



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/first-friday-hays-microfactory>

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Hays project aims to help small business owners scale up production

Clingan talks about MicroFactory during K-State's First Friday series

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news

MANHATTAN, Kan. – An official for a non-profit organization that spurs economic development and vitality in Hays, Kansas says the group's newest project creates a space "where small scale manufacturing meets big scale potential."

David Clingan, the director of recruitment and retention for Grow Hays, said construction is complete for a 'microfactory' that will encourage startup and established businesses to start production of proposed products in a way that minimizes the initial financial risk.

"Our goal," Clingan said, "is to help set businesses up for success by reducing their costs and setting up programs that will put them in the right direction."

Clingan was the featured speaker during the April 5 [First Friday e-Call](#), a monthly online series hosted by K-State Research and Extension that helps to nurture small businesses and inspire entrepreneurship in Kansas. The online discussions, which routinely host dozens of Kansas citizens from the public and private sectors, are available free each month.

Clingan said the Microfactory in Hays will be a 30,000 square foot space complete with meeting rooms and offices. The concept allows a business of any size to lease a space of 2,500, 4,000, 8,000 or more square feet to begin research and initial production.

The project is supported by Grow Hays. Clingan said the group has set an initial timeline of 1-3 years for each lease, in hopes that the business would be able to purchase property in order to scale up its production.

"We are focusing right now on startup businesses and small businesses that want to expand, as well as businesses outside of our market that would like to come to western Kansas," Clingan said. "They may want to put in a footprint, but maybe not ready to go all in yet."

The project addresses various limitations that officials with Grow Hays identified in their region, primarily that there was no or limited availability of factories capable of handling production.

“A third problem was that for new buildings, there was a high lease rate,” Clingan said.

He cited an example of a startup business in which the entrepreneur is working out of their house or out of a garage.

“That business owner just can’t see how the (financial) numbers would work to lease space,” Clingan said. “So the opportunity we can provide to them is a microfactory that helps to reduce some of those costs. And, we want to make sure you have the tools to be successful.”

More information about the Microfactory is [available online from Grow Hays](#).

Clingan’s full talk and other First Friday presentations are [available online](#) from K-State Research and Extension.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATION: Links used in this story

First Friday e-calls, <https://ksre-learn.com/entrepreneurship>

MicroFactory (Grow Hays), <https://www.growhays.com/microfactory>

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