

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Nick Jordan at 8:30 A.M. on January 24, 2006 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Helen Pedigo, Revisor of Statutes
Jackie Lunn, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Kansas Downtown Development Association:
Sabrina Williams, Chairperson Kansas Downtown Development Association
Joanna Brazil, Peabody Main Street Association
Mary Hummer, Emporia Main Street Association

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairperson Nick Jordan called the meeting to order and introduced Sabrina Williams, Chairperson for the Kansas Downtown Development Association to present information about the Kansas Downtown Development Association. Ms. Williams presented written testimony. (Attachment 1) Ms. Williams gave a brief history of the Kansas Downtown Development Association. (KDDA). She stated the KDDA works closely with Kansas Main Street, a program of the Kansas Department of Commerce. KDDA together with Kansas Main Street provides technical assistance to designated local Main Street programs. Together they offer opportunities for training on downtown revitalization issues to Kansas Main Street communities and KDDA members.

Upon the conclusion of Ms. Williams presentation there was discussion with the Committee on the number of communities in the Kansas Main Street program. Ms. Williams stated currently they have 22 members and listed them by name. The discussion turned to the requirements to be a member of the Kansas Main Street program. Ms. Jean Stinson, State Coordinator for the Kansas Main Street program, joined the discussion with information on the members of the Kansas Main Street program. She stated the Kansas Main Street program has been in existence since 1985. The populations of the members range from 50,000 to several hundred. The program helps individual communities meet their own vision for their own downtown. There was discussion on the Downtown Development Act which the Legislature passed two years ago and if there were ways the Committee could assist to make it better; to spread the word that incentives are available.

Chairperson Jordan introduced Joanna Brazil from the Peabody Main Street Association. Ms. Brazil presented written testimony. (Attachment 2) She stated Peabody's entire Main Street district has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings have been preserved, business and upper story apartments have been added to the downtown district, and the community is much healthier and moving forward as a result of being a member of the Kansas Main Street program. They have been with the program since 1990 and welcome the continued support and training from the Kansas Main Street program which is valuable to their economic vitality.

Upon the end of Ms. Brazil's statements a discussion followed regarding the development of quality of life in rural communities. The Committee wants to challenge the Kansas Main Street program and the Kansas Downtown Development Association to be creative as possible in helping the Committee figure out how to build up the rural communities in the state.

Chairperson Jordan introduced Mary Hummer representing the Emporia Main Street Association. Ms. Hummer presented written testimony. (Attachment 3) Ms. Hummer stated that before joining the Kansas Main Street program they were in an economic crisis situation. She stated Emporia became an Main Street Community in 1991. The past 12 years have been very productive for downtown Emporia. Several outstanding achievements have been accomplished. In closing she stated that the Downtown area is a

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powerful asset when recruiting new businesses, jobs and residents to Emporia.

The discussion continued with the Committee and the Kansas Downtown Development Association regarding the assistance the Kansas Main Street program and the Kansas Downtown Development Association has given to the rural communities in the state of Kansas. Chairperson Jordan recognized Senator Peggy Palmer as a guest at the meeting to join the discussion on rural downtown development. She added information on the downtown redevelopment of Augusta, Kansas. The discussion turned to tax credits available to downtown development and how the state could get the word out on the availability of these programs.

Chairperson Jordan recognized Senator Kelly. She requested Ms. Stinson, through the Department of Commerce, to produce a spreadsheet which breaks down the cities which are involved in the program and what monies have been allocated. Ms. Stinson stated she would get the information. Chairperson Jordan requested Ms. Stinson to present the information to the Committee Secretary and she would distribute it to the members of the Committee.

Chairperson Jordan made a public announcement that every Wednesday, Senator Brownlee, Senator Kelly and Senator Jordan and the staff would have a planning meeting for the Commerce Committee at 3:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in room 192E.

Chairperson Jordan adjourned the meeting at 9:25 a.m. with the next scheduled meeting being January 25, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. in room 123S.