

**PART II
EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

Comprehensive
Economic
Development
Strategy



Provide Technical Assistance
Cultivate Resilient Communities

Offer Financing
Create a Better Place

Invest in People
Grow Prosperity

Mo-Kan
An Economic & Community Development Organization

2020

This page left intentionally blank.

Prepared by

Mo-Kan Regional Council of Governments

This report was prepared under an award from the US Department of Commerce,
Economic Development Administration, Grant Project Number ED19DEN3020005

Adopted March, 2020



Acknowledgments

Mo-Kan CEDS Committee

Jon Ecker, Executive Director (2019)

Nicholas Hutchison, Executive Director (2020)

Mo-Kan Staff



This page left intentionally blank.

Table of Contents

Document II: Executive Summary

I. Introduction..... 1

What is the CEDS?

- a. Mo-Kan Regional Council
- b. SWOT Process
- c. SWOT Results
- d. SWOT Summary Chart

II. Strategic Direction..... 5

Vision, Goals, Objectives and Actions: Where do we want to go?

III. Action Plan, Implementation..... 6

Actions, Partners and Metrics: How do we get there?

IV. Economic Resilience..... 12

How can we prevent, withstand and recover from economic or environmental shocks?

This page left intentionally blank.

Introduction

What is the CEDS?

▶▶ The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a five-year plan update to guide economic development activities for the Mo-Kan Regional Council of Governments (Mo-Kan). It is a locally-based, regionally-driven process to establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration leading to economic prosperity. It uses current economic and demographic data to steer the plan toward the future.

▶▶ A CEDS Committee was established from Mo-Kan Board members and regional stakeholders. Representatives from business, industry, education, health, the public and governmental bodies were invited to be part of the Committee. See the *Kick-off Documentation Section of Appendix A* for details.

▶▶ Evaluating the needs of the region is the first step in the process. Public meetings were held to provide a forum for stakeholders and residents to express their ideas about regional needs and priorities. The outcome from these meetings is the

completion of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. A Public Survey was posted on various Internet sites to give the public-at-large access to the process of identifying our priorities.

▶▶ After the SWOT Analysis, building on the 2014 CEDS as a foundation, a Vision with Goals, Objectives and Actions was prepared. The next step was to formulate the Action Plan delineating the Actions, Partners, and Metrics used to define success. An Evaluation Framework and discussion of Economic Resilience round out the sections of The Plan.

▶▶ The CEDS includes three documents: Part I, Executive Summary; Part II, The Plan; Part III, Appendices: A, B, & C. The Executive Summary is designed to be a shorter, stand-alone document extracted from The Plan describing the SWOT process and highlighting the Action Plan, which forms the heart of the strategy. The Appendices contain process, demographics and background.



**Mo-Kan Regional Council of Governments
Board of Directors**

MEMBERS APPOINTED BY COUNTY				
Andrew	Buchanan	Clinton	DeKalb	Doniphan
Robert Caldwell	Lee Sawyer	Gary McCrea	Tanya Zimmerman	Leah Johnson
Annette Weeks			David Farr	Joyce Simpson
				Brett Neibling
MEMBERS APPOINTED BY CITY				
Amazonia	Cameron	Clarksdale	Easton	Fillmore
Brenda Goodwin	Quinten Lovejoy	Ward Good	Sally McDowell	Thomas Coats
	Tim Wymes			
Gower	Lathrop	Maysville	Morrill, KS	Plattsburg
Carroll Fisher	Robert Burns	Michele Allwood	Linda Hill	Greg Harris
Rosendale	St. Joseph	St. Joseph	Savannah	Trimble
Jason Dunbar	Brian Myers	Adam McGowan	Don Dillman	Michael Shryock
	Nicholas Hutchison	Gary Roach		
	Marty Novak	Chance Long	Stewartsville	Union Star
			Joe Stevenson	Stacy Benoit
MEMBERS APPOINTED BY VILLAGE				
Agency	Country Club	Lewis & Clark	Weatherby	DeKalb
Sandra Wood	Elmer Mayse	Jack Rodkey	Stephen Gallus	Skyler Glaub

