

Regional Economic Development Goals, Strategies and Objectives

Goal 1: Regional Economic Development

Purpose – Better organize, maintain and utilize the human and physical resources found throughout North Central Kansas as a means of improving the region’s competitive chances for economic development.

Strategy 1: Develop a social contract that organizes the region’s human capital into a “Virtual NCK” community to better ensure their participation and delivery of needed goods and services.

Objective 1.1: Ensure all local economic development offices, post-secondary education institutions, and other special service providers are engaged and made a part of the “Virtual NCK” community.

Objective 1.2: Market “Virtual NCK” to all business operations inside North Central Kansas such that they have access to and knowledge of the services available.

Strategy 2: Encourage development of a regional consensus that defines just what “economic development” is and isn’t as a means of instilling a common lexicon on the subject within North Central Kansas. This can be used to minimize destructive competition amongst those vying for theoretical priority within any given community, as well as within the region as a whole. It can also be used to focus scarce resources on given goals and objectives within the same set of players.

Objective 2.1: Promote the Home Town Competitiveness model advocated by the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and its focus on Wealth Retention, Youth Attraction, Leadership Development and Entrepreneurship Development.

Objective 2.2: Host at least one (1) public event each year dedicated to the topic of economic development and the policies and tools that apply.

Strategy 3: Illustrate the regional scale and scope of impact individual businesses and specific projects have as a means to explain the necessity of looking beyond traditional community walls.

Objective 3.1: Use Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to compile a database of businesses and their networks to better identify the “community” in which they operate; to illuminate potential new regional business opportunities; and to expose potential threats to existing business operations within the region.

Objective 3.2: Use Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to compile a database of environmental conditions and infrastructure that can be used as a planning tool by any developer or business needing to examine the breadth and scope of impact their project might have.

Goal 2: Regional Community Development

Purpose – Promote a regional sense of place in which individuals are made aware of the fact that specific locations are but a part of some larger community best described not by arbitrary political boundaries, but by the daily routines of residents as they commute to and from work, educate their children, seek out needed goods and services, and interact with those of common interests.

Strategy 4: Continue to support web publication of “EyeonKansas.org” as a means of introducing all parts of the region to each other and communicating the benefits of living in North Central Kansas.

Objective 4.1: Ensure “EyeonKansas.org” has fresh material each quarter on the people, places and things that occupy some niche of North Central Kansas, making it a unique and interesting place to live.

Objective 4.2: Promote the presence of “EyeonKansas.org” through monthly media advertisement in addition to that already used to promote both NCKCN and the NCRPC.

Objective 4.3: Create space in the NCRPC bi-monthly newsletter that makes area readers aware of “EyeonKansas.org”, highlighting articles in the web publication that pay special attention to businesses of unique character and ability found in North Central Kansas.

Strategy 5: Change the paradigm used to define and otherwise explain North Central Kansas such that one location’s gain is not seen as another’s loss, but rather as the development of the region as a community. Such perspective will assist those seeking to promote greater regional coordination and cooperation, which will lead to a better understanding of the dynamics already underway.

Objective 5.1 Describe the regional footprint of all business projects highlighted in NCRPC publications such that the reader is made aware of the service impact the business has.

Objective 5.2 Use map techniques to better illustrate the linkages that already exist amongst the various cities and counties of North Central Kansas as one means of creating a better “sense of place” and “community” definition within the region.

Strategy 6: Question area leaders and organizations concerning their views of the future. Frame questions in such a way respondents provide detailed views of the present or past along with their expectations for the future.

Objective 6.1: Question each of the economic and community development directors serving the various communities in North Central Kansas.

Objective 6.2: Divide the commonalities into a minimum of two groups, one that explains the consumption needs of the individual communities and one that addresses the same needs of the region.

Strategy 7: Examine the identification of a “sister” region in Mexico as a means of better understanding North Central Kansas as a singular social entity and preparing the region for the continued growth of its Hispanic population.

Objective 7.1: Use like-minded social concerns and values as an aid in overcoming cultural differences.

Objective 7.2: Open up a dialogue that might enable better acceptance of and understanding for Hispanic immigrants appearing in the region.

Goal 3: Business Development

Purpose – Create an environment in which existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs are able to access the ideas, services, capital, labor and infrastructure needed to achieve success in their business ventures.

