



**Contact Information:**

Melissa Kirkwood, Development Officer, 785.587.2726, ext. 207

[Kirkwood@ci.manhattan.ks.us](mailto:Kirkwood@ci.manhattan.ks.us)

315 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Manhattan, KS 66502

**Opening Day Set For Flint Hills Discovery Center**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MANHATTAN, KS** – The opening of Kansas’ next major tourism attraction, the Flint Hills Discovery Center has been set for April 14, 2012. Planning is underway for public festivities that underscore the importance of this much-anticipated cultural institution in Manhattan’s downtown redevelopment district.

“This project is stunning evidence of what can be accomplished when the public and private sectors collaboratively work together,” said Ron Fehr, city manager. “The Flint Hills Discovery Center is a key component to Manhattan’s successful downtown redevelopment and the award of \$50 million in STAR bonds from the State of Kansas. We are proud to have created this great place of both learning and fun. It will support all our efforts to preserve the Flint Hills and promote tourism within our state.”

A detailed schedule of events will be forthcoming. Opening day will include a ribbon cutting, remarks by local and state dignitaries, and the public’s first look at the facility. Dedication of the adjoining Blue Earth Plaza also will take place April 14.

Construction of the 35,000-square-foot facility began in July 2009 with a promise to inspire and educate visitors to the uniqueness and importance of the Flint Hills of Kansas and the Osage Hills of Oklahoma, said Bob Workman, director of the Flint Hills Discovery Center.

“It’s fantastic to be planning our opening. Our visitors are the reason for this project, and on April 14 we will come alive as everyone see and enjoys all that the Discovery Center has to offer,” Workman said.

Through dynamic interactive exhibits visitors will have an opportunity to explore the science and cultural history of the last stand of tallgrass prairie in North America – one of the world’s most endangered eco-systems. The building is nearly complete and installation of exhibits is in progress.

The \$24.5 million project anchors the second phase of Manhattan’s downtown redevelopment. Key players in the development of this project were the 2004 Attractions Committee that created the concept and a Steering Committee of local community leaders and a Technical Committee of content specialists. Their efforts were supported by a team of architects, exhibit and audio/visual designers, and fabricators and contractors.

The Flint Hills Discovery Center contains permanent and temporary exhibits, classrooms and meeting rooms, a store and beautiful outdoor terraces and landscaping. It will be open 363 days a year and serve as the visitor information center for Manhattan and the surrounding Flint Hills region. For more information, please visit [www.flinthillsdiscovery.org](http://www.flinthillsdiscovery.org) and our Facebook page.

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