

# SOUTHEAST KANSAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission

## News

January 2021

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### About SEKRPC

**Our Mission**  
At SEKRPC our goal is to improve the quality of life in Southeast Kansas by providing the tools to create and retain jobs and increase the services available in our communities.

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www.facebook.com/SEKRPC

### Executive Board Members

**Executive Director:** Matt Godinez

**Board Members:**

John F. Brocker - Allen County  
Jerry Howarter - Anderson County  
Lynne Oharah - Bourbon County  
Neal Anderson - Cherokee County  
Tom Hugunin - Coffey County  
Jeremy Johnson - Crawford County  
Lonie R. Addis - Labette County  
Jessica Hightower - Linn County  
Larry McManus - Montgomery County  
Paul Westhoff - Neosho County  
Kris Marple - Wilson County  
John Weseloh - Woodson County  
Jody Hoener - Member-At-Large

## Two CARES Act Loans Close

SEKRPC Closed the first two CARES Act RLF Loans in Dec

The Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission received \$520,000.00 to lend through a revolving loan fund from the CARES Act as a response to businesses during the Pandemic.

Throughout the month of December the SEKRPC closed their first two loans for the program. The first loan was made to a business in Fredonia, and the second loan was made to a Chanute Business.

The Fredonia business was granted a loan in the amount of Seventy Five Thousand Dollars at 0% interest for the life of the loan, to be used as working capital and towards the repair of a piece of machinery. The loan was approved by SEKRPC's RLF Committee on December 1st and approved by the SEKRPC Executive Board on December 3rd. The SEKRPC closed the loan with the business on December 23rd.

The second loan to the Chanute business was made in the amount of Sixty Thousand Dollars at 0%

interest for the life of the loan, to be used for the purpose of the purchase of real estate.

The CARES Act RLF has a total of Three Hundred Eighty Five Thousand Dollars remaining to lend out. The CARES Act RLF funds are available at as low as 0% interest, applicants do not need to have a denial letter from a banking center, and funds can be used for working capital, machinery and equipment, or the purchase and/or improvement of real land or estate. The goal of the CARES Act funds are to help businesses who have seen an impact on their business operations, either negative or positive, from the pandemic.

If you are interested in more information on the SEKRPC CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund or would like an application, please visit our website at [www.sekrpc.org](http://www.sekrpc.org), or Contact Taylor Hogue at [taylor@sekrpc.org](mailto:taylor@sekrpc.org) or (620) 431-0080.

### Meet The SEKRPC Executive Board

Lonie Addis represents District One for Labette County, covering roughly the eastern half of Labette County and two precincts in Parsons. Lonie was first elected in 1982 and is currently serving his tenth consecutive term making him the senior county commissioner in Kansas. His family has resided in Labette County since 1869. Descended from Revolutionary War soldier Frederick Eisenhauer who was killed serving with General George Washington at the Battle of Germantown on October 4th, 1777, Lonie maintains a strong patriotic profile.

At 17, he joined the U.S. Marines serving two combat tours in Vietnam. After his return he attended Labette Community College and the University of Kansas. Upon his election he has been quite active in legislative initiatives for Kansas Counties and is past president of the Kansas County Commissioners Association. From 2000-2005, Lonie served as the Kansas Representative on the Board of Directors to the National Association of Counties and likewise served during the same period on the Board of Directors of the Kansas Association of Counties. Lonie was an Executive board member for the SEKRPC from 1983-1984 and again from 1990- Present.



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## Community Development Block Grants

### Commercial Rehabilitations open for application

SEKRPC administers Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for businesses and municipalities including Economic Development, Commercial Rehabilitation, Community Facilities, Water and Sewer, Housing and Urgent Needs.

The CDBG Commercial Rehabilitation application period for 2021 opens in early January and will be open until early December 2021 or until Kansas Department of Commerce has expended all funds available for the program.

The purpose of Commercial Rehabilitation grants is to help cities improve the quality of their downtown commercial districts by assisting private property owners in the rehabilitation of blighted buildings. It is hoped that strategic investment of grant funds will help prevent the

spread of blighted conditions to other nearby structures.

A Commercial Rehabilitation grant does require a minimum match of 25% of the project cost and the match must come from a private source. These grants have a maximum amount of \$250,000 available and they must be used for slum and blight or for a business to reach a LMI (Low-to-Moderate Income) Objective. The projects may address the issues of rehabilitation, historic preservation or renovation and are limited to one building which must be in a downtown commercial district.

For more information pertaining to the CDBG Commercial Rehabilitation program or other CDBG programs, please contact our office at (620) 431-0080 or [office@sekrpc.org](mailto:office@sekrpc.org) or visit [www.kansascommerce.com](http://www.kansascommerce.com)



## Project Spotlight

### Fort Scott Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation

The City of Fort Scott submitted an application to the Community Development Block Grant Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation program on behalf of the business owner for the rehabilitation of 205 Scott Avenue in downtown Fort Scott.