Strategy 8: Use information technology to overcome the time and distance factor that every business and community within North Central Kansas must face on daily basis in the conduct of their business activities.

Objective 8.1: Further enhance the NCKCN system, making it more robust and capable of supporting a high speed Wide Area Network (WAN) system and integrating the system with other service providers wherever and whenever possible.

Strategy 9: Continue to engage the National Institute for Strategic Technology Acquisition and Commercialization (NISTAC), a 501(c)3 operated in association with Kansas State University.

Objective 9.1: Ensure area business has immediate access to the new ideas and the depth of knowledge and research contained within the database of patents managed by NISTAC.

Objective 9.2 Ensure area business has access to legal expertise regarding copywrite and patent rules and regulations.

Strategy 10: Further engage the Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AMI), which is associated with the School of Engineering at Kansas State University.

Objective 10.1: Ensure area business has access to engineering, production and marketing knowledge otherwise absent in the region as a means of meeting special business needs.

Objective 10.2: Create a mechanism whereby AMI can refer product ideas to those North Central Kansas businesses which have both the capacity and capability of producing the product.

Objective 10.3: Work with AMI to devise a technology based economic development program that provides detailed knowledge on the business networks serving businesses within the region.

Objective 10.4: Create a “pipeline” that enables qualified ideas and technologies, products, outside expertise, and capital to flow into North Central Kansas.

Strategy 11: Engage Cloud County Community College (CCCC) and offer to assist that institution with its new business and industry program formed in conjunction with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Objective 11.1: Make CCCC business and industry service staff aware of the various programs the NCRPC already has in place so they might be integrated into those the college develops.

Objective 11.2: Solicit input from CCCC business and industry service staff as to programs they believe to be necessary to meet the business service needs of their clientele.

Objective 11.3: Ensure the SBDC has the tools it requires to address the needs of the region’s retail and service businesses.

Objective 11.4: Identify the business service limitations of the SBDC and seek to establish or implement other programs that address those gaps.

Strategy 12: Build upon the alternative business finance capabilities of the region.

Objective 12.1: Attract funds that enable the NCRPC to establish other “revolving loan funds” and/or “equity investment funds” that compliment those already administered by the NCRPC.

Objective 12.2: Build a base of funds that have no federal or state guidelines that might otherwise restrict their use or application.

Objective 12.3: Compile a list of all revolving loan funds maintained by the counties and cities that make up North Central Kansas, along with the rules and regulations governing application and use of those funds.

Strategy 13: Address the need for unskilled and semi-skilled labor in North Central Kansas.

Objective 13.1: Host a seminar that addresses the rules and regulations regarding the attraction and use of immigrant labor.

Objective 13.2: Link the websites of all federal, state and local agencies listing job opportunities and skills training programs to the NCRPC website.

Strategy 14: Support the creation of at least one (1) entrepreneurship development program within North Central Kansas that provides startups and expanding businesses access to business management, production control and management, and financial management training and support.

Objective 14.1: Have at least one (1) staff member earn FastTrac Certification from the Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, that organization's entrepreneurship development and mentoring program.

Objective 14.2: Compile a listing of comparable programs developed by other cities and regional agencies for similar purpose to use as models for development of such programs in North Central Kansas.

Objective 14.3: Commit funding from the Rural Business Development Tax Credit program to underwrite the costs of area businesses entering the program, thereby helping them gain access to the training and support.

Strategy 15: Support the creation of at least one (1) entrepreneurship development program within North Central Kansas focused solely on the business development and management needs of minority groups.

Objective 15.1: Identify members of recognized minority groups who possess the capacity and interest in becoming FastTrac certified, then sponsor their certification.

Objective 15.2: Engage the minority business community to ascertain the specific needs of its members, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the region's business service provisions, and devising solutions to problems named.

Objective 15.3: List the business services of North Central Kansas in multiple languages as one means of reaching out to minority groups.

Goal 4: Alternative Energy Resource Development

Purpose – Promote and support the growth and development of production facilities focused on alternative energy resources and their application in North Central Kansas.

Strategy 16: Collect information specific to environmental conditions, whether natural or man-made, that might contribute to the development of wind farms and alternative fuels.

