



## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**South Central Kansas awarded \$5 million in federal workforce development funding**  
*WIRED grant will help grow aviation, healthcare, advanced materials and polymers industries*

A 10-county region of South Central Kansas has been named a Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) region and awarded \$5 million in federal workforce development funding over three years, Kansas officials announced today.

The funding comes from the U.S. Department of Labor and will be used to accelerate economic growth in South Central Kansas by fostering innovation and workforce development critical to the aircraft and healthcare industries. The South Central Kansas WIRED project will also foster growth in the areas of advanced materials and polymers, which are becoming increasingly critical to the aviation and healthcare industries.

“We are excited to have been awarded this workforce development funding through the WIRED program,” said David Kerr, Kansas Department of Commerce Secretary. “South Central Kansas is home to the world’s premier aviation manufacturing cluster and currently has the highest concentration of aircraft and aircraft parts manufacturing skills in the nation. This WIRED grant will allow the region to further develop its aviation industry and remain an industry leader for years to come.”

South Central Kansas’ application was submitted to the federal Department of Labor by the Kansas Department of Commerce in April 2007. The region was one of 13 areas across the nation awarded WIRED funding. All regions received the same \$5 million, three-year package.

“A successful regional economic development plan depends on the skills and talents of the workforce,” said Keith Lawing, Executive Director of the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas. “This WIRED grant will help South Central Kansas develop its workforce and more closely link the skills of its workers with those needed by the aviation, healthcare and advanced materials industries.”

Today’s announcement by the U.S. Department of Labor marks the third round of WIRED grants since the program was created in 2005. In February 2006, 13 competitively selected regions were awarded a total of \$195 million to transform their economies. In January 2007, 13 additional regions, which also were among the best nationally, were presented awards to reposition their regional economies.

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