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## **U.S. Commerce Department designates South Kansas a “manufacturing community” led by Wichita State** *Initiative aims to revitalize manufacturing through public-private partnerships and coordinated federal funding*

The U.S. Department of Commerce today announced that South Kansas is among the first 12 communities that will be designated Manufacturing Communities as part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) initiative. The program is designed to accelerate the resurgence of manufacturing nationwide by supporting long-term economic development strategies that help communities attract and expand private investment in the manufacturing sector and increase international trade and exports.

“Kansas is blessed with outstanding universities that are a great asset to businesses in our state,” said Gov. Sam Brownback. “Wichita State has a strong history of partnering with advanced manufacturers in research and education of the workforce. Being named to Phase Two of the IMCP is a tremendous accomplishment that will enhance the university’s efforts and support our growing economy and manufacturing sector.”

“The 12 Manufacturing Communities announced today represent a diverse group of communities with the most comprehensive economic development plans to attract business investment that will increase their competitiveness,” said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker. “IMCP is a critical part of our ‘Open for Business Agenda’ to strengthen the American manufacturing sector and attract more investment to the United States. Innovative programs like IMCP encourage American communities to work together to craft strong, clear, strategic plans to attract manufacturing investment and jobs to transform themselves into globally competitive commercial hubs.”

In Wichita, the program will allow for the accelerated insertion of advanced materials and automation into the production process and will bring together large and small business, defense contractors, research entities, university researchers, students, support organizations and government agencies to accelerate innovation by investing in industrially relevant advanced manufacturing technologies.

“Our goal through the IMCP is to secure south central Kansas as a global leader in advanced materials, ensuring increased high-wage employment opportunities for Kansans,” said Wichita State University President John Bardo.

“This designation will strengthen Kansas’ vibrant manufacturing sector,” Kansas Commerce Secretary Pat George said. “Wichita State has research and educational capabilities that have long supported area manufacturers. The enhanced collaboration between the university, businesses and other organizations promises to support the continued growth of manufacturing in Wichita and Kansas.”

(more)

From the 70 communities that applied, 12 were selected by an interagency panel, based on the strength of their economic development plans, the potential for impact in their communities and the depths of their partnerships across the public and private sector to carry out their plans. The designated communities will receive coordinated support for their strategies from eleven federal agencies with \$1.3 billion available in federal economic development assistance.

These communities will also receive a dedicated federal liaison at each of these agencies that will help them navigate available federal resources. They will also be recognized on a government website, accessible to prospective private foreign and domestic investors, looking for information on communities' competitive attributes.

In order to earn the designation, communities had to demonstrate the significance of manufacturing already present in their region and develop strategies to make investments in six areas: 1) workforce and training, 2) advanced research, 3) infrastructure and site development, 4) supply chain support, 5) trade and international investment, 6) operational improvement and capital access.

For more information on IMCP, please visit: <http://www.eda.gov/challenges/imcp/index.htm>.

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