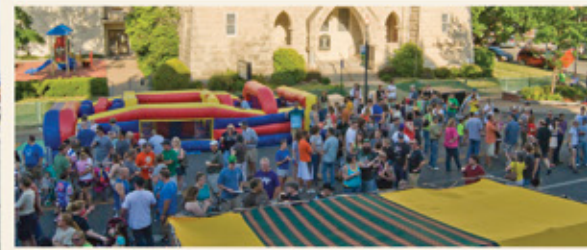




HISTORIC DOWNTOWN EMPORIA KANSAS BUSINESS INVESTMENT GUIDE



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Who is Emporia Main Street?

Emporia Main Street is an economic and community development philosophy within the City of Emporia. Using a proven four point approach adopted by the National Main Street Center, we create a dense and sustainable community environment where businesses, properties, developments and people can thrive. Our promotions bring thousands of individuals from throughout the nation and beyond into Emporia, exposing our area businesses to potential customers. Emporia Main Street Design work brings traffic beyond traditional vehicles with pedestrian walkways and a bike friendly atmosphere while encouraging aesthetics that promote community pride and profitable properties. Through Business Enhancement research and implementation activities, Emporia Main Street conducts market research necessary to grow our existing businesses and promote entrepreneurship. With a proven record of consulting, incentives, exposure, networking, and unique tools, we are dedicated to working with you so that your business succeeds.

Throughout our twenty-two year history, Emporia Main Street has facilitated over sixty million dollars worth of reinvestment in our community core. Each year we aid entrepreneurs, franchises, and corporate businesses in placement and expansion activities consistent with our downtown master plan. This long range thinking results in long term success for our core business members and our property vacancy rate is well below the national average. Using innovative zero interest loan programs, tax credits, and other financial vehicles, we work with both start ups and business expansions to ensure they have the facilities and tools they need to thrive.

Emporia Main Street, accredited by the National Main Street organization, is the first Main Street program in Kansas honored as a winner of The Great American Main Street Award, an accolade reserved for only a select few economic development agencies throughout the nation. Each year, Emporia Main Street is cited by the Kansas Department of Commerce as an elite economic development program because of our creative work in many different areas. National Publications like *Main Street Now*, *The Downtown Promotion Reporter*, and *The National Tax Credit Advisor* have recognized Emporia Main Street for its efforts in building a stronger economy for our local businesses and developers. Regional print media, television stations, radio and internet media consistently report Emporia Main Street activities as we accomplish our goal of building a better community.

One of our organizational goals is to create a unique downtown urban environment, full of complementary shopping, dining, entertainment, and service options. While we have a good selection of businesses now, every community has market gaps. We have identified your business as a category need. Simply put: we want you! Please keep reading, and we think you will agree that Emporia Main Street offers a tremendous opportunity for you.



reasons

TO DO BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN EMPORIA

UNTAPPED MARKET POTENTIAL ■

Explore our demographics to find the market gaps YOU can harness.

REASON
1

A THRIVING DOWNTOWN WITH A CLEAR VISION ■

Take a look at current & planned projects.

REASON
2

A WEALTH OF BUSINESS INCENTIVES ■

Loans, tax credits and more make Emporia the business friendly choice.

REASON
3

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION ■

Find the perfect spot in a walkable, centrally located city.

REASON
4

DOWNTOWN EVENTS ■

Emporia Main Street will draw crowds to your door!

REASON
5

EDUCATED WORKFORCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS ■

Our university and technical college create employees with the skill sets you need.

REASON
6

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED NOW ■

Need advice? A realtor? A code official? Emporia Main Street will put you in touch with the right person.

REASON
7

HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE ■

Don't worry - You'll fit right in.

REASON
8

Every business start-up or expansion is cash intensive. Emporia has the mechanisms in place to facilitate your business formation and development.

Zero Interest Business Loans

Emporia Main Street has access to three separate zero interest loan programs for businesses: Incentives Without Walls, The Trusler Loan Program and Network Kansas. These matching loan programs are designed to help businesses start up and expand in certain areas of the community. Conditions apply to each loan program, so contact Emporia Main Street for details.

