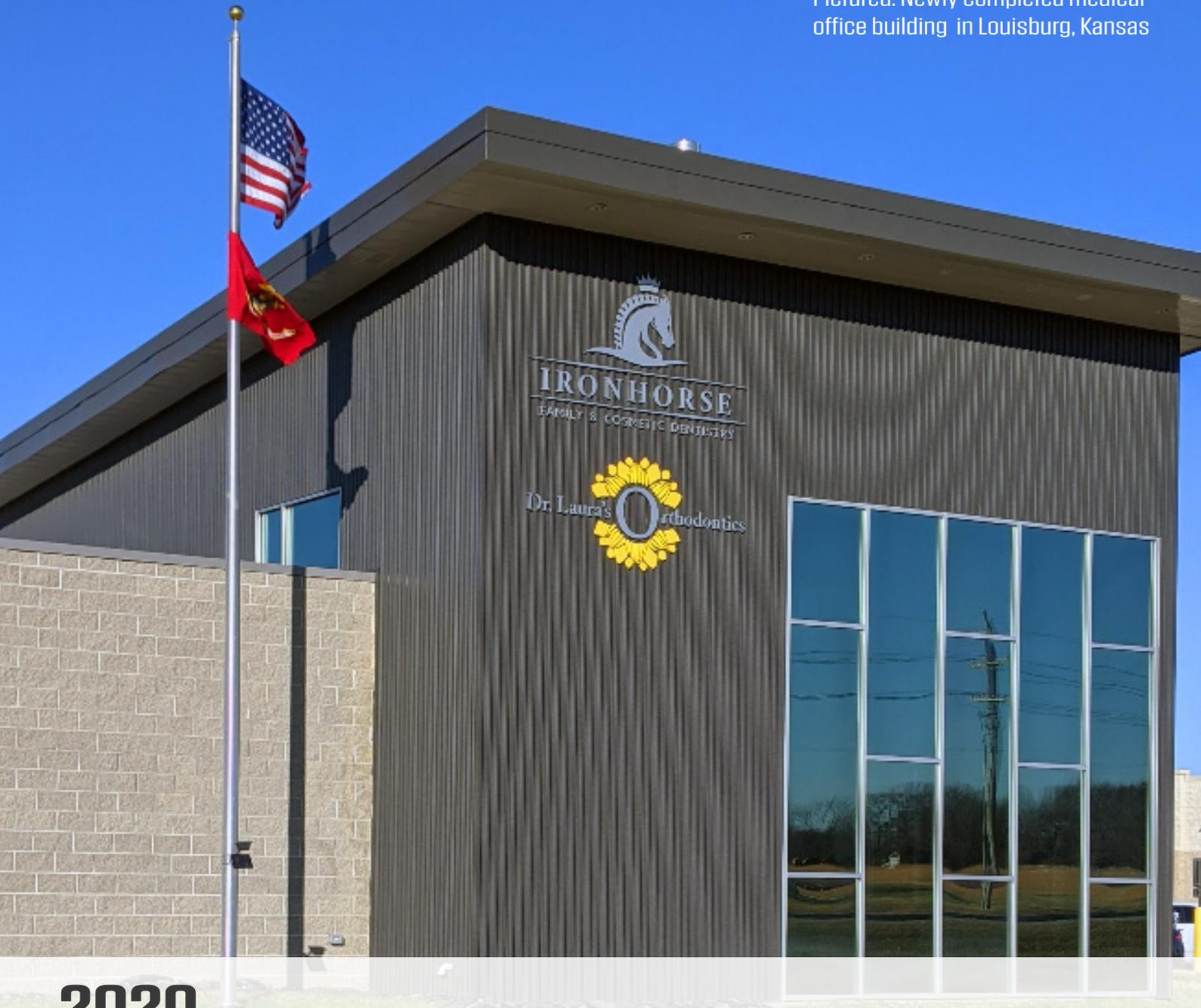


Pictured: Newly completed medical office building in Louisburg, Kansas

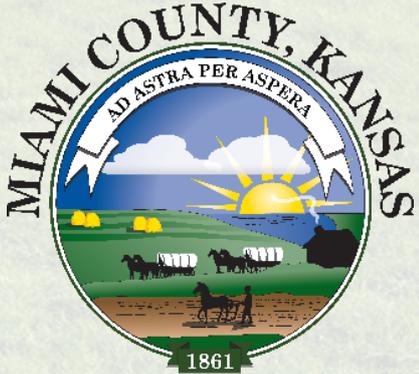


**2020**

# PROGRESS REPORT

Miami County showed its resilience more than ever during 2020. Businesses and communities did more than simply survive, they thrived. Their united efforts met the challenges created by the year's unprecedented events. Together, Miami County focused on improving by innovating in the moment and for the future.

Collaborating with partners, Miami County's Economic Development Department anticipated and responded to community needs by assisting with the distribution of CARES funds, identifying private grant funds, disbursing personal protective equipment and regularly communicating on evolving issues.



# POSITIONED FOR **SUCCESS**

During 2019, more than 100 business owners and community leaders dedicated time to help Miami County craft an economic development strategic plan. That plan was formally accepted by the county and its communities during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the curveballs 2020 threw, the strategic plan positioned the region with a sharp focus on vision alignment, talent pipeline optimization, community elements, target industries and unified communications. The investments made during 2019 prepared Miami County for the challenges 2020 presented on a regional level and distinguished Miami County from the pack.

