

Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee

Thursday, March 5, 2015

Leanne Kehres, Executive Director
Southeast KANSASWORKS, Inc.

Chairperson Lynn and members of the Committee,

Good morning, I am Leanne Kehres, Executive Director of Southeast KANSASWORKS. The Local Area V Workforce Investment Board serves 17 counties: Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Elk, Greenwood, Labette, Linn, Lyon, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Woodson and Wilson. Counties in our area border Missouri and Oklahoma and cover 13 percent of the state or approximately 10,930 square miles. The population base in Local Area V is approximately 277,000 with a working population of approximately 147,000. Our average unemployment rate is 4.6%. Of the people who are employed in our local area, approximately 39.3% live in one of four counties: Crawford, Lyon, Montgomery and Labette. We currently have approximately 4,821 job vacancies. The mean hourly wage for our area is \$16.81 and the median wage is \$13.55

Southeast KANSASWORKS One-Stop Delivery System currently includes three comprehensive Workforce Centers located in Emporia, Independence and Pittsburg, with an outreach office in Paola. We are in the process of expanding our Paola Office and moving to a new location in June. Additionally, we have issued requests for proposals for our Independence and Emporia locations due to the expiration of our leases.

This last year has brought a lot of change to our Area in both administrative and board staffing and with our local operations. We are in the process of reviewing our infrastructure and determining how we can provide higher quality services to the employers and job seekers we serve. Since we are unable to have Workforce Centers in all the counties we serve, we are looking at ways to become more mobile and leverage technology to provide face-to-face services to customers in the other 13 counties. We are working with community partners to identify the various resources available in the local area and are further defining ways we can work together to assist our communities with the employment barriers and generational poverty issues that we face in this part of the state.

We have recently suffered some significant layoffs in the Montgomery County area. Amazon one of Southeast Kansas' largest employers, recently laid off 800 plus full time, contract and temporary employees. Additionally, Southwire and John Deere, also located in Montgomery County, laid off 181 and 40 respectively in the last year. Approximately half of those laid off by Amazon and more than half of the Southwire and John Deere employees live in Montgomery County. The annual payroll loss from the Amazon closure will be approximately 18.6 million and have a significant impact on the community. In conjunction with the Department of Commerce, Coffeyville Community College, the Montgomery County Action Council and other community partners, we have been working with the dislocated employees to assist them in identifying and finding other employment and providing training opportunities to allow them to retrain for other job opportunities.

In anticipation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which includes regional collaboration, we are in the process of partnering with Local Area III on the BSNF Intermodal project, which is located on some of our bordering counties. We are still in the early planning stages, but plan to share staffing at the Logistics Park Kansas City to assist with providing workforce services. We anticipate a significant number of the workers will come from some of our bordering counties such as Miami and Linn.

Senate Commerce Committee

Date: 3-5-15

Attachment: 6

The Local Area V Workforce Investment Board is committed to developing a workforce development system that meets the needs of the employers and job seekers in our diverse region.

Thank you for your interest in what we do. I would be happy to answer any questions you have for me.

SOUTHEAST KANSASWORKS

sekworks.org

Local Area V Workforce Investment Board

Name	Organization, City or County	Phone Numbers
Mike Beene	Director of Employment Services, KS Dept. of Commerce, Topeka	620-704-5091
Lisa Brumbaugh	Director, Small Business Development Center, Emporia, KS	620-341-5308
Phillip Chappuie	Director of Services Montgomery County, Class Limited, Independence	620-331-8604
Virginia Crossland-Macha Chair	Owner/CEO, Macha Enterprises, Iola	620-365-8141
Jennifer Graber	Human Services Counselor Eastern Region, DCF Rehabilitation Services	785-229-8653
John Green	Director, SEK Area Agency on Aging, Chanute	620-431-2980
Joe Knight	Assistant Business Manager, Int'l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Parsons	620-423-1599
Sally Manbeck	Administrative Assistant, B&W Trailer Hitches, Humboldt	620-473-3664
Ron Marrone	Vice President, Marrone's Inc., Pittsburg	620-231-6610
Gary Mattson	Human Resource Director, Atkinson/AZZ, Pittsburg	620-231-6900
	Director of Human Resources, the EPOCH Group, Fort Scott	816-659-9105
Stacey Stuart	Human Resource Manager, Grandview Products, Parsons	620-421-6970
Tim Thomas	Director of Recruiting, WardKraft, Inc., Fort Scott	620-644-2315
Angela Trimble	Owner, Trust Point Services, Burlington, KS	620-364-8811
Karen Ulanski	Regional Director of Adult Education, Paola Adult Education, Paola	913-294-8018
Megan Vohs	Human Resource Professional, First Option Bank, Paola	913-294-3811
Mike Wolonik	Business Representative, Plumbers and Pipeline Local 441, Frontenac	620-231-4280
Tony Wood – Vice Chair	Owner/CEO, Midwest Computer Solutions, Coffeyville	620-251-0750

Local Area V Chief Elected Officials Board

Lonie Addis	Commissioner, Labette County	620-820-4436
Fred Brown	Commissioner, Montgomery County	620-251-2981
Bonnie (Rob) Roberts	Commissioner, Miami	913-256-8006
Robert (Bob) Saueressig	Commissioner, Coffey County	620-203-1182
Vacant	Replacement for Dick Works – Allen County	