CEDS COMMITTEE LIST

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	COUNTY
Ron	Barbosa	Security Bank of Kansas City	Finance	Buchanan
Bob	Caldwell	Andrew County Commission	Government	Andrew
Ted	Hauser	St. Joseph Planning Commission	Government	Buchanan
Chad	Higdon	Second Harvest Community Food Bank	Not-for-Profit	Buchanan
Nicholas	Hutchison	City of St. Joseph	Government	Buchanan
Leah B.	Johnson	Doniphan County	Economic	Doniphan
Dale	Krueger	Missouri Western State University	Individual	Buchanan
Dean	Langner	City of Lathrop	Government	Clinton
Brad	Lau	St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce	Business	Buchanan
Rebecca	Lobina	Small Business Development Center	Economic Development	Buchanan
Roni	Mauer	Farmers State Bank	Finance	Buchanan
Adam	McGowan	Missouri Western State University	Education	Buchanan
Patrick	McKernan	Troy USD 429	Education	Doniphan
Keli	Morris	Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation	Economic Development	Andrew
Marty	Novak	City of Saint Joseph	Government	Buchanan
Amy	Ryan	Commerce Bank	Finance	Buchanan
Joyce	Simpson	Doniphan County	Government	Doniphan
Tama	Wagner	St. Joseph Community Alliance	Economic Development	Buchanan
Annette	Weeks	Craig School of Business	Economic Development	Buchanan
Stephanie	Williams	North Central Missouri Business Facilitation	Economic Development	Clinton
Tim	Wymes	City of Cameron	Government	DeKalb
Tanya	Zimmerman	DeKalb County	Government	DeKalb

Mo-Kan Regional Council

▶▶ The Mo-Kan Regional Council of Governments (Mo-Kan) is in its fifty-first year as a bi-state regional planning commission serving Andrew, Buchanan, Clinton and DeKalb Counties in Missouri, and Atchison and Doniphan Counties in Kansas. The Mo-Kan Economic Development District (EDD) serves the same counties. In 2017, Atchison County withdrew from the Council but continues to be part of the EDD, therefore, data for Atchison County will be presented in the charts and graphs of the plan.

▶▶ The Mo-Kan Board of Directors is made up of representatives from each county and cities are invited to join. The larger cities in the core service area are St. Joseph, Cameron and Savannah in Missouri, and Atchison, Wathena, and Elwood in Kansas. Mo-Kan is part of the St. Joseph Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with the exception of Clinton County.

▶▶ Mo-Kan’s planning services are designed to benefit all citizens of the core service area and the communities within. Additional communities are served due to special programming and not included in the primary service area. Over the past five years Mo-Kan has actively assisted local communities with completing projects through various grant and revolving loan funds, stimulating economic growth and prosperity in the local economy. Table 1, *Economic Impact of Mo-Kan Grants*, shows the grant project totals from the grant programs that Mo-Kan has

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MO-KAN GRANTS	
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	\$10,097,226.00
MoDOT	\$390,424.35
Hazard Mitigation	\$127,221.00
Watershed Project	\$33,214.19
Homeland	\$937,038.12
Brownfields	\$75,000.00
Total Grant Project Funds	\$11,660,123.66

participated in since the last CEDS plan.

▶▶ Table 2, *Loan Programs Economic Impact*, summarizes the impact of the Mo-Kan Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and the SBA-504 Loan fund administered by Mo-Kan, along with other loan programs packaged in partnership with local banks as a Mo-Kan service. The economic impact of the loans total \$42,975,430 injected into the regional economy over the past five years. Sixty-one percent of the funded loans went to firms in Andrew, Buchanan, and Clinton Counties in Missouri and Atchison County in Kansas. This business activity generated a total of 497 new and retained jobs.

LOAN PROGRAMS ECONOMIC IMPACT	
Loans	\$19,592,675
Project Total	\$42,975,430
Injection	\$5,568,450
Jobs Created	308
Jobs Retained	189
Total Jobs	497

▶▶ Median income is \$49,724, with 13.17 percent living in poverty. Just under 90 percent of the area’s residents achieved a high school diploma, certifications and degrees. More than 12,300 businesses and their employees generate an annual payroll of over \$2.2 billion.

▶▶ According to national statistics, more than 89 percent of businesses employ 20 workers or less, while businesses employing fewer than 100 compose slightly over 98.2 percent of total businesses. Those employing more than 100 employees represent approximately 2 percent of total businesses. Mo-Kan’s largest potential for growth is small business. We have to develop a focus on business retention, increasing skill levels of the labor force, building public-private partnerships, and improving the entrepreneurial environment through local resources such as Mo-Kan’s internal revolving loan funds (RLF), US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Small Business Administration loans ranging from \$2,500 to \$4 million.

