

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

Submission Category: Community Awareness

Organization: Downtown Hays Development Corp

Who worked on this Project (internal/external): Downtown Hays Development Corporation, Fort Hays State University, North Central Kansas Technical College, City of Hays, Commercial Builders, Inc. Internally

Integrated Components or Type:

Project Description: Ultimately, it was an unprecedented public/private partnership that created enough momentum to see this project come to fruition. The Downtown Hays Pavilion Project turned an unused, empty lot into an attractive, functional, public gathering space in Downtown Hays that features a 46-by-86-foot outdoor pavilion. It also beautified, expanded and added public restrooms to an already existing park. The added facilities are the first and only public restrooms in our downtown district.

Project Goals: (1) To plan, design and build a 46-by-86-foot outdoor pavilion in Downtown Hays to be used for free by our community.

(2) To provide the first public restroom facilities in Downtown Hays.

(3) To collaborate with as many community entities as possible.

(4) To give students, real-life, hands-on learning experience.

(5) To beautify an unused, empty lot and turn it into a gathering place.

(6) To keep Downtown Hays top of mind in the community and to make them more aware of the activities offered.

Problem to Overcome: Both the City of Hays and Downtown Hays business owners agreed there was a desperate need for a public restroom facility in our area. There are a large number of events that occur in Downtown, and if businesses were closed or restaurants didn't allow non-diners to use the facilities, our guests were out of luck. There was also a need for a public gathering place in downtown identified in a city strategic plan and an unused, unattractive area that needed to be spruced up.

Background: This project was first brainstormed in 2012 when the need for restrooms and a gathering place was identified in a city strategic plan. Originally priced at over half a million dollars, it was an impossible goal for a non-profit of our size to reach. The project died. It was reinvigorated in 2016 when DHDC was able to create a partnership with our local university, FHSU. Students planned and designed the structure. With input and assistance from a local contractor they also built it.

Community Resources: FHSU: Students in interior design planned and designed the structure

FHSU: Students in building construction built the structure saving thousands in labor

Commercial Builders, Inc: This local contractor provided project insurance, equipment, guidance and training and more

NCK-Tech: Students from this college installed the electrical wiring and lighting for the structure

City of Hays: Boring water lines, installing electric lines, landscaping, in-kind labor and more

Results: Ultimately, it was an unprecedented public/private partnership that resulted in an open-air, 46-by-86-foot outdoor pavilion and public restrooms in Downtown Hays. The structure was gifted by DHDC (who funded the majority of the project) to the City of Hays and can now be reserved for free by anyone in our community for any event. Approximately 80 students were involved in the project, which spanned two semesters as work continued for more than a year.

Web Link: <https://www.hayspost.com/2017/05/25/%F0%9F%8E%A5-downtown-pavilion-groundbreaking-brings-vision-to-reality/>

<https://www.hayspost.com/2018/03/26/dhdc-downtown-pavilion-has-been-a-neat-project/>

<https://www.hdnews.net/news/20180428/crowds-gather-to-celebrate-downtown-pavilion>

<https://www.hayspost.com/2018/04/28/collaboration-key-in-downtown-hays-pavilion-project/>

Additional:

Comments: This project would not have been possible without generous donations from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation and Robert E. and Patricia Schmidt Foundation.