The purpose of the Commercial Rehabilitation Grant for this location is to replace the roof, upgrade the facade, replace the windows, replace the south entrance door, remove the north end door and replace it with a double sliding door, construct an ADA accessible entrance on the north end consisting of an accessible ramp and sidewalk with column adjustments as necessary, construct two accessible restrooms on the north end of the building, install emergency lighting and smoke

alarms throughout the main and lower level of the entire building replace 6,000 square feet of ceiling tile that was damaged by roof leakage in the north end and install two emergency fire disconnects in the alley behind the building.

The estimated project cost is \$299,250.00, the City of Fort Scott on behalf of the business owner has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$224,437.00 with the building owner contributing the remaining cost of the project. The construction is set to begin in early spring 2021 and will be completed by no later than August of 2022. Pictures of the current building are above.

## Economic Development Outlook

### Labette County's Silver Lining in the Midst of the Pandemic

Like many SEK cities Parsons entered 2020 with a bright future and optimistic outlook as they welcomed a brand new 80-room Holiday Inn Express with an adjoining 8,000 square foot conference space. They were also granted a \$7,000 tourism attraction grant to assist with the implementation of an 18-hole disc golf course that would sit near the hotel complex in beautiful Tolen Creek Park, which is home to Tolen Creek Pond, a 2.2-mile walking trail and other outdoor exhibits including the "stone house."

Unfortunately, no city was immune to the effects of COVID and a future that was so bright suddenly had a cloudy outlook. Despite the blanket of COVID that has affected all of not only Southeast Kansas but the World, Parsons has still had a very productive year if not in the tourism industry but in economic development. It seems to spite the pandemic the "Queen City" as Parsons was known in the early pioneer days has kept its head above water and continued to attract development.

Recently approved by the city commission is a new cement plant, Ed' Ready Mix, which will be located in the Flynn Industrial Park on the northwest corner of the 400/59 highways intersection. The cement operation will join a Parsons Freight-liner Diesel Mechanic shop being located at the corner of 59 highway and Flynn drive as well as the new Mike Carpino Ford Dealership opening mid-2021 immediately across US 59 from Tom Davis Chevrolet.

According to Tourism & Economic Development Director Jim Zaleski each development, from the hotel to the car dealership and both of the industrial projects were all treated differently as some bring a huge up side in sales tax while others offer services that will assist current large industrial residents of the city as well as individual travelers from other cities. Multi-level incentive package based off several different criteria were provided by the economic development department of Parsons, depending on the individual aspects of each project. "We feel we are building with the right mix between commercial, industrial and retail, we don't want to become over dependent on any one segment of the economy," he said. Although he did admit that it would be nice to attract some new dining options for those staying at the more than 125 hotel rooms located at the intersection of the two state highways.

Additionally, Parsons has two buildings that were brought from non-use to private ownership in the historic downtown district and when open will bring the number of unoccupied buildings on Mainstreet to only two or three at most. The downtown district also saw the opening of a pocket park featuring a fountain, walking path and sitting areas all amidst a fully landscaped backdrop.

While our planet struggles under the cloud of the pandemic that no one can foresee ending any time soon, at least in the immediate future the City of Parsons has a small silver lining.



### Events and Deadlines

- Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commissions Annual Meeting - July (Exact date and time TBD)
- Community Development Block Grants Commercial Rehabilitation Grant Application - Opens January 4 (Awarded on a first come first serve basis).

- Community Development Block Grant: Community Facilities, Water and Sewer Annual Award Announcement - Late January

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## SEKRPC's New Look

### SEKRPC is Seeing Many Changes

The SEKRPC not only got a new website, but a new look overall! The SEKRPC has a new logo, new signage, new colors, new clothing for on-site visits, new business cards with other changes in the works. The new colors are used throughout our new website and all of our documents, like our newsletter. You can see our new

signage on the building in the pictures below. Our new logo is also below and is used throughout all of our documents and work. The SEKRPC, director, Matt Godinez, and staff are all very excited for these changes!



### SEKRPC Board

#### SEKRPC Could See New Board Members Soon

The Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission Executive Board is made up of Elected Officials or former Elected Officials who were not replaced at the time they left their elected seat as well as one member-at-large. When an elected official no longer holds their seat with their county, they may also be replaced on the SEKRPC Executive Board.

As of January, two of the Planning Commissions long time and much appreciated board members no longer hold their seat in their county and may have to leave their position on our Executive Board. If a board members seat is no longer held at their county, it is up to the county and their appointed seats to replace those board members or choose to have the former seat holder remain as the Planning Commissions Executive Board member. The purpose of each county in which the Planning Commission represents holding a seat on the executive board is to get information discussed at our board meetings and the opportunities available back to the counties, cities and businesses that could benefit.

The Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission greatly appreciates each of our executive board members and all that they give to our business on a volunteer basis, without our board members, the planning commission would not be where we are today.

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Visit our new website at [www.sekrpc.org](http://www.sekrpc.org) to see programs and services we offer, projects we have worked on, events in the area and more!

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