of limiting the tax revenues of the region's various units of government. The assessed valuation of property in southeast Kansas is extremely low when compared to the state as a whole. As a result, there is a general inability of many communities in southeast Kansas to raise the necessary revenues to conduct programs aimed at enhancing the economy of the community.

**Threat & Weakness** -- This lack of capital has caused, or added to, many severe problems in the physical infrastructure of the district. The lack of a viable funding base seriously affects all aspects of the physical infrastructure. The deficiencies in the public utilities, especially the water supply, waste water treatment and solid waste disposal facilities, have been strongly impacted by the attitudes and voting habits of "fixed income" elderly populations of the various jurisdictions within the district. Local governments have infrequently been capable of financing the costs of construction and maintenance of most public utilities with the aid of state and federal grant programs.

**Threat** -- With dwindling federal grant resources, southeast Kansas is facing some menacing problems in funding public utilities that meet the required standards of the KDHE.

**Strength & Threat** – Generally speaking, the district has an adequate distribution and supply of gas and electricity. Improvements have been made to the distribution of potable water to the cities and particularly to the rural areas. The district is facing its most severe public utility problems in wastewater treatment facilities. There are still some communities that do not have wastewater facilities despite the fact that the soils of southeast Kansas generally restrict the use of septic tanks.

**Strength & Threat** – Another physical restriction placed upon the economy of southeast Kansas becomes very evident when one reviews the surface water flows. The district has an abundant supply of surface water, in fact the most abundant in the state. The problem arises with the extreme fluctuations in the stream flow of the district. The district is characterized by seasonal rains that create flood and drought conditions throughout the district. Water control has been a critical problem in many areas of the district with the flood-prone areas being extensive.

**Strength & Opportunity** -- The district has shown some evidence in stabilization and even sporadic growth. There has been a slight upsurge in industrial activity. It appears that the district has transformed from a predominately agricultural region to a manufacturing orientated region. The district has had good success in attracting a variety of new manufacturing firms that have served to diversify the economy of southeast Kansas.

**Strength & Opportunity** – Cropland and rangeland still remain the predominate land use in terms of size, however, in terms of concentration within the district, pasture and forest are the most concentrated. Urban land is ranked next in concentration which underscores the recent increase of urban land.

**Strength & Opportunity** --There are a number of additional positive features operating within the district that counteract, to a certain extent, the negative forces. The district is utilizing its non-mineral resources in a more efficient manner. Limestone, clay, shale and gravel have now become the most important mined resources. The district has large acreages of woodlands that are only partially utilized. Other than pallet manufacturing, the district has limited secondary wood processing facilities, resulting in the export of the district's raw timber.

**Strength & Opportunity** -- Other advantages in the physical environment include the abundance of the water resources, the large potential of the recreational facilities, and the increasing productivity of farming.

**Threat & Opportunity** – The closure of the Kansas Army ammunition plant presented a significant threat to the southeast Kansas region. However, the closure provides the region the opportunity to establish a premiere mixed use industrial park which will serve as the center for industrial growth in the region. The Great Plains Industrial Park consists of 13,727 acres providing not only the opportunity for industrial growth but the opportunity for recreation, preservation, and conservation of sensitive habitat.

**Strength** – Small town living, low crime rates (especially low violent crimes), sense of community, and low cost of living.

**Threat** – Drug abuse, especially in the entry level, and blue collar workforce, is a significant issue. It limits employability. Employers have trouble hiring because of the inability of a significant number of applicants who are unable to pass a drug test.

**Weakness** – The lack of downtown pride and entertainment. The need to improve city streets, building facades and make communities more attractive. There needs to be more entertainment options for youth and adults & to attract new businesses. “We need to look at

our communities like dating – we have to wear deodorant and do the small things to attract individuals to our communities. We have let ourselves go.”

**Threat & Weakness** – The outward migration of the young educated from the region. “kids from southeast Kansas schools go on to do incredible things in other places. They have a lot of talent, but we don’t have enough opportunities here for them to use their talents.” The need for awareness of the available high-paying jobs so young professionals can return.

**Strength** – Good higher education system with PSU and six community colleges. Local rural school districts do well with the resources they have.

## **EVALUATION** - How is the Region doing?

Private investment capital is available within the district. There are federal monies available, but it is granted under highly competitive situations. In the past, southeast Kansas has been successful in attracting federal and state aid, which indicates that the federal and state government recognizes the grave needs of southeast Kansas.

