Center On Rural Innovation

Barton Board of Trustees Report

9/9/2025

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Center for Rural Innovation (CORI)

- CORI assists rural communities in developing tech economy strategies that support innovation, tech entrepreneurship, workforce development, and tech job creation in our communities.
- Community partners such as:
- Norfolk, NE
- Emporia, KS
- Aberdeen, SD
- Create a cohort of communities to create tech development strategies, tech skills, and economic development.
- CORI has helped communities secure $40 million dollars in grants and matching funds.

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Partnership Timeline

- Barton Community College and Great Bend Economic Development held ongoing conversations with CORI

- Assessment Phase
  - Qualitative and Quantitative Data

- Strategy Development Stage
  - Two day on-site visit from CORI Representative

- Implementation Phase

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Innovation Support and Coordination

- Strong Employer Base

- Central Hub

- Existing Resources

- Funding Programs

- Awareness Gaps

- Broadband

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Technology Adoption, Workforce Readiness, Job Access

- Established Training Foundation

- Early Talent Development

- Workforce

- Retention Challenge

- Rural Underrepresentation in Tech

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Implementation

- Create a local leadership team to leverage our strengths
- Explore funding opportunities to enhance training and programing
- Create an "Entrepreneur's Roadmap" to assist founders
- Increase visibility of entrepreneurship as a career path
- Continued alignment with workforce needs

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Barton Programming

- Computer Science and Computer Information Systems Programs
- AI Consortium Participant
- Talent Development
- DOCK Grant
- Exploring Options for Classes/Programs in the Innovation Center

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Questions