Tax Credits

Historic Tax Credits, Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits and other competitive and noncompetitive grant programs are available for qualifying businesses and development projects.

Loan Guarantees

The local Small Business Development Center, USDA, and Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship have access to loan guarantee programs that help mitigate risk for traditional lenders aiding in business and development projects.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIFs use future gains in taxes to finance current improvements to a district or property. The City of Emporia currently has a TIF policy in place for large scale developments.

Transportation Development District (TDD)

A Transportation Development District (TDD) may be created to act as the entity responsible for developing, improving, maintaining, or operating one or more “projects” relative to the transportation needs of the area in which the District is located. For large scale developments that have a transportation component, a TDD may aid in your efforts.

Community Improvement District (CID)

CIDs are organized for the purpose of financing a wide range of public-use facilities and establishing and managing policies and public services relative to the needs of a defined district. For large scale developments, CIDs can aid in the development of infrastructure, maintenance and amenities within the area through sales tax or property tax assessments within the district.

Local business Cooper's Carts took advantage of a **0% interest loan** for building renovations. Cooper's Carts received a design award for their efforts in revitalizing South Commercial Street.



Cooper's Carts



High Gear

Local business High Gear utilized REAP tax credits to fund electrical system upgrades.

HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

People have referred to Emporia as a “really big, small town.” Emporia retains its hometown charm while offering big city amenities including theatre, arts, concerts, night life, museums, festivals, live music, family activities, sports, parks, retail, services and a variety of restaurants.

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SOCIAL

Emporia is an easy place to meet people and make new connections. Our many community events, clubs, churches, watering holes and gathering spots provide the chance to make friends and develop a positive social circle quickly and easily. Whether you are going on a community bike ride, stopping by an art opening, attending a church social, joining a library book discussion, or showing up at a service club function, Emporia is an ideal place to relax and be yourself amongst new friends.

Organizations like Emporia Main Street constantly conduct community outreach activities to introduce people to businesses and other individuals within the community. “How do I meet people?” quickly becomes “how am I going to participate in all these activities?” as people get acclimated to Emporia. Have an interest? Need some help getting involved? Emporia Main Street understands that it is important for new businesses to mingle and make introductions, and we are here to help.

INCLUSIVENESS

Emporia welcomes newcomers with open arms. Our visitors, foreign exchange students, and new residents give glowing reviews of Emporia’s hospitality. We embrace our diverse mix of cultures and backgrounds. New residents and students bring fresh ideas and a constant flow of energy to our city that accounts for many of our unique traditions, businesses and activities.

AESTHETICS

One our primary goals is to create an attractive space for our citizens and their guests to gather. We have made tremendous progress in this area, and continuously work to improve our downtown aesthetics. Our volunteers maintain beautiful gardens, help with clean-ups, and create a festive atmosphere during the holidays. Emporia Main Street has a plan in place to foster appropriate downtown development in the future as our community grows.

Top 25 Things To Do RECOMMENDED BY LOCALS

- The David Traylor Zoo
- The dog park
- Roller derby
- Thursday night bike rides
- After work cocktails at Town Royal
- The Gallery at Emporia Arts Center
- Movies at the Granada Theatre
- Outdoor summer concerts
- Disc golf at Jones Park
- Breakfast at Commercial Street Diner
- Halloween haunted tour
- William Allen White House
- Antiquing
- Natural History Museum at ESU
- Art Gallery at ESU
- Studio 11
- Community classes at Flint Hills Technical College
- Dirty Kanza 200
- Go karts at the Family Fun Center
- Midnight Madness
- Carriage rides at Christmas
- Farmer’s market
- ESU Football
- Bar hop downtown
- Fishing at the stone bridge
- Cyber bowling
- Ride the trails at Camp Alexander
- ZOIKS! Comedy shows at ESU



Community Bike Ride



Emporia Arts Center Kids Activity