**BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS**

**BMO Harris Bank awards $458,000 to Crawford County Projects**

In 1994, Pittsburg citizens William B. Pritchett and Athlyn C. Pritchett worked together to form what would become The Pritchett Trust. This trust was developed in order to better Crawford County and benefit its inhabitants by providing financial grants to local schools, service organizations, and more. In the past twenty years since being introduced, the trust has donated over $8.8 million to local organizations.

This year, grants awarded have been used to replace the roof of the Crawford County Historical Museum, as well as the Safehouse Crisis Center in order to renovate their kitchens. With a grant of $50,000, the City of Pittsburg plans to link the Pittsburg State University Trail with the Pitsco Sunflower Trail in order to increase connectivity throughout Pittsburg.

*Chance Hoener, The Morning Sun, September 7th, 2017*

**PSU Kelce College of Business receives $300k donation courtesy of Girard National Bank**

Formed in 1977, and now being depicted as among the world’s top 5 percent of business colleges, Kelce College of Business has begun preparing for a historic overhaul.

With plans for an extensive renovation of the building, Kelce has begun accepting donations and working to raise money to gather the estimated $18 million required. This September of 2017 in Russ Hall located on PSU’s campus, a myriad of banking and school officials gathered for Girard National Bank’s presentation of $300k to aid the project.

CEO of Girard National Bank, Mark Shifferdecker, recalls hearing of the planned Kelce Renovations, and claims they were “immediately intrigued and excited.” Shifferdeck views this renovation as a method to ward off “brain drain” by keeping PSU graduates in the area, to work and open new businesses.

*Patrick Richardson, The Morning Sun, September 21st, 2017*

**Creighton University’s Mid-America Economic Survey Suggests Substantial Growth**

Overseen by Creighton University, business supply managers located in nine Midwest and Plains states, are surveyed regarding business operations monthly.

In August, The Mid-America Business Conditions Index increased to 57.5, from 56.1 in July. Developers of the survey suggest that a score above 50, references business operations showing growth in that factor. Another factor, The Business Confidence Index, reporting at 62.3 in June, 60.2 in July, and now following that with an increase to 62.5 in August, the region’s strong profit growth, low interest rates, and international sales suggest a boosted economic outlook among the region’s business supply managers.

*The Associated Press, The Morning Sun, September 5th, 2017*

**Mid City Renaissance project ready to go in Pittsburg**

After 16 months of planning, the city of Pittsburg has a final version of its proposed Mid City Renaissance Project.

The Mid City Renaissance project is a revitalization plan for about 380 acres in the heart of Pittsburg. It will redevelop the land occupied by the old, unused Dickey Clay buildings, and the surrounding area between Joplin and Rouse.

City officials say Pittsburg residents should have a lot of pride in this proposal, because of the large amount of input they had in it. They helped come up with ideas like a solar field, with the ability to provide clean energy to up to 1000 Pittsburg homes. New residential areas, a recreation facility, parks and baseball fields, and a connecting trail system, all are part of the proposal.

"One of the main things the public was looking for in this redevelopment was connecting the community. It's central to our city and it will be a way for the community to come together," says Byers.

Once the City Commission has signed off on the final version of the Mid City Renaissance Project, Pittsburg will be able to apply for a grant from the EPA and other agencies, to make the project a reality.

*Mike Mahoney, KOAM-TV, May 25th, 2017*

**Downtown Pittsburg Hosts 27th Annual Little Balkans Day**

Centered in the lively downtown area of Pittsburg, Kansas, the 27th annual Little Balkans Day was a success for officials and attendees alike.

With temperatures over 100 degrees, the Little Balkans Day board members report attendance in the thousands, believing to have set a new record for attendance. With events ranging from a vintage fashion show to a spaghetti eating contest, the activities proved to attract a record-breaking crowd. Alongside these, the annual Little Balkans Chili Contest attracted many chili-passionate contenders, as well as those taking part to raise money for the contest’s charity, Habitat for Humanity.

Little Balkans Day 2017 provided an lively environment for the downtown area of Pittsburg, and will continue to do so for years to come.

*William Klusener, The Morning Sun, September 4th, 2017*

**Block22 underway**

The city of Pittsburg and Pittsburg State University have engaged in a project set to revitalize the historic downtown corner of 4th Street and Broadway Avenue – an intersection known for its landmark existence as the city’s original economic hub. Deemed the Block22 project, the redevelopment project involves renovating four mostly-empty historic buildings – the Commerce Building, vacant former National Bank building, and two other neighboring historic dwellings – to give them a new lease on life as mixed-use learning, housing, commerce space and business incubator facilities

On April 25, the city, PSU and representatives from the Vecino Group held a groundbreaking to celebrate the project’s official inception. “The ceremonial groundbreaking is an exciting milestone as we officially begin construction of the Block22 development,” Shawn Naccarato, executive director of PSU’s Center for Business and Innovation Development, told Joplin Regional Business Journal.

The estimated total cost of Block22 is $18 million. The city of Pittsburg is investing $1.5 million and PSU $1 million. The university is planning to conduct a fundraiser to cover its promised portion of the project costs. Block22 is scheduled to open in August 2018.

*Stacey Lindsay, Joplin Regional Business Journal, May 8, 2017*