2016 Business Improvement Grant Program

In 2013, ACDC introduced the Business Improvement Grant, designed to encourage development and growth of Atchison County businesses. In its first three years, this grant program has yielded some impressive numbers:

- 95 projects throughout Atchison County, including new equipment, façade and parking improvements, infrastructure upgrades, and more
- Over $83,000 of Atchison County tax dollars reimbursed to businesses that invested in themselves
- AT LEAST $170,000 spent locally

In 2016, Business Improvement Grant BASIC will be structured differently. ACDC will still offer matching reimbursable grants, equal up to 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, up to a maximum of $1,000. ACDC could award up to $10,000 this year, depending upon project selection. One difference this year is that businesses awarded the Business Improvement Grant in either 2014 or 2015 are not eligible. These grant applications will be considered on a first come, first served basis, and will be accepted April 1-30, 2016.

In an effort to encourage and assist with larger scale projects, ACDC has also added Business Improvement Grant 2.0, which can be utilized by ANY existing business (including past recipients). This one-third/two-thirds matching grant will reimburse up to a maximum of $2,500 per project. For example, once a business has completed and funded a qualifying $6,000 project, ACDC would reimburse $2,000. If a business spends at least $7,500 on a project, they would be reimbursed $2,500. $10,000 has been budgeted for this grant as well, and given the size of the projects in this category, these grants will be more competitive and will be graded on the project’s impact. Applications for this grant will also be accepted April 1-30, 2016.

Applications and guidelines are now available on ACDC’s website (www.atchisoncounty.org) or you can contact the office (atchdev@rpt.coop; 660-744-6562) and request to have it mailed or emailed to you.

If you notice a grant sign in a business’s window or yard, please take a moment to commend them for their efforts. That sign means they have added or expanded services, improved infrastructure, enhanced the look of their building, increased their productivity, or otherwise improved their business.

In fact - anytime you see that a business has taken strides to better themselves, acknowledge it. This means they are working to serve YOU better!
About ACDC

ACDC was organized in the 1970s as a volunteer board. Since 1995, ACDC’s board and full-time staff have worked to improve the business climate in Atchison County.

Today, ACDC staff provides support to community organizations and collaborates with county, regional and state groups to better our county.

ACDC Membership...

Thank you to the nearly 90 of you who have sent in your 2016 membership dues. We are predominantly able to do what we do because we are funded by a 1/4-cent sales tax, but your membership dues enable us to stretch those dollars even further and fund projects like the scholarships we give each year (see page 3 for details). Thank you for your support!

To Recruit or Revitalize - That is the Question

Considering where we are as a county and significant nearby business closures in our region, what path do we take? Do we direct our efforts toward recruiting an outside company, or do we grow our own? ACDC does both, but with a much stronger emphasis on the latter.

Our anchor industries are growing and employing more people every day. We are focused on developing all of our existing businesses and encouraging local startups. A few points from Becky McCray’s “Recruiting business to your small town” article at Small Biz Survival help demonstrate our reasoning on this.

Revitalizing a town is less about what you can attract from outside and more about what you can grow yourself.

Experiment, try, fail, learn, try some more, help others try, connect people with resources. Those are the essential skills to revitalizing a town.

When it comes to attracting businesses from outside...
♦ If you can attract them, someone else can attract them away.
♦ If headquarters and decision-making are elsewhere, that’s where profits are going, too.
♦ If it’s part of a larger company, local service providers and subcontractors are unlikely to get much business from it.

Better to grow 10 of your own one-person businesses than to recruit a 10-employee branch.

Focusing on your existing businesses is more productive than recruiting.

(From the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City)

“Focusing on the growth of existing small businesses and entrepreneurs can be a more productive and cost-effective strategy than recruitment of new businesses.”

“Entrepreneurs are committed to their community’s long-term growth and viability. Local entrepreneurs are likely to remain in their community and be committed to philanthropy and community service.”

80% of jobs come from existing businesses.
(From Vickki Dearing, Oklahoma Department of Commerce)

“Business retention and expansion (BR&E) is important economic development work in any community. Since at least 80% of all new jobs come from existing businesses, keeping existing businesses strong and growing is key.”

ACDC Scholarships

For several years, ACDC has given a $1,000 scholarship to a graduate from each Atchison County High School. The purpose of the scholarship is to assist a worthy graduate with funding post-secondary education, particularly when that education can help a student establish a livelihood in Atchison County.