HUD/CDBG funds administered by the KDC, USDA Rural Development funds, U.S. Department of Commerce EDA funds and U.S. Small Business Administration loan guarantees form the major sources of federal assistance for community and economic development within the district.

Often the prime advantages of a district are the most intangible or the hardest to quantify. In southeast Kansas, there is a number of area-wide and local agencies that are striving to achieve an improved economic environment. It is all but impossible to really ascertain the effectiveness of these groups, but, in showing the willingness of the people to bond together and work for improvement, they must be considered a chief advantage to the district.

In trying to analysis the region there are several economic clusters in the region:

1. Manufacturing – Growing in some areas as well as diversifying, finding quality employees is a large detriment.
2. Energy – Oil and gas, wind, biodiesel, solar, ethanol, city owned power supplies continue to be large economic development tools for the region. Utility companies partnering with and assisting with economic development.

3. Agriculture – Industrial Hemp has begun to take notice in the region. The John Deere plant located in Coffeyville along with Caterpillar tractors and parts dealers in the region. An Ethanol Plant in Garnett continues to serve local farmers. Multiple Livestock sale barns, particularly the sale barn located in Fort Scott drive regional sale markets.
4. Healthcare – Even though we have lost some smaller rural hospitals, we continue to see a possible growth cluster being created with collaboration and shared programs with larger metro hospitals.

In summary, the evaluation process of the CEDS will be the responsibility of the Regional CEDS Committee. The report will address accomplishments and other factors which may affect performance in the Priority Issues & Strategies, County Specific Strategy and the Regional Goals & Objectives. The annual CEDS report will be compiled by the Southeast Planning Commission and submitted to EDA.

**PRIORITY ISSUES AND STRATEGIES**  
**SEKRPC CEDS**  
**PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE SOUTHEAST KANSAS REGION**

“Number” = Priority issue that was ranked between 1 and 9.

Issue	Issue Description	Allen	Bourbon	Anderson	Cherokee	Coffey	Crawford	Labette	Linn	Montgomery	Neosho	Wilson	Woodson	Total	
1	Attracting and retaining a qualified work force	1	2	2	1		1	1		1	1	4	1	15	
2	Attracting and retaining business and industry			1	2		2							5	
3	Housing	2		3	3	1		2	2	4	2	5	2	10	
4	Utilizing Tourism as an Economic Development tool			1	4	4		5	4	5	6	4	7	4	12
5	Establishing and maintaining partnerships between business, education and government														
			4	7	5		9				6	8	6	6	
6	Lack of Retail shopping opportunities			3	5	9		3	3		3		3	3	7
7	Provide training and education to meet the needs of business and industry														
					8	6		8			5			5	6
8	Leadership and community involvement				10	7		7							
9	Lack of awareness of business assistance				5	9	10		6				0		
10	Enhance “Curb” Appeal of our cities.					6	8						2		1

## REGIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Action Plan - How does the Region get there?

Regional Goals and Objectives have been developed from Priority Issues one through five, as selected by the respective County CEDS Committees. Regional Goals and Objectives have been approved by the Regional CEDS Committee, the Board of County Commissioners of each of the twelve member counties and the SEKRPC Executive Committee.

### Work Force Recruitment & Retention

**The Need:** It continues to be extremely difficult for regional employers to recruit qualified workers needed to fill existing vacancies and/or expand business capacity. Current training and education systems are still unable to meet the demand for a skilled work force. Employers are forced to hire untrained or unskilled applicants and incur the cost of training these workers in the skills that are needed in the particular business.

**The Goal:** To identify, recruit and retain qualified persons to work for southeast Kansas employers in sufficient numbers to fill all existing position vacancies and provide for the expansion of business capacity in coordination to create workforce ready communities through Network Kansas,

**Objective #1:** Ongoing, contact graduates from county school districts, workforce organizations, and direct contact with Youth Entrepreneurship.

**Objective #2:** 2020-2025, Lobbying for an improved highway system including US 69, US 169, US 400, and US 75 which would result in promoting new job opportunities in the area. Improvement of our highway systems not just connects us to the world but better connects us to each other.

**Objective #3:** 2020-2025, encourage development of cyclical rural healthcare services, promoting cooperation & development of new services and programs.

**Objective #4:** Ongoing, determining the needs of local employers and how to help retain them by onsite visits, local education recruitment for new hires through agencies such as SEKRPC, SEK, Inc., Department of Commerce, and Kansas Works and local economic development agencies.