On the Horizon

The next five years promise to be packed with new economic endeavors in an environment that supports building momentum for entrepreneurs and continuing businesses and capital ventures to develop and grow. The Mo-Kan Region contributes to the robust economies of Missouri and Kansas. St. Joseph is the third largest exporter in the state of Missouri which indicates that we are growing manufacturing businesses producing goods for the world market; the future looks bright.

Buchanan County has established a Land Bank to address the problems of aging neighborhoods and deterioration of homes. The Land Bank has already established two subcommittees to begin their work.

The 139th Airlift Wing, Missouri Air National Guard, shares airport services with the City of St Joseph at Rosecrans Memorial Airport. Long rang planning has begun for the area that in includes plans for the Air Guard to move their headquarters north, and the development of commercial and industrial business sites.

The Ag Expo project has completed a new exit with connections to Pickett Road to the south and Mitchell Woods Business Park to the north. A capital campaign is underway to finance \$1.9 million for the grading of the site. Once the grading is completed, the commercial lots will



Photo courtesy: Ag Expo Facebook

be available for sale. When the project is finished, the region will have a new venue for agricultural and other events with hotel, restaurants and retail establishments on the site.

Clinton County has passed zoning restrictions for wind turbines. Pressure to build wind

farms will continue in the region. Buchanan Planning and Zoning is currently working on a set of regulations and public meetings have been held to discuss the topic.

Missouri recently passed legislation, approved by the voters, to make medical marijuana legal. The amendment received 1,572,592 votes statewide (65.54 percent) and made marijuana use legal for treatment of several medical conditions per doctor approval. This is a budding business venture that has become big business across many states despite it still being against federal law to possess marijuana.

Implementation of Missouri's medical marijuana program may appear slow, but it is proceeding at a pace outlined by the initiative that created the program. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services recently issued licenses for 10 testing facilities (eight more than required), 21 transportation facilities and 60 cultivation facilities. Missouri's medical marijuana amendment gives cultivation facilities another year to start producing crops. A company in Plattsburg has received a license to be a medical marijuana grower.

The production of industrial hemp has been approved in both Missouri and Kansas. CBD production has been recently approved by the Kansas Legislature. Medical marijuana is not legal in Kansas. Application for licenses to grow hemp are being accepted as of Jan. 2, 2020. Kansas is in the process of writing the program rules and expects to have them in place by January 23, 2020. Both state have a history of hemp production until it was made illegal by federal law in 1937. Hemp production is expected to contribute to expansion of agricultural production in both states.

Photo courtesy: St. Louis Public Radio

MO-KAN Action Plan Implementation:
Actions, Partners and Metrics
How do we get there?



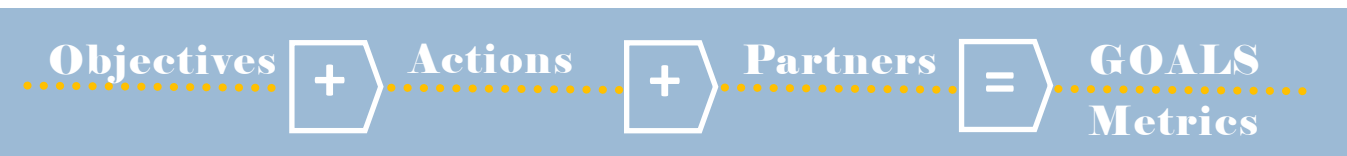
We get *there* by following the themes on which our Goals are based. Each theme is clearly tied to listed Actions that can be implemented over the next five years engaging our economic partners, member communities and state and federal agencies. Close collaboration will enable prosperity to spread throughout the Mo-Kan Region. This section shows a summary of how to implement the Actions and sets benchmarks to measure our success in fulfilling the plan.

The coordinated Goals and Themes are:

- ◆ Goal I.....Grow Prosperity
- ◆ Goal II.....Create a Better Place
- ◆ Goal II.....Offer Financing
- ◆ Goal III.....Provide Technical Assistance
- ◆ Goal IV.....Invest in People
- ◆ Goals I-IV.....Cultivate Resilient Communities

The tables on the following pages summarize the Objectives and Actions under each Goal showing the collaborating partners, and metrics to track benchmarks and overall achievement of the Actions listed. Since all the objectives and actions are directly related to a particular goal, the summary table will give a clear picture of what kind of implementation process will be successful. To list this information under each objective would be redundant, because the Objective and Actions create a systematic approach to achieving the Goals.