Objective 16.1: Provide area business interests with information they need to make investment decisions regarding the development of alternative energy.

Objective 16.2: Provide area governments with information they need to prepare and make policy decisions relative to the development of wind farms within their jurisdictions.

Strategy 17: Interview area officials that have experienced such growth to determine just what questions they faced during implementation of the projects.

Objective 17.1: Find out what questions yet remain in the minds of public officials and others that need to be addressed for them to accept and support the development of such technologies.

Objective 17.2: Find out what information was exchanged during negotiations to determine payment en lieu of taxes (PILOT) fees in exchange for just what government services.

Strategy 18: Host workshops on the subjects of wind, solar, ethanol and bio-diesel production, and other non-traditional energy sources.

Objective 18.1: Inform the general public on the technologies associated with the individual subjects; the potential applications of those technologies; the communities that might be formed and/or impacted; and the prospective policies needed to govern use and application of the technologies and the formation of the communities.

Objective 18.2: Explore the use and application of alternative energy resources (i.e., wind) in the production of products like anhydrous ammonia and hydrogen.

Goal 5: Human Capital Development

Purpose – Improve the quantity, capacity and capability of the human capital found in North Central Kansas.

Strategy 19: Better quantify the population losses of North Central Kansas and thereby offer a better mental image of just what that means on both a local and regional scale.

- Objective 19.1: Convert population loss into the number of families each county must retain and/or recapture each year in order to halt their respective loss in population.
- Objective 19.2: Develop programs that encourage young people to remain and/or return to North Central Kansas with a reasonable expectation of finding the quality life resources they desire.
- Objective 19.3: Develop a list of “quality of life” resources that successful communities possess that attract young families to those locations.

Strategy 20: Explore the possibility of supporting the legal immigration of Hispanic individuals into the region as a replacement for the population leaving the area.

- Objective 20.1: Obtain a copy of the process through which Hispanic immigrants can achieve legal status in this country and make information concerning that available via the NCRPC website.
- Objective 20.2: Create a list of immigrant support services available to the region and make those services known to area businesses via the NCRPC website.

Strategy 21: Engage the labor and workforce development programs offered by the state and better structure them to meet regional need.

- Objective 21.1: Focus attention on the need for labor numbers, not just on training programs that address the skill sets area businesses need.
- Objective 21.2: Work with the state workforce development program serving North Central Kansas to better integrate their programs with those of the NCRPC.

Strategy 22: Work with the post-secondary educational network operating in the region, helping them initiate and structure academic and technical training offerings that meet regional need.

- Objective 22.1: Assist the North Central Kansas Technical College in the placement of state tax credits that can be used to acquire needed

technology and/or facilities in support of workforce training programs.

Objective 22.2: Engage Cloud County Community College in the formation of business support services that meet the needs of area business and industry.

Strategy 23: Visit area employers and solicit their input as to just what skill sets they need in their operations to better address market demands and opportunities.

Objective 23.1: Share findings from such investigation with both Cloud County Community College and the North Central Kansas Technical College business and industry programs.

Objective 23.2: Document findings and solicit comment from the local economic development groups operating within North Central Kansas as a means of further engaging them in the development of solutions to address recognized needs.

Objective 23.3: Work with groups and organizations located outside North Central Kansas as a means of addressing needed services when area providers are unable to meet such needs due to shortfalls in capacity or capability.

Goal 6: Financial Capital Development

Purpose – Build capacity within the financial capital resources of North Central Kansas to ensure it has the ability to meet the financing needs of not only its business community but those of its communities as they seek to address “quality of life” infrastructure demands.

Strategy 24: Use the Kansas Rural Business Development Tax Credit program to approach potential area contributors and ascertain their level of interest in investing in regional programs and projects.

Objective 24.1: Create a list of 12 individuals who are thinking on a level different from their contemporaries.

Objective 24.2: Build a philanthropic culture at the regional level that is intentionally inclusive of the whole region and not just an asset for a specific city or county.

Strategy 25: Create a regional endowment that is dedicated to economic development and is controlled by the North Central Regional Planning Commission, making the funds subject to rules and regulations established by the NCRPC Board or its assigns.

