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PRESS ADVISORY

DATE: April 1, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REAP Announces Kansas Affordable Airfares Program Request for Proposals for Fiscal Year 2010

The Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) today announced the release of a request for proposals for the Kansas Affordable Airfares Program for fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010).

"Affordable airfares represent an issue of concern to all Kansans, particularly those involved in economic development," stated REAP chairman, Mayor John Waltner of Hesston. "By following the guidelines provided by the State of Kansas, REAP will ensure that Kansas businesses can compete globally, families can enjoy the opportunity for affordable leisure travel, and the State can benefit from increased tourism through available, competitive, and affordable air travel to all Kansans."

Under the authority of House Substitute for Senate Bill 475 and the omnibus appropriation bill, Senate Bill 2968, both enacted in the 2006 session of the Kansas Legislature, REAP is assigned authority for administering the Kansas Affordable Airfares Program.

REAP established a selection process and selection criteria for administering the Program that include more air flight options, more competition for air travel, and affordable air fares for Kansas. In making awards, REAP will give highest priority to maintaining affordable airfares to eastern and western U.S. destinations. Priority will also be given to proposals that impact a majority of Kansans.

Proposals will be accepted through June 19, 2009, and the selection of a successful proposal(s) will be July 13, 2009.

"In administering the Kansas Affordable Airfares Program, REAP wants to assure that the program is carried out in line with the intentions of the Kansas Legislature" said Joe Yager, REAP Chief Executive Officer.

This is the fourth year of awarding funds. The previous three grants were awarded to Sedgwick County to enhance a program that saved Kansans \$99 million dollars in 2008 alone, serves over 3/4 of the State and lessens the need for Kansans to leave the State when traveling. The grant was matched by Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita. The program included maintaining discount carrier services to the Eastern and Western destinations.

In addition, the direct investment of the \$7 million funding resulted in a direct return on investment to the program funders of 3.6 to 1, with the following benefit-to-cost ratio as calculated by the Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR) at Wichita State University:

- State of Kansas received \$5.25 for every \$1 invested
- City of Wichita received \$1.35 for every \$1 invested
- Sedgwick County received \$1.86 for every \$1 invested
- For the three entities combined, they received \$3.64 for every \$1 invested.

REAP is a council of local governments comprised of thirty-six 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. To learn more about REAP, go to www.reap-ks.org or contact Joe Yager at 316-978-6542 (joe.yager@wichita.edu).