For the latest updates and information related to COVID-19, visit the Kansas COVID-19 Response and Recovery website. covid.ks.gov.

Governor Laura Kelly Announces New Rural Economic Development Program

Nov 12, 2020

Governor Laura Kelly today announced the creation of the Kansas Main Street Affiliate Community Program, an initiative designed to introduce more Kansas communities to the resources and technical assistance offered through Kansas Main Street.

The new Affiliate Community Program is a membership-based program that invites representatives from participating communities to attend training and technical service sessions normally reserved for only the 25 designated Main Street program communities in the state. This allows those communities not involved fully with Main Street to still reap significant benefits from the program.

"My administration brought back the Main Street program because it is a proven tool to help Kansas' rural communities recruit and retain businesses, and restore and preserve the unique history of their downtown corridors," **Governor Kelly said.** "This Affiliate Community Program will bring more resources for downtown development to rural Kansas communities to maintain the health and viability of their

downtowns, and will be a strong resource for my administration to highlight as we continue to recruit new businesses to our state."

The Kansas Main Street program originally launched in 1985 has helped dozens of mostly rural communities work toward ensuring their downtowns remain viable. The program was ended by the Brownback administration in 2012 but resurrected in late 2019 by Governor Kelly. There are currently 25 designated Kansas Main Street communities in the program.

Kansas Main Street is a cornerstone of the Community Development Division at the Kansas Department of Commerce and is one of many investments made in rural Kansas with the support of the Office of Rural Prosperity led by Lieutenant Governor Lynn Rogers.

"Since Governor Kelly announced the return of Kansas Main Street last year, the program has been an incredible success," **Secretary of Commerce David Toland said**. "So many rural communities have benefitted from the Main Street program and its resources. This Affiliate Community program will undoubtedly bring Main Street to even greater heights, benefitting communities across our state."

To participate in the program, fill out and submit the online form here.

The cost to become an Affiliate Community is $400.

Kansas Main Street is affiliated with the National Main Street Center. Main Street is a self-help, technical assistance program that targets revitalization and preservation of downtown districts through the development of a comprehensive strategy based on four points: organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring. While there are no federal funds provided directly to Main Street communities, designated cities are eligible for training and technical assistance designed to help them become self-sufficient in downtown revitalization.

"As we work to help those 25 designated communities continue to be successful with their downtown revitalization efforts, we also want to expand the program's reach and bring some of the same tools to more communities, organizations and individuals who care about their local downtown," **Scott Sewell, director of the Kansas Main Street program, said**. "We look forward to introducing the Main Street

approach to a broader audience that cares about the revitalization of their downtowns."

For more information on the Kansas Main Street program, contact Scott Sewell, Director of Kansas Main Street, at (785) 296-3485 or scott.sewell@ks.gov.

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