- Objective 25.1: Devise an economic development program that will attract 5.0% of the wealth to be transferred from one generation to the next over the next 10 years.
- Objective 25.2: Develop and/or identify human assets that have experience in developing community foundations to assist with investment and fund management.
- Objective 25.3: Accumulate capital that enables the NCRPC to make direct investments in growth-oriented and potentially high performing private enterprise as a means of assisting businesses in overcoming shortfalls in equity needs, recovering invested capital after the elapse of a set period of time or once the business achieves an agreed upon profit margin.
- Objective 25.4: Accumulate capital that enables the NCRPC to make “gap” financing loans to all kinds of businesses, but especially those of a retail or service nature.

Goal 7: Leadership Development

Purpose – Promote the education and development of area leaders to ensure they have the knowledge and skill sets needed to both recognize and confront the challenges facing the region now and in the future.

Strategy 26: Engage young people in a discussion about the future of North Central Kansas, asking their input and opinions.

- Objective 26.1: Extract information from those conversations concerning what they have in mind specific to their own future, and what – if anything – can be done to make wish to return to their home communities, and other communities like them, in the future.
- Objective 26.2: Identify at least one (1) program the NCRPC can develop and promote as a means of establishing a pathway that enables area youth to return to the region and yet fulfill their personal aspirations and goals.

Strategy 27: Build “organization” leadership such that individual groups work together to collectively establish a vision of the future with each group accepting the responsibility for achieving and/or producing one task necessary for that future to arise. A number of leadership programs already exist in the region, most focused on increasing the knowledge and skills of the individual. More is needed to match individual to organization and then to better define the role and responsibilities of the various organizations operating in North Central Kansas.

Objective 27.1: Structure a leadership program around **The Source** published by BoardSource, targeting the for-profit and non-profit organizations operating in North Central Kansas.

Objective 27.2: Develop a sub-committee within the North Central Regional Planning Commission to oversee the program, to evaluate its progress and to modify its offerings as needed over time.

Strategy 28: Build “regional” awareness in organizational leadership. Educate individuals and organizations in the importance of regional dynamics and the shared relationships that exist amongst separate corporate places.

Objective 28.1: Minimize and/or mitigate the political separation of distinct places when those same places share commonalities that would otherwise enable them to work together towards common goals.

Objective 28.2: Develop an educational program that describes North Central Kansas as a “region” and details the relationships identified components and/or geographies of North Central Kansas play in making it a distinct landscape feature.

Strategy 29: Support continued publication of the web-based “On-Line Journal of Public Policy and Research” which seeks to place in the public eye academic study predicated on the rural perspective.

Objective 29.1: Engage Kansas State University, it being the state’s land grant academic institution, as a partner in this endeavor.

Objective 29.2: Promote awareness of the Journal in all NCRPC newsletters.

Objective 29.3: Arrange at least one (1) meeting each year between the NCRPC Board and KSU officials involved with the Journal to review process and procedure as well as to discuss Journal content and suggested policy implications.

Goal 8: Basic Infrastructure

Purpose – Ensure North Central Kansas has access to the basic infrastructure necessary to support existing business and industry plus provide a base upon which additional business and industry can develop and grow.

Strategy 30: Develop a capital improvements planning program, providing county and city governments the technical assistance needed to develop and maintain the region's essential infrastructure.

Objective 30.1: Provide each member city and county with a hard bound document that enables them to develop a capital improvements program.

Objective 30.2: Use the NCRPC website to explain the capital improvements planning process and to provide step-by-step instruction on developing such a plan.

Strategy 31: Work with member cities and counties, helping them access financing to address the needs of area roads and bridges, water and sewer systems, and airports.

Objective 31.1: Identify the essential roads and bridges present in each member county.

Objective 31.2: Identify the essential water and sewer systems in each member county.

Objective 31.3: Identify the essential airports in the region.

Objective 31.4: Prioritize and promote the development of all infrastructure that serves multiple locations.

Goal 9: Improve the Region's Housing Stock

Purpose – Ensure residents of the region have access to the best and most affordable living accommodations possible as a means of providing for their personal dreams and expectations for a fulfilling life.

Strategy 32: Establish a Comprehensive Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

Objective 32.1: Gain access to government funds not otherwise available to cities and counties for purposes of housing development.