ACDC recognizes the importance of not only traditional undergraduate education, but also career and technical training. To that end, ACDC’s scholarship program offers a $1,000 award in each of the following categories, for a total of two scholarships per school:

- 2-year community college or tech school program
- 4-year undergraduate degree

Applications are available in each high school counselor’s office. Look for details on our scholarship recipients in the Summer newsletter!

Please join Atchison County students as they focus on Character Traits:

March - Cooperation: Working together toward a common goal
April - Perseverance: demonstrating determination and commitment to complete a task
May - Patience: ability to remain calm and to wait for what you want

Job Shadowing Day for Atchison County Seniors—April 19

These two concerns are most frequently mentioned when we travel the county:

1) There’s ‘nothing’ here for our kids. How can we get them to choose this place as their home?
2) So many of our skilled and essential business owners will be retiring in the next 5-10-15 years. How will we replace them?

At ACDC, we track existing businesses as best we can. Some of them are seasonal or side businesses, but we know that there are AT LEAST 300 places in this county where people are employed or self-employed. We’ve been working with our excellent high school counselors to coordinate a job shadowing day for Atchison County Seniors, where we will match interested businesses with students who want to learn more about what they do. The goal is to get these students out into their county to learn a little something about what exists in their own backyard.

By mid-March, we hope to have a list of businesses that the students will be able to visit on April 19. Thank you in advance to those of you who choose to host our amazing students. Thank you for giving them your time, attention and guidance.

Thank you most of all for showing them that Atchison County is a place where they can be successful in all aspects of their lives.

Thoughts from your ACDC Director...

Hey, did you read that stat to the left? Over THREE HUNDRED different ways people are making money in Atchison County. Did you know that? Our kids don’t! And they should. That fact should make us rethink and maybe even rephrase our message to them.

Instead of saying:
There’s nothing here for you.
How about:
Look at all the different businesses that exist here! Where do you excel? What are you interested in? Look at these local businesses that do those things! How can you start a business doing what you love?

Instead of saying:
What do you want to do?
How about:
Where do you want to live? Here? How can we make that work for you?

Instead of:
That would never work here.
How about:
Great idea. What do you need to make that happen, and how can I help?

Whether you are a parent or relative or church friend or random person in the grocery store, what you say impacts that teenager standing in front of you. It can make or break their perception of how they are valued in our county and what is possible here. Champion the idea that they can make a life in Atchison County if they want to! They CAN - and the truth is, the future of our county depends on it.

- Monica
ACDC NEWSLETTER SPRING 2016

Upcoming Events
Friday, March 25 – Good Friday
Friday, May 9 – Truman Day (state holiday)
Monday, May 30 – Memorial Day

If you know of any upcoming community events, please contact us so we can add it to the calendar on our website.

Coming Soon: Summer Fun in Atchison County
Watch our website for dates and details of events happening around the county this summer, including the Doug Summa Memorial Car Show, Tarkio Rodeo, Westboro Wildcat Days, Atchison County Fair and Parade, Fairfax Fair and Fourth of July festivities.

Community Business Lunches
ACDC will be hosting complimentary lunches for all members of the business community. These lunches will provide an opportunity for you to hear about what is happening in your community and what ACDC resources are available to you. ACDC staff and board members will be on hand to discuss how ACDC can be of assistance.

All lunches will be held on Wednesdays from Noon—1 p.m. Please watch the Fairfax Forum, Tarkio Avalanche and Atchison County Mail for details on the lunch nearest you.

March 16: Rock Port/Watson: Rock Port Country Club
Speakers: Rock Port R-II Schools, AgChoice

March 23: Tarkio/Westboro: Farmers State Bank
Speakers: Tarkio R-I Schools, Heartland Recreation Center

March 30: Fairfax: Community Room at the Firehouse
Speakers: Fairfax R-III Schools, Community Hospital-Fairfax

Contact us (660-744-6562; atchdev@rpt.coop) to reserve your seat!
We look forward to seeing you there.

Resource Roundup!
ACDC strives to be a clearinghouse of information for startups and existing businesses that are looking for assistance. Below are just three of the many resources available to you. Call, email, or stop by if we can connect you with these and many other organizations that exist to better our businesses, communities, and region.

Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation (NWMEF)
Free and confidential business coaching
Keli Morris
(816) 262-9400
facilitator@nwmef.org
Learn more at www.nwmef.org

Mo-Kan Development
Loan programs, including SBA loans and internal revolving loan funds
Jon Ecker, (816) 233-3144
Learn more at www.mo-kan.org

Missouri Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC)
Helping businesses obtain federal, state and local government contracts
Clint Dougherty
816-279-1691
doughertycb@missouri.edu
Learn more at http://moptac.net