

1000 S.W. Jackson St., Suite 100  
Topeka, KS 66612-1354  
[www.kansascommerce.com](http://www.kansascommerce.com)

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Contact: Joe Monaco (785) 296-3760

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Kansas Department of Commerce awards \$800,000 in Workforce Solutions Funds to Hutchinson Community College**

*Funding to help HCC prepare students for careers in healthcare, bioscience, advanced manufacturing*

The Kansas Department of Commerce has awarded \$800,000 in Workforce Solutions Funds to Hutchinson Community College (HCC) to help the institution expand its science, technology, engineering and mathematics curriculum to better prepare students for careers in healthcare, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing.

The award will help HCC enlarge and retrofit its existing science building into a state-of-the-art Physical and Biotechnology Science Center. The renovated center will house lecture and lab facilities for foundational coursework in nursing and allied health, as well as physical, biological and biotechnical sciences. The award will also allow HCC to increase enrollment in science-related field by 150-200 students per year, increase credit hours in science disciplines and certify each graduate with a Kansas WorkReady! Certificate, a portable certificate issued by the State of Kansas.

The award is a direct response to the state's need for skilled workers in the so-called "critical" industries of healthcare, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing. These industries include sectors such as aviation manufacturing, polymers and advanced materials, pharmaceuticals and alternative energy.

"Today's marketplace demands our postsecondary education opportunities match the needs of growing industries such as nursing, manufacturing and the biosciences," said Governor Kathleen Sebelius. "Hutchinson Community College is preparing students to compete in the innovation economy and strengthening the Kansas workforce."

HCC has leveraged approximately \$6 million to match the Workforce Solution Fund grant. Support for the project, its programs and training has been expressed by Hutchinson Hospital, Chemstar, Kansas Ethanol and Hospira.

"There's no question that Kansas' economy will continue to hinge on our healthcare, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing industries," said Department of Commerce Secretary David Kerr. "This award will help Hutchinson Community College increase its capacity to prepare students for careers in these critical industries. We appreciate the efforts of HCC and its partners in helping us address this workforce need."

HCC President Ed Berger said that the new Physical and Biotechnology Science Center will enhance the Healthcare Education Center of Excellence and Biotechnology Center of Excellence that the College has established.

The Workforce Solutions Fund allows the Department of Commerce to help workforce training institutions respond to the needs of Kansas businesses. Funds are invested into projects that enhance postsecondary institutions' training services or facilities for the benefit of all Kansas companies.

The Workforce Solutions Fund has funded various workforce projects since its inception in 2004. Examples include a 2006 award to Wichita Area Technical College to assist in the construction of a new aviation technology training center and a 2005 grant to Johnson County Community College to expand its bioscience training capacities.

For more information, contact Public Information Officer Joe Monaco with the Kansas Department of Commerce at (785) 296-3760 or [jmonaco@kansascommerce.com](mailto:jmonaco@kansascommerce.com).

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