Emporia, Lyon County and the surrounding six counties do not have adequate high speed computer access to meet the needs of its residents, in particular, the needs of the un- and under-employed.

Our action plan to correct this situation is to build a 12,000 sq ft. addition to the current FHTC building. It will house the Emporia KansasWorks center, a 36 seat electronic classroom/lab, a 40 seat computer center, and a testing center. The computer lab will also house the small collection of print materials in the FHTC Library. Weekend and evening hours will be added, increasing access by 88% in the evening and 48% on the weekends.

The entire population of the seven county area will be served. The population of Lyon county is over 19% Hispanic and Latino. The average for all of Kansas is 7%. The number of unemployed in Lyon county is 986 which is nearly one-third of all unemployed in the service area.

While it is very difficult to estimate the number of people who might use the facility we do know that KansasWorks is currently servicing approximately 1,000 clients a week. All of the KansasWorks clients are potential users of the new public computing center in addition to FHTC students and the general public. We estimate that the FHTC Center will serve 2,000 people a week. The AEC center, downtown, will also serve as a starting point for many who use KansasWorks services and can be expected to serve 200 people a week.

The project team for this grant has varied experiences with building projects and grant funding.

- Our President supervised the initial phase of a $15 million construction project at Colorado Northwestern Community College from 2004 – 2006.

- The Dean of Students annually administers and coordinates $210,000 in Carl Perkins Program Improvement Grant monies (2005-Present.)
- The Dean of Student Services managed the $203,000 Educational Opportunity Center grant at Barton County Community College for 2 years.

- Our technology team is excellent and is lead by a FHTC networking graduate who has five years of experience working with this system.

- One of our construction instructors has recently taken on creating a Center for Sustainable Living and is working with a wide variety of green and sustainable projects. He has written a textbook on how to build homes that are energy efficient and environmentally friendly. He has been in the construction business for 36 years.

- The director of the AEC has been at the center for six years. The center is funded through grants from local, state, and federal agencies. It is her responsibility to administer these monies.

- The Director of Accounting worked with the FHTC administration during the $5.8 million renovation that began in 2004.

- The Librarian has experience working with Carl Perkins Program Improvement Grants and state funded library collection development grants.

The focus of the project is to facilitate the acquisition of employment whether by FHTC students of clients of the KansasWorks Center. At least two positions will be added to staff the center on nights and weekend.

The cost of the project will be approximately $3,192,976.