

2000 Annual Report Executive Summary

Wichita County Enterprise Community

The Wichita County Enterprise Community spent much of their time in 2000 moving from the planning stages to the implementation stages. Although, at times, progress seemed slow, the Enterprise Community did make great strides in 2000.

Business development was the main priority for the Enterprise Community. The community celebrated the opening of Seaboard Farms, Inc.'s \$11 million dollar feed mill. The mill will process 11 million bushels of grain per year, creating new markets for grain producers. Seaboard Farms created a total of 46 new jobs in Wichita County in 2000. An auxiliary business, Maple Creek Farms, created an additional 36 jobs, half of those being located within the Enterprise Community.

A new retail store, Dollar General, also opened in 2000, creating eight new jobs. And, a \$225,000.00 automated car wash was constructed.

These new business developments helped increase Wichita County's valuation by \$2,633,517.00, from \$24,644,860.00 to \$27,278,377.00 in 2000.

In other business development efforts, the Enterprise Community established a revolving loan fund in 2000 and made their first loan to a new agri-business that created two new jobs. The \$50,000.00 loan was leveraged with \$210,000.00 of private investment.

The Enterprise Community continued to work with a dentist interested in locating within the Enterprise Community. Nearest dental care is currently located 25 miles away. The Enterprise Community signed a 5-year lease/purchase agreement with the dentist and began plans to construct a dental clinic. A local utility company, Wheatland Electric, applied for \$154,400.00 RUS low-interest loan on behalf of the dentist, which was awarded. The Enterprise Community also received a donation of a 50' x 150' lot located in the downtown business district to locate the dental clinic.

The Enterprise Community continued to develop promotional material to enhance its business recruitment efforts. A business printed and donated 500 Wichita County Community Profiles to the Enterprise Community. The Enterprise Community also worked with a local youth to develop a website to promote Wichita County. The website address is www.wichitacounty.org.

In community development efforts, the Wichita County Enterprise Community partnered with several other community organizations and entities. The City of Leoti secured a \$1,078,300.00 grant and an \$873,400.00 low interest loan from Rural Development's Water and Waste Water program to help finance a city-wide water project. The Leoti Housing Authority also worked with Rural Development to obligate \$100,000.00 to rehab low-income senior citizen housing and construct additional parking. The money will be paired with \$15,000.00 in EC funds to complete the project.

The Enterprise Community partnered with the Wichita County Health Center to provide additional health services to the residents of Wichita County. The EC purchased a cardiac treadmill and newborn audiology equipment in 2000. The Enterprise Community partnered with a group of residents to form the Wichita County Arts Alliance and to provide several art events and activities for the community. One of their projects was to fund and sponsor a part-time art instructor at the elementary school, providing art instruction to students for the first time in more than 20 years. The Enterprise Community also continued to work with the Wichita County Historical Society to develop the Santa Fe Railroad

Hand-dug Well into a tourism attraction.

The Enterprise Community helped negotiate a \$450,000.00 ten-year technology grant from Seaboard Farms for the school district prior to 2000. That agreement was finalized in 2000 and the first year installment was presented to the school in the amount of \$85,000.00. The money was used to install an IBM compatible computer lab in the Wichita County Junior High School, network the computers within the junior high to the high school, and purchase educational software. Seaboard Farms and Unified School District 467 also partnered with the Enterprise Community to create a building trades program in the high school to construct affordable single-family housing in the EC. The Enterprise Community purchased a lot for the first home and Seaboard Farms committed \$80,000.00 towards the project.

The Enterprise Community also worked on building capacity within the program. A part-time staff person was hired to assist the director, maintain regular office hours and to set up an accounting system. Six directors attended the Annual Rural EZ/EC Conference in Washington, D.C. and two directors attended the Annual White House Conference in Columbus, OH. The Enterprise Community also met with Kansas state agencies to introduce the Enterprise Community initiative and to discuss potential partnerships. They also met with state USDA Rural Development officials for the same purpose.

The Wichita County Enterprise Community held a series of community committee meetings in the fall of 2000 to evaluate current projects and to identify new ones. Seven new benchmarks were adopted and additional funds were committed to two existing benchmarks at the Enterprise Community's Annual meeting in November.