To maintain accountability, quarterly updates are released detailing progress on the more than 70 action steps. Those are accessible at [www.miamicountyks.org/ecodevstratplan](http://www.miamicountyks.org/ecodevstratplan).

## TAKING THE **PULSE**

As part of the strategic planning and communication efforts, Miami County engaged Ady Advantage to conduct “Pulse Surveys” with community and business leaders. These real-time, local indicators assisted the county as decisions were made and activities planned. From the engagement and responses provided, we know Miami County is ready to work and ready for the future.

From the Pulse Surveys, we saw the strength of the industries and overall economy in Miami County. Even in uncertain times, more than **25% of businesses in Miami County anticipate expanding** services or products within the next year, and almost 10% expect to expand their footprint.



**Acquiring resources allowed us to focus more on our employees and their needs which has helped the culture. In return it has brought the team together.**

**- Pulse Survey Respondent**



In further good news, fewer than 3% reported an expected downsize in location and just 6.5% considered reducing products or services.

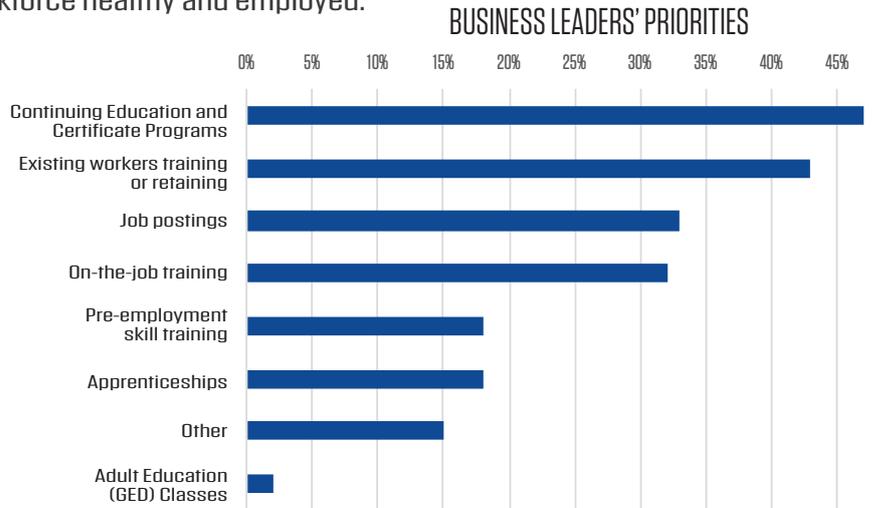
Not only are existing businesses stable or ready for expansion, but new businesses are also opening. As an E-Community, entrepreneurship is embraced as a core economic development strategy in Miami County. In December 2020, the first loan was finalized via the E-Community program. The business is now open in Paola.

