

## 2003 Annual Report Executive Summary

### Wichita County Enterprise Community

The Wichita County Enterprise Community consists of one census tract that encompasses all of Wichita County, Kansas. The 2001 Census estimates show that Wichita County experienced a slight increase in population of .3% to 2,538. Between census estimates, the EC gauges population fluctuation through school enrollment numbers. For the 2003-2004 school year, the enrollment is 464 students, up five students from the 2001-2002 school year.

To date the EC has leveraged a total of \$5,458,812.00 in federal, state, local and private funds and \$409,817.00 in in-kind contributions to \$667,963.00 in EZ/EC funds expended, for a 8.79:1 ratio. The EC has 41 Benchmarks that fall within one of the seven categories that make up the Wichita County EC Strategic Plan. Those categories are Business Development; Housing; Education; Health Care; Natural Resources; Infrastructure; and Cultural Arts, Recreation and Tourism. Of the 41 active benchmarks in the EC program, nineteen have been completed. Four benchmarks have been deemed inactive.

The Wichita County Enterprise Community spent much of 2003 evaluating what impact they have had in the first four years and what direction they needed to go to achieve the results they desired. That evaluation led the EC to determine that focusing on business and entrepreneurial development would help them achieve the goal of a self-sustaining community.

Therefore, the EC began to focus on a group of benchmarks that they deemed valuable to their goals:

- **Benchmark 1** – the continued development of their Revolving Loan Fund, which to date has helped eight start-up businesses.
- **Benchmark 34** – the development of a business incubator and educational training facility to assist business start ups and provide business education to assist in their long-term success
- **Benchmark 49** – youth and adult entrepreneurial education
- **Benchmark 46** – free and confidential business coaching through Enterprise Facilitation
- **Benchmark 47** – capturing and building community wealth through the Wichita County Community Foundation

The EC made progress in the area of business development in 2003. They made three new loans from their revolving loan fund which helped three new business start-ups that created at least six new jobs. The EC also purchased two vacant buildings and began work on developing a business incubator and training facility which will be housed in the buildings. Their staff also participated in an entrepreneurial training developed by the Kaufmann Foundation called Entrepreneurial Effect, which helped them identify future entrepreneurial needs and goals.

The EC continued their partnership with five surrounding counties and the State of Kansas as one of five pilot Enterprise Facilitation projects. Enterprise Facilitation is a grassroots entrepreneurial assistance method that uses local citizens and sound business practices to assist people in developing small entrepreneurial businesses, allowing communities to grow one small business at a time.

The EC learned during their informal evaluation process that there were three areas of immediate educational needs for existing businesses. To meet those needs, the EC sponsored educational trainings in Credit and Collections, QuickBooks, and Marketing. Through those trainings, the EC educated approximately 70 business owners/managers in the area.

The EC also continued their efforts to establish and build the Wichita County Community Foundation, Inc. In 2003, the foundation held their community kick-off event with a benefit golf tournament and a community banquet and auction on June 11. The events raised approximately \$30,000 for the foundation's endowment. The foundation also partnered with six community entities and organizations that affiliated with the foundation and established endowment funds through the foundation. In the first year of existence, the foundation and its affiliates built an endowment pool of \$100,000.

Although the EC has identified a more focused initiative in the area of entrepreneurial development, they have not ignored outside opportunities. In January of 2003, Sunflower Electric Power Corp and Renewable Energy Systems (RES) North America announced plans to build a 100 megawatt wind farm in Wichita County. This was the culmination of two and a half years of recruitment efforts with RES. The project has yet to break ground because of the uncertainty of future federal tax incentives, but the EC hopes to see the \$100 million project completed in 2004.

The EC also worked on several projects that began in 2002. The EC continued its commercial and residential demolition project, removing another 14 structures in 2003, for a total of 23 structures. They also completed their housing preservation project, which rehabilitated a total of eight low-income homes.