



2022 Emerging BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The Haven Event Space



Louisburg, KS
Miami County



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Kansas SBDC at JCCC
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Owner: Blake Harris
Kansas SBDC Advisors: John Addressi
Capital Access Center: Vince Haworth

Business Started: 2021
Industry: Wedding & Event Venue

Starting a business is tough. Transforming 40 acres into an event venue in a rural area during a pandemic? Unimaginable. Blake Harris took that risk when he opened The Haven Event Space in Louisburg, Kansas in 2021 and transformed an unused field into a high-tech, unique event space for weddings, parties, and corporate events.

Harris knew he had a golden idea but needed help getting plans off the ground. Initially, Harris reached out to Vince Haworth at the Capital Access Center (CAC) for advising, and then to his local branch of the Kansas Small Business Development Center at Johnson County Community College where he connected with Advisor John Addressi. Both Haworth and Addressi assisted Harris with creating and enhancing his business plan and finding capital infusion opportunities. While Harris worked with Haworth to find the right financing for the construction, Haworth was able to use banking connections with two financial entities. Harris met with bankers within two days, and then had term sheets within a week of joining the Kansas SBDC. Through Harris's vision and help from the Kansas SBDC, The Haven officially opened in October 2021 already booked with 75 events and nearly \$800,000 in revenues. Ground up construction was completed within 6 months during a pandemic.

Harris credits The Haven's success to the advisors' quick communication and solid business referrals.

Harris said, "I was in SUCH a hurry to get my business open that I didn't account for delays! It caused unnecessary stress and pressure if I had just known there is no rush."

Advisors and the Kansas SBDC truly care and take a vested interest in business and client accomplishments. What started out as a field and a dream transformed into a prosperous event venue attracting tourism and creating a dozen new jobs in the community.



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