# PEOPLE FIRST

Miami County businesses are committed to their team members. The first Pulse Survey showed business leaders' number one priority was keeping their workforce healthy and employed.

The survey also indicated that employers ranked retaining and retraining their existing workforce as a top concern.

This theme continued in the fourth Pulse Survey with 45% indicating increased efforts to provide a skilled workforce would improve the business climate in the county.



# 60%

of business leaders indicated in the second Pulse Survey that access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) would be most beneficial to their company. This and other information shared in the survey process led Miami County to direct CARES funding specifically to those areas where business leaders indicated the greatest need.

# \$ 152,000

KansasWorks "Earn & Learn" programs continued investing in the county workforce in 2020; apprenticeships, on-the-job training, supportive services, training services. Miami County is committed to this partnership which provides incredible resources to employers.



## EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Miami County has people ready to work. Unemployment rates initially rose with the pandemic but have since tapered back toward more historical levels. Nevertheless, the department's website offers guidance for both workers and employers highlighting resources that help them access incentives and programs offered by partners, such as KansasWorks and the Kansas Department of Commerce.



## CONNECTING ONLINE

We continue to find success connecting job seekers and employers online. More than 400 members were added to the Miami County Jobs Facebook group. During 2020, the more than 3,500 members had access to more than 700 job listings posted within the group.

**Miami County Economic Development has been an important portal to information for many of my clients.**

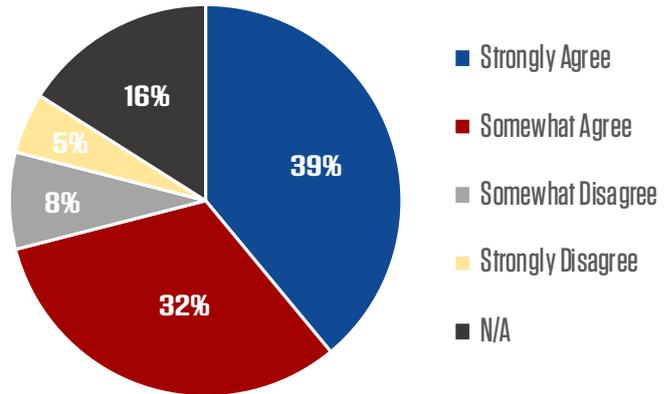
- Pulse Survey Respondent

## OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION

Our area of expertise

The outreach and/or services provided by Miami County over the past year have been beneficial to my company and have helped to provide greater certainty in my business operations.

- Pulse Survey Question



[Miami County]

