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To the USDA Rural Development Community Facility Grant Program Reviewers,

BHS Construction would like to voice our support for the Future Service Leaders Foundation (FSL) and their vision to create a Rural Vitality Center for rural Kansas citizens to learn and grow through experiential opportunities centered on community. A model we are familiar with, as our internship and community outreach programs are focused on hands on, field experiences which we would bring to the FSL's Rural Vitality Center project.

Lyon County is a place of significance for BHS Construction as members of our leadership team, including myself, and field employees are from there. We have family ties to local subcontractors and a unique understanding of the communities within the county. Through our many rural construction projects, we are familiar with the site and material planning that construction in a remote area would entail. Utilizing local lumber yards, trades and students not only saves cost on a project but contributes to the local economy. On a recent school bond project in Riley County, BHS used the local lumber yard and hired high school students to work on the project. These small gestures in local support resulted in a lasting relationship with both the district and the surrounding communities.

BHS is a community driven company. We are an active member of not only the Manhattan community, but the surrounding areas. Through our partnerships with and donating to universities, technical schools and school districts, BHS has given hands on experiences to many Kansas youth. Starting with classroom visits in the grade and high schools, we are dedicated to exposing kids to the trades. Our internship program places individuals in the field for hands on learning and allows the opportunity to get into the office for exposure to the many professionals within a construction company. On average, 10 interns are hired during the summer coming to us from KSU, Fort Hays State, Manhattan Area Technical College, and local high schools. Often, our interns stick around for part time work during the semester which leads to a full-time job offer extended. We have had great success with this program, and with a devoted intern director, look to only enhance these opportunities in the future.

The new Rural Vitality Center project is the ideal opportunity to bring KSU and MATC students to real world experience in construction. On site, our project managers, foreman, carpenters, and superintendents work hand in hand with interns sharing experience and expertise on many aspects of the construction process. Paid, hands-on work on a project is notably rewarding to these students. Putting up blocking, helping with concrete pours and interior finish work give our interns ownership on a job site. They not only learn, but do, gaining experiences they can utilize after pursuit of their vocation. Putting these students to work on the new Rural Vitality Center project jobsite also shows they can pursue their dreams while staying in Kansas. Once they see the possibility of career opportunity locally, they have a higher chance of staying local, which is good for rural communities and the state of Kansas as a whole.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Schutter

Patrick Schutter

President

Build Together.