

ONWARD OTTAWA PRESENTS LEGACY SQUARE

June 20, 2018

Onward Ottawa, a 501c3 foundation of the Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce and Franklin County Development Council invited the community to The Bottle House to participate in the kickoff event to announce the name and location of the new downtown event space. Legacy Square will be located at the intersection of First and Walnut Streets in Ottawa. The Flint Hills Nature Trail (FHNT) intersects with the Prairie Spirit Trail (PST) at the northeast corner and together the two trails border the new Legacy Square.

Onward Ottawa initiated a capital campaign to support downtown revitalization. The campaign co-chairs, Pam Harris and David Lee in a joint statement said, "The Onward Ottawa Board identified the need for downtown outdoor event space to create an area for people to gather and to hold community events."

The campaign has set a goal to raise \$4.3 million over five years and already has a strong start with over \$3.6 million in pledges from over 100 investors located across the county. Lee said, "Investors are making substantial private commitments in helping drive our future economic growth and are committed to making Ottawa and Franklin County a successful, competitive area for more jobs and economic prosperity. We have a diverse group of stakeholders which includes individuals joining with large and small businesses in and around our area."

Harris explains, "I joined this project early and have been very excited to see the number of community individuals working together to make this happen. We have 70 volunteers working on four different committees to refine this project, promote it, and help raise the funds. This has truly been a collaborative community project."

Lonnie King, Onward Ottawa Honorary Co-Chair, Chairman/CEO of Image Resource Group, a local employer and parent company to Fashion, Inc. announced the name of the new downtown development initiative to be Legacy Square. King said, "Ottawa has been good to me, my family, and my employees. We saw this as a great opportunity to give back to the community. We wanted to create a legacy that the entire community could join in and leave their legacy as well."

Ottawa Mayor, Mike Skidmore explained to those in attendance, "This has been a public/private initiative in which private stakeholders have joined with the City of Ottawa to make something positive happen for our citizens. The City Commission believes in this project and sees it as a great amenity which will add to the quality of life and the ambiance of our downtown."

In attendance were State of Kansas Governor Jeff Colyer and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism Secretary, Robin Jennison. State Representative Blaine Finch introduced Governor Jeff Colyer. Governor Jeff Colyer performed an honorary signing of Senate Bill 331 which designated The FHNT to be an official Kansas State Park. Governor Jeff Colyer also complimented the community for being selected as a recipient for an Attraction Development Grant from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism.

It is anticipated Legacy Square will begin construction in 2018 and be completed in 2019. Onward Ottawa will continue to work with city, county and state officials to improve quality of life and attract new business to Franklin County while also working closely with existing companies to make Ottawa and Franklin County an attractive place to live and work.