

Marketing Budget: Small Community marketing budget (\$19,999 and under)

Submission Category: Event

Organization: Downtown Hays Development Corp

Who worked on this Project (internal/external): Downtown Hays Development Corporation Internally

Integrated Components or Type: Virtual Welcome for Students

Project Description: March to Main normally fills Downtown with Fort Hays State University, NCK-Tech, and Hays Academy of Hair Design students and Hays community members. Since gatherings are not suggested at this time, we're making the experience VIRTUAL! Meet prominent community members, check out downtown, and don't worry... we didn't forget about the PRIZES! TVs, laptops, headphones, Apple products, and amazing swag from our downtown businesses.

Summary: COVID-19 forced Downtown Hays Development Corporation to turn an annual event that gathers and welcomes hundreds of college students into a virtual event. By partnering with the Hays Convention and Visitor's Bureau, students from all three higher education institutions are invited to participate.

Web Link: Video Link: <https://www.facebook.com/783675105076827/videos/304444997540898>

Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/217357876358090/>

Additional:

Comments: March to Main is hosted by Downtown Hays Development Corporation, a small 501c3 organization. We partner with the Hays Convention & Visitors Bureau, Fort Hays State University, North Central Kansas Technical College, and Hays Academy of Hair Design to make it a success. The goal of this event is to welcome students back home to Hays.

Within the first 24 hours of the video airing we had over 600 emails from excited students trying to win prizes. After the August 28th deadline, DHDC will go live on our facebook page to give away all of the prizes to qualifying entries. More than a dozen downtown businesses donated prizes. Combined with prizes purchased with event sponsorship money, over \$3,000 in prizes will be given away.

The video was shot and edited by Brandon Cooley who is a staff member of the Hays Convention and Visitor's Bureau. The video was their contribution to the event instead of a monetary sponsorship that they have done in the past. They utilized both 4K cameras and a drone for the footage.

The video included welcome messages from each of the school's presidents/owners, city officials including the mayor and commissioners, our police and fire chiefs, and other prominent city contacts.

Prior to the video premier on August 14th, DHDC and CVB staff stuffed approximately 1,400 welcome bags for each new student on all three campuses. The bags included cloth face masks, discounts to downtown businesses, fun swag, community information, and a postcard promoting this virtual event.