**Objective #5:** 2020-2025, promote quality of life factors by broadening the residential base within the counties. This goal would also help promote career and educational

opportunities in the area. 80% of our growth will be through local business, placemaking, and promotion of our communities as a place to move too for quality of life, and not just available jobs.

**Resources:** Chambers of Commerce, Unified School Districts, Medical Organizations, Cities, Counties, US 69 Association, Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Agencies:** SEKRPC, Southeast Kansas, Inc.

### **Attracting & Retaining Business & Industry**

**The Need:** Southeast Kansas has experienced a population drain due to out migration for quality of life and urbanization.

**The Goal:** To improve placemaking and quality of life for the citizens, increase the tax base and increase the standard of living.

**Objective #1:** 2020-2025, work with SBDC to assist businesses requesting assistance. The SBDC is also able to help with business start-up questions and helping get the business practices set up.

**Objective #2:** 2020-2025, Focus on retention and expansion programs by contacting local businesses on a semi-annual basis to find out what can be done on the part of the city/county to help them excel during a difficult time. If there are problems, what needs or assistance is requested?

**Objective #3:** Ongoing, promote the regional and local business financial resources.

**Objective #4:** Ongoing, promote business and industry clusters and matching local suppliers and manufacturers.

**Objective #5:** Ongoing, Encourage and support entrepreneur programs and educational endeavors along with promotion and education of buy local campaigns within retail.

**Resources:** Southeast Kansas, Inc., SEKRPC, CIBD & SBDC at PSU, local retailers, local Main Street, local chambers and economic development agencies, KDOC, Kansas Department of Agriculture.

**Lead Agency:** Southeast Kansas, Inc., SEKRPC, Chamber of Commerce

## **Housing**

**The Need:** The need for affordable modern housing units is acknowledged as a priority in virtually every sector of the region. Even those counties that did not list housing as a priority issue in their Strategic Plan have acknowledged that housing is indeed a pressing economic development issue. However, the lack of developers and speculative development in the region exacerbates the problem. At present, many communities lack the detailed data necessary to document the need for specific types and quantities of housing and have been unsuccessful in attracting development capital.

**The Goal:** To identify and quantify specific local housing priorities as the basis for creating a regional housing development strategy.

**Objective #1:** Ongoing, maximizing resources for senior and moderate-income residents by expanding housing choices to all income brackets and improve the quality of housing. When recruiting developers look for all income level developers.

**Objective #2:** Ongoing, study and develop individual city requirements for local housing and determine the best way to the local needs for housing. Look for grants or tax incentives to help with the cost of new home. Advertise and educate on how to build affordable housing. Work with cities on code enforcement and maintenance of quality housing, this will also help attract and retain a greater qualified workforce.

**Objective #3:** 2020-2025, research the need for financing affordable housing and assist the low to moderate income home buyers and also determine the need for special financing to build new homes.

**Resources:** Community Task Force on Housing, Chamber of Commerce, local financial institutions, City and County Commission, KDOC

**Lead Agency:** Southeast Kansas, Inc., SEKRPC, Housing Authorities

## **Utilizing Tourism as an Economic Development Tool**

**The Need:** The need for utilizing tourism is an economic development tool. One method for reversing a regional retail trade deficit is to develop tourist attractions and events that are successful in attracting tourists from outside the region.

**The Goal:** To increase the local customer base for retail and service businesses throughout the region and to enhance the region's overall market appeal.

**Objective #1:** Ongoing, market attractions that might draw tourists to the local area. Use promotional literature and videos of the county to highlight the positive attributes. This is will also reinforce a communities pride in their city/county.

**Objective #2:** Ongoing, develop plans for tours to area attractions. Collaboration between communities to offer motorcoach and driving tours to attractions within the region.

**Objective #3:** SEKTR attends several tourism related trade shows a year distributing collateral material at consumer-based trade shows. They also cooperatively attend direct sales shows targeting the motor coach and travel group industries.

**Resources:** Area Tourism Directors, KDOC, News Media, SEKTR, Chamber of Commerce, Main Street organizations

**Lead Agency:** SEKTR

### **Establishing and Maintaining Partnerships Between Busines, Education and Government**

**The Need:** Communication and collaboration between education, government, and business do not exist in some areas of the region and needs improvement in other areas of the region.

**The Goal:** Establish economic development partnership linkages between local, county and state governments, education and businesses.