Objective 32.2: Provide area cities and counties with a competitive advantage over others of like kind not otherwise served by a CHDO.

Objective 32.3: Enable the NCRPC to begin developing housing in the region if the Board should decide to do so.

Strategy 33: Create a working relationship with at least one (1) housing developer who has an interest in North Central Kansas.

Objective 33.1: Gain access to specialized housing development expertise that can assist the region in making sound decisions regarding new home construction.

Objective 33.2: Engage the private sector in a public/private partnership as one means of overcoming the difficulties associated with new home construction in rural Kansas.

Strategy 34: Look to local community and economic development groups for guidance in solving and/or addressing housing issues in their respective communities.

Objective 34.1: Seek local assistance in developing incentive packages that can be used to overcome the up-front costs and fees associated with new home construction.

Objective 34.2: Work with local development groups in determining the housing demands that exist within their community.

Strategy 35: Develop a regional housing plan that not only defines housing issues at the regional level, but also defines them at the local level, be that city or county.

Objective 35.1: Follow the state outline of a housing plan and compile data any developer will need to determine local market and its viability.

Objective 35.2: Make that data available to all via the NCRPC website.

Strategy 36: Improve the quality and quantity of affordable housing in the region by taking advantage of housing rehabilitation and weatherization programs.

Objective 36.1: Ensure that all housing enrolled in a city home rehabilitation program is improved sufficiently enough to meet current housing quality standards, thereby adding a minimum of 20 years to its useful life.

Objective 36.2: Apply use of the weatherization program to improve the energy efficiency of any eligible home.

Objective 36.3: Develop access to and/or control over additional sources of funding that can be applied towards housing rehabilitation and/or home weatherization.

Goal 10: Technical Assistance

Purpose – Maintain a staff that has sufficient skill sets to directly address the needs of area business and industry plus assist local community and economic development groups as they address local needs in fulfillment of their individual responsibilities.

Strategy 37: Inventory staff skills to document just what areas of competency exist within the NCRPC as a means of setting the course for future growth and activity.

Objective 37.1: List areas of strengths and areas of weaknesses in staff skill sets to determine what must be done to develop and maintain a staff that fills “gaps” in the skill sets otherwise present in local community and economic development organizations.

Objective 37.2: Develop a list of other federal and state programs, complete with application deadlines, if any, that meet the criteria of projects in which the NCRPC commonly becomes involved.

Objective 37.3: Assign a minimum of one (1) new program to each staff member with it being their responsibility to develop knowledge of and proficiency in that program.

Strategy 38: Inventory the needs of the NCRPC membership as a means of determining what skills the membership wishes the organization to have on staff.

Objective 38.1: List areas of need that have historically arisen during the course of any given year.

Objective 38.2: Annually survey the membership for a list of projects that will require staff assistance in the next five years as a means of preparing the staff for upcoming demands.

Strategy 39: Market access to NCRPC staff as a means of rendering products or services that private enterprise and/or public institutions need and are willing to pay for.

Objective 39.1: Develop a listing of services that are within the capabilities of NCRPC staff and for which users will pay 2 to 3 times the fixed NCRPC hourly coverage rate to access.

Objective 39.2: Develop staff capacity in areas such as environmental review; GIS; meeting facilitation; capital improvements planning; etc.

Strategy 40: Provide non-profit organizations and councils access to staff management services as a means of promoting cooperative planning and program implementation.

Objective 40.1: Continue to oversee and monitor the region’s Non-Metropolitan Development District (Enterprise Zone) program in accordance to state program rules, thus ensuring each new or expanding business enterprise has access to state tax credits and tax deductions related to job creation and capital investment.

- Objective 40.2: Continue to oversee and monitor the Regional Solid Waste Management Program to minimize costly duplication of planning expense and to promote increased recycling.
- Objective 40.3: Continue to manage the Homeland Security Program on behalf of the North Central Kansas Regional Homeland Security Council, ensuring the interests of the region's essential infrastructure are addressed and steps are taken to mitigate damage from potential natural or terrorist events.
- Objective 40.4: Continue to coordinate the activities of the North Central Kansas Public Health Program, ensuring the public health needs of the region are addressed and that the expenses associated with such service delivery are minimized through cooperative means.