The metrics are a matter of setting goals within the Actions to measure progress and success. Most of the Objectives and Actions are ongoing because Mo-Kan’s mission is ongoing. There will be projects started and completed, but they are not the subject of the CEDS planning process, they are the outcomes of the process. As we pass through the next five years, we will be able to document our progress in each Annual Report to EDA. If there are new Objectives because of a changing economic climate, they can be added. In the same respect, any Objectives completed or found to be outdated can be deleted from the plan during the annual review. This is not a plan to sit on the shelf. It is designed to be a blueprint for Mo-Kan to follow to have the most positive impact on growth and prosperity in the region.



GOAL I

Grow prosperity focusing on infrastructure, communication, government and community collaboration to develop sustainable community services.



ACTIONS SUMMARY

▶ Maintaining and improving infrastructure is accomplished by facilitating access to state and federal programs for our communities such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which provide the most impact for rural community projects by providing critical gap grant and loan funding for infrastructure projects. Mo-Kan assists with grant writing and administration. By providing technical assistance for both Missouri and Kansas communities to find appropriate resources, we help to develop the kind of thriving communities where people want to live.

▶ Communicating through various newsletters, we keep community leaders up-to-date about opportunities to participate in new programs and also inform them about current economic development opportunities.

▶ GIS and access to relevant database information for the region is another service offered.

▶ Mo-Kan staff participates in state and local organizations to be on the forefront as a professional resource to assist our member communities with all aspects of community and economic development.

PARTNERS	METRICS
Cities, Counties, Chambers, Federal, State and local agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market infrastructure projects to 6 communities per year. • Attend relevant organization meetings, track participation annually. • Communicate monthly with counties and member communities by putting flyers or special notices in our Board meeting packets. • Market GIS and database access to all communities through the Mo-Kan website and social media; update weekly. • Attend MACOG and local economic development organization meetings monthly.
FUNDING SOURCES	TIME FRAME
EDA, MDNR, KDHE, DED, MoDOT, USDA, Local	Ongoing, most infrastructure projects have a lifespan of less than 2 years. Communication and education are ongoing.



Create a better place by connecting neighborhoods with business services and amenities, cultivating entrepreneurship and providing financial services for small business development.

GOAL II

ACTIONS

▶ Offer financing to entrepreneurs and to small businesses for expansion. Consider new solutions for decaying buildings and financing opportunities to improve neighborhoods. By promoting preservation or revitalization of existing sites for economic development, cities can improve the overall appeal of their community. Collaborate with communities and businesses to improve downtown revitalization efforts.

▶ Facilitate training and technical assistance to small businesses to improve administrative skills increases their chance of success. Provide information to new businesses about best practices and the value of collaboration within the business community to build resiliency.

▶ Support development of businesses that directly contribute to established supply chains for the region’s strongest business clusters. Engage the business community by participating in entrepreneurial events and outreach.

PARTNERS	METRICS
Cities, Counties, Chambers, Economic Developers , Small Business Development Center (NWMSU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer SBA Program information to communities through 4 entrepreneurial events and outreach. • Assist 3 communities in attracting new business to support existing industries. • Facilitate 2 small business administrative training sessions. • Provide technical assistance for 1 revitalization project in each county.
FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
EDA, SBA, USDA, MDNR, KDHE, Local	Ongoing activities.

FUNDING SOURCES



MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



U.S. Small Business
Administration



GOAL III

Provide technical assistance for community and economic planning to improve quality of life through better transportation, recreation and environmental safeguards.



ACTIONS

- ▶▶ Assist communities with transportation planning and pursue appropriate funding streams to improve community streets and transportation networks. Cultivate the inclusion of multimodal transportation features into plans. Participate in Mo-DOT programs focusing on highway safety and safe driving education.
- ▶▶ Collaborate with local, regional and national partners to grow tourism and agritourism. Support Missouri and Kansas efforts to increase state-wide tourism by encouraging local communities to participate in state-wide tourism programs.
- ▶▶ Continue to contract to provide hazard mitigation planning for our Missouri counties and coordinate with emergency managers to implement Homeland Security preparations and disaster management.
- ▶▶ Facilitate access to the Brownfield Assessment programs and grant/loan RLF program for remediation funding. Assist communities to find funding sources to increase local recreational amenities.

PARTNERS	METRICS
Cities, Counties, Chambers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate quarterly TAC meetings to establish regional transportation priorities. • Participate in the NW Coalition for Roadway Safety and other MoDOT programs. • Educate communities about the benefits of tourism and agritourism as additional economic development revenue streams through newsletters and social media campaigns. • Continue to update Hazard Mitigation Plans for Andrew, Buchanan, Clinton and DeKalb counties on a rotating basis every 5 years. • Continue to contract for Homeland Security Region H administration. • Provide technical assistance to 2 communities for Brownfield Assessments annually.
FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
EDA, EPA, KDHE, MoDOT, MDNR, MDC, USDA-RD, Local	Ongoing



Invest in people through workforce development and education to align employment opportunities with qualified employees to achieve synchronized business growth.