**Objective #1:** Ongoing partnerships between each community and their respective economic development communities.

**Objective #2:** Ongoing, continued support of changes and directions of programs and identify new ways to cooperate. This support will foster the development of meaningful partnerships between business and education allowing a more prepared and well trained work force to emerge.

**Objective #3:** 2020-2025, Encourage county-wide networking opportunities including city Chambers of Commerce, rural citizens and smaller communities within the county.

Implementing more environmental programs will also encourage cooperation between the areas of business, industries, state and federal opportunities.

**Resources:** Local residents, Counties and Cities, Area businesses, County government, KDHR, SRS, KDOC, Unified School Districts, Business, Community Chambers, Local Leadership, and Project 17.

**Lead Agency:** SEKRPC, Southeast Kansas, Inc., CIBD and Project 17.

## **STRATEGIC PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES**

The SEKRPC staff have identified the following projects in the area that likely will occur within the next five years. Staff is providing project planning, readiness and fund development services for these projects at the present time.



<b>Economic Development Projects</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Montgomery County	Business Finance Loan	Local cash - CDBG
Montgomery County	Business Finance Loan	Local cash - CDBG
City of Neodesha	Infrastructure/Business Finance Loan	Local cash - CDBG
Throughout the 12 counties of the SEKRPC District	Various Gap Financing of business development and expansions	Local cash - CDBG - SEKRPC Revolving Loan Fund - Prosperity Foundation - E Communities
		<b>89 private job creations projected</b>
		<b>Overall, 96 private job creations projected</b>

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

**2019-2024**

### **Technical Assistance**

- a. Offer/provide technical assistance in developing plans, projects and grant/loan applications for projects and activities related to EDA programs, CDBG programs, and other state and federal programs to the twelve counties of southeast Kansas. These counties are Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Labette, Linn, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson and include over 66 cities and a total population of over 250,000. These projects may be water or wastewater projects or the development and/or improvement of their infrastructure or public safety projects.
- b. Provide staff assistance as needed for the Solid Waste Management activities of the Southeast Kansas Solid Waste Operating Authority if funding becomes available.
- c. Assist all communities in our twelve-county region, on possible economic development projects.

### **Economic Development**

- a. Work with the twelve counties in the region and the KDC in using the CEDS for planning on a regional basis.
- b. Maintain partnerships between business, education and government to assist the region by working towards attracting and retaining Business & Industry in the region. Identify specific needs of industries and attempt to find the resources through the partnerships.
- c. Manage a Revolving Loan Fund to be used to help finance businesses within the region.

### **Community Development**

- a. Assist three (3) communities and two (2) counties in the planning and management of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program funded from the KDC.
- b. Assist communities with community improvement grants from various federal, state and local agencies.
- c. Assist local community/economic development data collection with AMI for Project 17, a regional strategic planning effort.

### **Training and Workshops**

- a. Support the attendance of at least two (3) staff members at community and/or economic development trainings or certifications.
- b. Support the attendance of all staff members at continuing education workshops.

### **Reports**

- a. Submit the annual Progress Report to EDA.
- b. Submit the annual CEDS updates/revisions to EDA.

## **UTILIZATION OF SERVICES**

Historically, SEKRPC technical assistance and planning services are utilized by communities and counties that do not have sufficient staff or funding to otherwise facilitate the development process. Much of this service is provided to communities and target areas that meet the Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) National Objective of the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) CDBG program. The main focus is upon population groups that are at least 51% LMI.

Given the distressed economic status of the region as a whole, there are no development services provided by SEKRPC that would not substantially benefit the unemployed, low-income, elderly and minority population of the region. In recent years, for example, SEKRPC has facilitated (completed or began) projects for:

1. Rehabilitation of housing for LMI persons in Arcadia, Caney, Chanute, Cherryvale, Chetopa, Coffeyville, Fort Scott, Fredonia, Fulton, Humboldt, Iola, Parsons and Yates Center.
2. Construction of a Senior Center in Coffeyville, Crawford County and Woodson County.
3. Rehabilitating an abandoned school into a community center in Fulton.
4. More than seven dozen water, sewer and other public improvement projects since January of 1995.
5. Handicapped accessibility to the Wilson, Allen, Montgomery, Cherokee and Anderson County courthouses to become ADA compliant.

6. Handicapped accessibility to senior meal centers in Caney, Bronson, Independence and Cherryvale.
7. Facilitation of EDA and CDBG grants and/or loans that have resulted in the creation of thousands of new jobs across the region.
8. Enforcing civil rights regulations and standards on projects served by the agency.
9. Six urgent need grants for storm shelters after the May 2003 tornados.
10. Flood grants for Chanute, Coffeyville, Erie, Independence, Neodesha and the counties of Allen, Montgomery and Wilson after the summer of 2007 flood.