**helped with navigating all the COVID Funding out there and bringing us together as a community to decide it.**

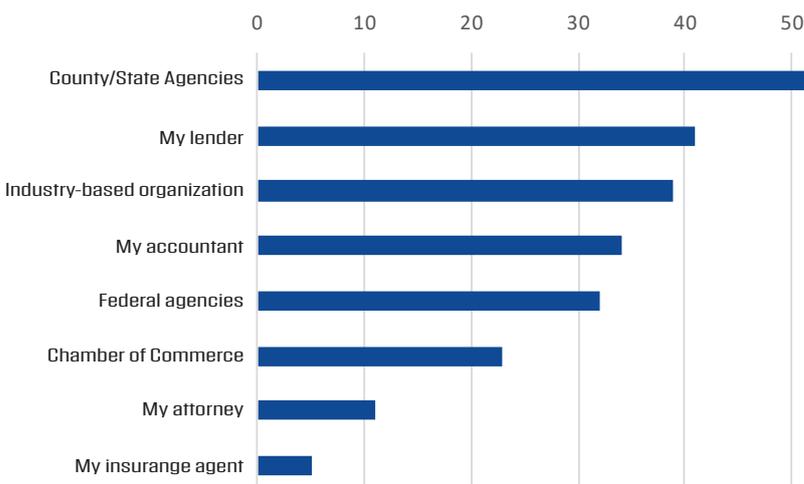
- Pulse Survey Respondent



The Miami County Economic Development Facebook page doubled visits in 2020. The ThinkMiamiCounty.com web site also nearly doubled in visits during 2020. That growth was fueled by the COVID-19 business resource page featuring staff-curated links and content.

When the region's businesses sought information and needed to overcome the challenges 2020 laid at their feet, they found it through Miami County's digital platforms.

When the pandemic hit, Miami County wanted business owners to know they could still reach out for assistance. By shifting from in-person visits to the Pulse Surveys delivered via email, the county was able to continue supporting businesses via their preferred method of communication. Relationships built by the county and local chambers of commerce allowed information to be shared broadly and during critical times.



**What resources provided you with the most helpful guidance during the past three months?**

- Pulse Survey Question

## WHY MIAMI COUNTY?

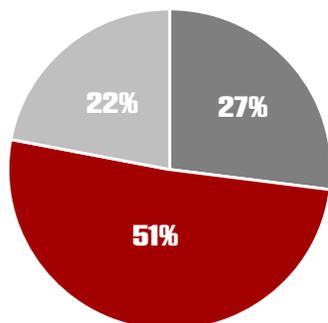
It is clear that existing businesses have strong ties to the region. In the fourth Pulse Survey, when employers were asked why they chose to locate in Miami County, half of the respondents indicated that a Miami County community is the business owner's hometown, and one-third chose the location due to its central location. Other common responses were that the company filled a product or service need; and the county provided location options at an affordable price. Miami County business leaders are invested in making the region thrive. Miami County is their home. The most common words that came up in this Pulse Survey response are represented below.



### PROJECT LEADS

Companies that are looking to relocate or expand in the area largely come directly from local contacts such as real estate agents, city leaders and bankers.

The department also works to leverage the broader reach offered by the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas City Area Development Council. Collaborating with these partners ensures Miami County is not only on the radar of companies and site selectors for its own merit, but also as part of a larger laborshed.



■ KDOC ■ Miami County ■ KCADC



# ABOUT US

The Miami County Department of Economic Development

- Assists in starting and growing businesses
- Acts as an intermediary to resource providers
- Prepares and distributes reports and research data on demographics, businesses, employment, market profiles, census data, workforce characteristics and available sites/buildings
- Provides technical assistance in areas such as marketing and business management



The department relies on strong partnerships with the chambers of commerce in Louisburg, Osawatomie, Paola and Spring Hill to deliver services and programs. Coordination with each of the county's five cities, Fontana, Louisburg, Osawatomie, Paola and Spring Hill, allow business owners to work with a team.

## MIAMI COUNTY HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Successful implementation of the county's economic development strategic plan involves a broad base of partnerships at the local, regional and state level. Those efforts are led by the Miami County Commissioners and involve staff members from each county department.



Responsibility for tracking the plan's implementation falls to Miami County Director of Economic Development Janet McRae. She was recently appointed to the Federal Home Loan Bank System's Affordable Housing Advisory Council. The 16-member board provides direction to the FHLB regarding investments and grant programs offered to spur economic development.

McRae was also recently appointed by the Governor to the state's Council on Travel and Tourism. The Council advises on the development of new tourist attractions in Kansas and expansion of existing tourist attractions positioning Miami County at the table with 16 other members from throughout the state.

She also serves as the vice president of her statewide professional development organization and represents Miami County on several metro-area planning groups.

### **Janet McRae, Director**

Miami County, Kansas Economic Development Department

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[www.ThinkMiamiCounty.com](http://www.ThinkMiamiCounty.com)