GOAL IV

ACTIONS

- ▶▶ Continue to pursue contract for the Missouri Job Center to provide workforce development services to businesses and job seekers. Use social media to connect employers and employees. Expand outreach through support of the Mobile Job Center. Partner with other agencies and organizations to establish local business internship and apprenticeship opportunities. Research and pursue other funding for workforce development programs or projects.
- ▶▶ Work with regional chambers of commerce to connect businesses with potential employees in outlying communities through mini job fairs and the Mobile Job Center bus. Support participation in regional leadership training. Focus on local job fairs and school-to-job transition events for high school graduates.
- ▶▶ Support training opportunities for Mo-Kan staff for professional development. Host CDBG trainers for annual Missouri CDBG grant training.

PARTNERS	METRICS
Businesses, Chambers, WDB, MDNR, KDC, MML, KLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill 60% of jobs offered monthly. • Complete 5 outreach events by the Mobile Job Center in partnership with Chambers or other local organizations. • Plan and execute 1 regional Job Fair annually. • Provide 1 professional development training opportunity for each Mo-Kan staff member annually. • Mo-Kan staff members participate in 4 training webinars annually. • Mo-Kan staff members participate annually in CDBG training for Missouri and Kansas programs.
FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
EDA, HUD, DOL, WDB, MDNR, Local	Ongoing, benchmarks measured monthly or annually.

Economic Resilience:

How can we prevent, withstand and recover from economic or environmental shocks?



Planning for a potential economic disruption, whether it be natural or manmade, is a crucial step to ensure the resiliency of a community if or when a disaster strikes. While the list of potential shocks to the economy of a region can be extensive, a community’s initiatives for preparing for and recovering from any disruption should be both succinct and viable. Since the economy of Mo-Kan’s service area is largely dependent on commercial businesses, both large and small, the biggest vulnerability would be a disruption to infrastructure of which includes transportation, food, water, sewage, telecommunications, and electrical systems. Shocks to the region’s infrastructure could create a ripple effect throughout the workforce and the economy, so safeguards must be in place.

Responding to Economic Shocks

There are already initiatives in place to help absorb the shock of a manmade disruption to the workforce with the Missouri Job Center in St. Joseph. Serving the region through job training, financial assistance and other programs to help job seekers overcome barriers to employment. In 2017, the job center served over 9,614 job seekers, with more than 75 percent receiving training and job search assistance that eventually led to jobs. There have not been recent mass layoffs or large business closures directly in the region with the upturn of the economy, but the approximately 800 Harley-Davidson employees affected by the Kansas City plant closure in 2018-19 did increase the influx of job seekers in the area.

While some economic shocks, like business closures, are foreseen, other possible manmade disruptions like terrorist attacks on critical sectors such as education, medical and/or agriculture, are less predictable. Potential disruptions could impact food production, healthcare and education, considering these are some of the key services many of the area’s larger employers provide. Vital to planning for shocks to these services are redundancy measures including secondary energy, communication and data storage/retrieval sources, alternative funding sources, and a cache of supplies.

Figure 14, *Larger Employers in Mo-Kan Region by County* (below) lists the critical employers.

<u>Larger Employers in Mo-Kan Region by County</u>	
<u>Employer</u>	<u>County</u>
Savannah R-III School District	Andrew
North Andrew R-VI School District.....	Andrew
Benedictine College.....	Atchison
Mosaic Life Care.....	Buchanan
Triumph Foods	Buchanan
St. Joseph School District	Buchanan
Cameron Regional Medical Center.....	Clinton
Crossroads Correctional Center.....	DeKalb
Highland Community College.....	Doniphan

Responding to Environmental Shocks

The Mo-Kan Region is also susceptible to natural shocks in the form of extreme weather-related events such as flooding, drought, tornado, earthquakes, thunderstorms and ice storms, which can severely impact transportation, utilities and communication services. For example, spring 2019 flooding closed several roadways, disrupting travel and damaging roads in Atchison and Doniphan Counties in Kansas, and Andrew and Buchanan Counties in Missouri, where part of Interstate 29 was temporarily closed. Some of the region’s residents were personally impacted by the flooding, so Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Recovery Centers were set up in Andrew and Buchanan Counties in July 2019 to provide assistance to those residents and businesses affected by flooding.