The SEKRPC provides up-front project start-up and development consulting services to communities that would not otherwise be able to afford costly private sector consulting services. Funds for this are utilized by its EDA planning grant, dues income from counties and communities and fee-for-service income from grant and project administration services.

In FY 2019 and FY 2020, SEKRPC's operating budget anticipates that 50% or more of its funding will come from grant administration fees. Most of the fees for grant administration are provided by the granting agency. This means that virtually all of SEKRPC's services can be accessed by any community in the region by simply paying a \$50 annual membership fee.

The larger, more populous and more economically competitive communities within the region have hired professional development staff to facilitate further planning and development efforts. This virtually guarantees that SEKRPC's focus will be upon the more distressed communities that can least afford professional services, but need these services the most.

As has been stated elsewhere in this document, many of the region's communities have large elderly populations many of whom must live on limited fixed incomes. SEKRPC's services are invaluable to the continuation of safe, sanitary and livable communities for the region's elderly and economically disadvantaged citizens.

## **EXHIBITS AND ATTACHMENTS**

The following exhibits and attachments provide additional data and support for the plans, goals and activities proposed in the CEDS. These documents are also provided to assist local units of government and community leaders in planning for the future of the region.

## Regional Development Agencies 2019

NAME OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION	CONTACT PERSON & TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX/EMAIL	PROGRAM FOCUS
Kansas Department of Commerce Regional Office	Craig Van Wey Field Representative	1501 S. Joplin, Shirk Hall Pittsburg, KS 66762	Phone: 620-235-4998 Fax: 620-235-4919 cvanwey@kansascommerce.com	Serves as regional contact person for all programs of the Kansas Department of Commerce.
USDA Rural Development	Randy Snider Business Programs Director	202 W. Miller Road P.O. Box 408 Iola, KS 66749-0408	Phone: 620-380-3113 Fax: 620-365-5785	Provides development services to rural communities as an agency of the US Department of Agriculture. Services include loans & grants for public facilities & infrastructure, business development, job creation & housing.
SEE-KAN Rural Conservation & Development (RC&D)	Jessica Berthot Coordinator	RR 2 Box 293A Chanute, KS 66720	Phone: 620-431-6180 Fax: 620-431-6181 <a href="mailto:jessica.gordon.seekanrcd@gmail.com">jessica.gordon.seekanrcd@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.seekanrcd.org">www.seekanrcd.org</a>	Provides multi-county natural resource conservation & Development services to rural communities as an agency of the US Department of Agriculture. Economic Development activities include agriculture related projects such as “value added” and other market development functions.
SEK-CAP, Inc.	Craig Chronister (Sr. Associate Housing) Steve Lohr Executive Director	401 N. Sinnet Girard, KS 66743	Phone: 620-620-724-8030 Fax: 620-724-4471  <a href="http://www.sek-cap.com">www.sek-cap.com</a>	A multi-county agency providing a variety of services to assist disadvantaged populations, including housing, weatherization and public transportation. The agency operates a Certified Housing Development Organization

<b>NAME OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CONTACT PERSON &amp; TITLE</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>PHONE/FAX/EMAIL</b>	<b>PROGRAM FOCUS</b>
See-KAN Cooperative Development, INC Chanute CHDO	Crystal Eisele Executive Director	871 S. Country Club Rd Chanute, KS 66720	Phone: 620-431-6180 Fax: 620-431-6181  Crystal.eisele@ks.usda.gov	Provides housing technical assistance and project development services as Certified Housing Development Organization.
Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission	Matthew Godinez Executive Director	215 W. Cherry P.O. Box 664 Chanute, KS 66720	Phone: 620-431-0080 Fax: 620-431-4805  director@sekrpc.org	Provides planning & technical assistance services as a twelve-county EDA EDD. This includes project development & facilitation, loan and grant writing & administration services. SEKRPC also administers an EDA Revolving Loan Fund and the Southeast Kansas Solid Waste Operating Authority.
Southeast Kansas, Inc.	DeAnn Welch Chambers, Administrator  Lonnie Larson 2019 President	PO Box 664 Chanute, KS 66720  Sonic Equipment Company	Phone: 620-431-0080 laura@sekrpc.org  Phone: 620.365.5701  lonnie@sonicequipment.com	Provides services to the region as a non-profit multi-county economic development agency. Services include: Sponsorship and/or facilitation of the issues specific action groups and serves
Center for Innovation & Business Development (CIBD) at Pittsburg State University	Andrew Myers Executive Director	1501 S. Joplin, Shirk Hall Pittsburg, KS 66762	Phone: 620-235-4920 Fax: 620-235-4919	Provides business development technical assistance and consulting services as a Small Business Development Center affiliated with PSU and the Kansas Department of Commerce.
SEK Prosperity Foundation	Bruce Fairbank			A non-profit organization that provide access to capital for existing and startup small businesses through loan funds, and to provide financial support for and partner with local and regional agencies and organizations whose focus is on community and economic development needs.

