

Overall Organization Budget: Medium Community overall budget (\$100,001 - \$499,999)

Submission Category: Community Awareness

Organization: Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau

Who worked on this Project (internal/external): Executive Director Melissa Dixon, Graphic Designer Joe McKenna, Marketing Manager Brandon Cooley internally

Integrated Components or Type: N/A

Project Description: The Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau designed new Welcome banners for Vine Street, the main corridor through the City of Hays. The designs use bright colors and bold graphics to highlight specific Hays attractions, amenities, history, and culture. The series includes seven different designs, including a "Visitor Information" design that directs visitors to the Welcome Center. The Hays CVB purchased 180 banners for 90 light poles from 27th Street to 48th Street.

- Project Goals:**
1. Welcome visitors to Hays.
 2. Increase awareness of Hays attractions, amenities, history, and culture.
 3. Increase visitor traffic to Hays attractions.
 4. Improve signage for the Hays Welcome Center.
 5. Increase visitor traffic to the Hays Welcome Center to better assist visitors.
 6. Beautify the Vine Street corridor.

Problem to Overcome: Small-scale signage at the Hays Welcome Center created some confusion as to what is housed in the building. Empty banner brackets on the Vine Street corridor light poles were unattractive. Many I-70 travelers pass through Hays on their way to another destination and are not aware of the city's attractions or history.

Background: The Hays CVB team agreed on the top seven attractions/messages to be featured on the banners. Our graphic designer used stock imagery as well as original photography, then modified the images to have the same graphic style. The "German Capital of Kansas" banner features a local couple from the area in authentic German dress. Other banners feature our museums, Historic Fort Hays, and Fort Hays State University.

Community Resources: Designs were created by Joe McKenna, a graphic design intern, through a partnership with Fort Hays State University. Student interns work at the Welcome Center from 10-20 hours/week. Ellis County Historical Society helped ensure imagery of "German Capital of Kansas" banners were authentic German dress, and true to our Volga-German heritage. Banners were installed by City of Hays Public Works department.

Results: The Vine Street corridor is now full of colorful representations of Hays attractions. Travelers are greeted as soon as they exit I-70. Visitors are now more aware of some of the things that make Hays so unique: our Sternberg Museum of Natural History, our Downtown district, our historic Fort, and our Volga-German heritage. The banners directly in front of the Hays Welcome Center direct visitors inside to get additional information on what they can see and do in Hays.

Comments: See local news coverage of the Hays Welcome banner project at <https://www.hayspost.com/2018/07/31/%f0%9f%8e%a5-new-vine-street-banners-feature-fhsu-grads-designs-local-couple/>