Being a member of local emergency management planning committees, Mo-Kan will continue to take part in pre-disaster planning endeavors in the region and serve as a link to recovery resources and efforts in a post-disaster situation. With its various partnerships, Mo-Kan is able to assist communities and businesses by helping them secure information, funding and provisions necessary in the recovery process.

Due in part to Mo-Kan’s programs and partnerships, the communities it serves are more equipped to overcome manmade or natural economic shocks. Table 12, *Resiliency Initiatives*, (below) demonstrates Mo-Kan’s commitment to helping cultivate resilient communities.

Resiliency Initiatives

STEADY-STATE	BENEFITS
Goal III. Coordination of Emergency Managers through Regional Homeland Security Oversight Committee, Region H	1. Allows for the deployment of regional resources and emergency management communication
Goal III. Up-to-date County Hazard Mitigation Plans	2. Document past hazards and identifies vulnerabilities
Goal I. Accessible regional data via mySidewalk	3. Provides data-driven insights for planning and decision-making
Goal I. Facilitation of transportation meetings and plans	4. Establishes regional rapport with common goals of citizen safety and education
Goal IV. Development of workforce through job training and outreach	5. Provides opportunities for citizens to adapt to an evolving job market
Goal I. Facilitation of federal and state monies for community improvement projects	6. Assists in the development and rejuvenation of communities
Goal II. Availability of financial and educational assistance	7. Supports business growth and preparedness
RESPONSIVE	BENEFITS
Goal I. Ongoing communication between community leaders and stakeholders through meetings, publications and social media	8. Provides various platforms for dialogue on community needs and challenges and availability of services
Goal IV. Assistance for dislocated workers and job seekers through Missouri Job Center partnership	9. Supports region’s workforce development mission to connect job seekers with quality employment opportunities

On the Horizon

The next five years promise to be packed with new economic endeavors in an environment that supports building momentum for entrepreneurs and continuing businesses and capital ventures to develop and grow. The Mo-Kan Region contributes to the robust economies of Missouri and Kansas. St. Joseph is the third largest exporter in the state of Missouri which indicates that we are growing manufacturing businesses producing goods for the world market; the future looks bright.

Buchanan County has established a Land Bank to address the problems of aging neighborhoods and deterioration of homes. The Land Bank has already established two subcommittees to begin their work.

The 139th Airlift Wing, Missouri Air National Guard, shares airport services with the City of St Joseph at Rosecrans Memorial Airport. Long rang planning has begun for the area that in includes plans for the Air Guard to move their headquarters north, and the development of commercial and industrial business sites.

The Ag Expo project has completed a new exit with



Photo courtesy: Ag Expo Facebook

connections to Pickett Road to the south and Mitchell Woods Business Park to the north. A capital campaign is underway to finance \$1.9 million for the grading of the site. Once the grading is completed, the commercial lots will

be available for sale. When the project is finished, the region will have a new venue for agricultural and other events with hotel, restaurants and retail establishments on the site.

Clinton County has passed zoning restrictions for wind turbines. Pressure to build wind

farms will continue in the region. Buchanan Planning and Zoning is currently working on a set of regulations and public meetings have been held to discuss the topic.

Missouri recently passed legislation, approved by the voters, to make medical marijuana legal. The amendment received 1,572,592 votes statewide (65.54 percent) and made marijuana use legal for treatment of several medical conditions per doctor approval. This is a budding business venture that has become big business across many states despite it still being against federal law to possess marijuana.

Implementation of Missouri's medical marijuana program may appear slow, but it is proceeding at a pace outlined by the initiative that created the program. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services recently issued licenses for 10 testing facilities (eight more than required), 21 transportation facilities and 60 cultivation facilities. Missouri's medical marijuana amendment gives cultivation facilities another year to start producing crops. A company in Plattsburg has received a license to be a medical marijuana grower.

The production of industrial hemp has been approved in both Missouri and Kansas. CBD production has been recently approved by the Kansas Legislature. Medical marijuana is not legal in Kansas. Application for licenses to grow hemp are being accepted as of Jan. 2, 2020. Kansas is in the process of writing the program rules and expects to have them in place by January 23, 2020. Both state have a history of hemp production until it was made illegal by federal law in 1937. Hemp production is expected to contribute to expansion of agricultural production in both states.

Photo courtesy: St. Louis Public Radio

