

## **REAP partnership awarded HUD grant for sustainable development plan**

The Regional Economic Area Partnership of South Central Kansas (REAP), in partnership with 10 local governments and 20 other partners, has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create a regional plan for sustainable growth.

With this grant, REAP will establish a planning and citizen engagement process to develop long-term vision and goals that reflect its unique regional values and identity.

The grant will support coordinated efforts to foster long-term job creation and adequate infrastructure so citizens have affordable access to employment and services. Focusing on housing, workforce, water and air quality, economic development, transportation and health issues will provide a framework to ensure the region's economic competitiveness.

"While our independent spirit has made our region strong, today's global economy only increases our necessity to work together toward common goals," said REAP chairwoman Kristey Williams, city of Augusta mayor. "With this planning opportunity, we will be able to bring everyone to the table to make our region more economically competitive."

The REAP-led consortium includes the cities of Wichita, El Dorado, Newton, Hutchinson and Wellington; counties of Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, Reno and Sumner; Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Wichita State University's Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs and the Center for Community Support and Research; Visioneering Wichita; Workforce Alliance and Kansas Workforce One; Kansas Small Business Development Center; Wichita Downtown Development Corp.; Kansas Health Foundation; United Way; Independent Living Resource Center; Ponder: Connect Marketing; University of Kansas School of Medicine Wichita campus; and Wichita Independent Neighborhoods Inc.

Partnership support comes from the Urban League of Kansas; Wichita Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Healthy Reno County Coalition; Kansas Department of Transportation; Our Local Foods; Sumner County Economic Development Commission; and the Cowley County Housing Authority.

The consortium, with administrative offices at the Hugo Wall School, competed with grant applicants from 50 states.

REAP is a council of local governments comprised of 36 cities and counties in South Central Kansas. These local governments have voluntarily joined together to guide state and national actions that affect economic development in the region and to adopt joint actions among member governments that enhance the regional economy.

For more information, contact Joe Yager, REAP CEO, at (316) 978-6542, [joe.yager@wichita.edu](mailto:joe.yager@wichita.edu) or go to [www.reap-ks.org](http://www.reap-ks.org).