## Strategic Plan

**1.0 Objective** — To retain, grow and attract high value-added jobs to southeast Kansas.

**2.0 Method** — Develop and implement a regional economic development strategy, campaign and organization. The approach is similar to country development techniques used by the governments of the fast-growth Asian countries.

**3.0 Need** —

3.1 Most Distressed Region – Kansas, Inc. rates southeast Kansas as the state’s most distressed region.

3.2 Population Loss – According to U.S. Census data, the twelve counties comprising southeast Kansas have lost one-third of their population since 1930 declining from over 300,000 to 201,948 in 2010.

3.3 Other Indicators of Distress – Kansas, Inc. uses eight economic vitality distress indicators that are listed below under Measures of Success.

**4.0 Organizational Structure and Management System** –

4.1 Executive Committee – Comprised of 5-7 persons, this group makes most of the policy decisions.

4.2 Board of Directors – A board of up to 100 or more directors will meet at least once annually.

4.3 Management and Staffing – The organization is intended to be volunteer-driven. However, professional staff will be needed to maintain the organization and will be hired as funds become available.

4.4 Councils – From six to twelve councils will carry out the work of the organization in the council subject areas. Council effectiveness will depend upon chairs and members. When a council ceases to function, it will be deactivated.

4.5 Project Management System – A project management system will be used to move a portfolio of projects that are not under a council.

**5.0 Council and Project Deliverables** – Specific goals must be stated by council chairs and project managers. A sample overview of early goals follows:

- 5.1 Agriculture – Develop a written value-added agriculture strategic plan, design and conduct a communications campaign and increase agriculture group activities
- 5.2 Economic Developers / Chambers – Develop regional marketing materials to include a website and collateral materials (identity packages, symbols, images, brochures), produce a regional integrated growth vision, strategy and marketing campaign
- 5.3 Education – Hold joint meetings of community colleges, technical schools, PSU and USD leaders and develop projects to strengthen education, training and retaining
- 5.4 Housing – Identify and support programs to develop new housing and refurbish existing housing
- 5.5 Manufacturing – Advocate and obtain better delivery of local, state and regional services to enable existing industry to survive and grow, grow membership in the Manufacturing Network to enable the network to conduct value-added networking activities between firms
- 5.6 Legislative Caucus – Educate legislators on regional distress, vision, councils and projects, provide Topeka liaison when there is a need, following the lead of bellwether states such as Florida, North Carolina and California, introduce regional matching fund legislation
- 5.7 Regional Planning Commission / Council of Governments – Produce and widely distribute the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), make the RPC General Commission a true regional council of governments by including cities
- 5.8 Tourism – Revitalize the regional tourism council and mobilize local and regional tourism plans and activities
- 5.9 Transportation – Identify and list regional transportation priorities and provide transportation advocacy for the region

## 6.0 Measures of Success –

- 6.1 Net Population Change – Reversing the ½% per year decline into a ½% per year increase
- 6.2 Elderly Population Change – Reduce the percentage of elderly population by reversing the out-migration of educated youth
- 6.3 Labor Force – Increasing the quantity and quality of the workforce
- 6.4 Long-Term Employment Growth – Create a permanent upward trend in the number of high value-added jobs, i.e., those paying \$15 per hour or more
- 6.5 Short-Term Employment Growth – Create job growth via support to local employers in process and workforce improvements
- 6.6 Per Capita Property Valuation – Increase property valuation by reversing the shrinking population, workforce preparation for higher paying jobs and the attraction of higher paying jobs
- 6.7 Per Capita Income – Raising per capita income through better workforce preparation and the availability of higher paying jobs
- 6.8 General Assistance Participants – Shrinking these numbers through better workforce preparation and the availability of higher paying jobs

# Territory Map

