

The Kansas Historic Tax Credit: A Proven Catalyst for Housing, Business Growth, and Community Revitalization in Emporia

Emporia's success in downtown revitalization is directly tied to the Kansas Historic Tax Credit (HTC). This essential tool has breathed new life into long-vacant buildings, adding much-needed housing, creating high-quality commercial spaces for entrepreneurs, and ensuring the long-term viability of our most treasured community landmarks. Without it, many of these transformative projects simply would not have happened.

A prime example is the remarkable conversion of a once-vacant four-story bank building in downtown Emporia. Thanks to the Kansas Historic Tax Credit, this building now offers market-rate housing, filling upper floors that had remained empty for decades. Another once-abandoned upper story, its windows bricked over for years in the heart of downtown, has been fully restored into modern, functional living space. These projects—and several others currently in progress—have significantly expanded Emporia's housing options at a time when demand is at an all-time high.

But the HTC's impact extends beyond just housing. Great businesses need great spaces, and entrepreneurs thrive when located alongside other entrepreneurs. Emporia's award-winning downtown is now home to an array of unique small businesses, all housed in beautifully rehabilitated historic structures made possible by the HTC. These spaces, rich with character and modern amenities, serve as hubs for innovation, drawing both locals and visitors to shop, dine, and invest in our community.

The benefits of the HTC don't stop with commercial and residential projects—it has also been instrumental in preserving and revitalizing key nonprofit spaces. The restoration of the Historic Granada Theatre, a downtown icon, simply would not have been possible without the HTC. This venue now serves as a cultural and economic engine, hosting events that bring thousands of people downtown, benefiting local businesses and fostering a sense of community pride. Additionally, the HTC has ensured that historic houses of worship and other essential nonprofit venues remain viable for future generations, safeguarding the institutions that serve as the backbone of our communities.

The Kansas Historic Tax Credit is not just a preservation tool—it is an economic driver that strengthens our tax base, maximizes existing infrastructure, and creates sustainable growth. Downtown Emporia's success story is proof that this program works. Continued legislative support for the HTC is critical to ensuring that our historic buildings remain active, our businesses continue to thrive, and our communities remain vibrant for generations to come.



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