



## Fort Hays State Strategic Affiliation Launches Cross-Campus Applied Learning Initiative



This semester, two Applied & Technical Education Initiatives (AIT #3) subcommittees are turning collaboration into action through hands-on learning experiences in advanced manufacturing and surveying.

Through a joint advanced manufacturing project, students from Fort Hays State University and Fort Hays Tech | Northwest will share expertise and equipment access. University students will develop and validate multi-axis Computer Numerical Control (CNC) programs before traveling to Northwest to machine their projects on a 5-axis mill.



In return, Northwest students will design components for fabrication using FHSU's waterjet technology. The shared project model gives students access to industry-grade equipment beyond their home campus while strengthening technical skill development and professional collaboration.

In surveying, a total station training initiative will provide university students with immersive, field-based instruction hosted at Northwest. Each effort reflects the shared commitment of each Affiliation partner to applied education and to becoming a valued partner with business and industry across Kansas.



Additional subcommittees are advancing collaboration in heavy equipment operation, estimating and scheduling software, and controls and automation. Each effort reflects the affiliation's shared commitment to applied student-centered education and responsiveness to business and industry needs across Kansas.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how the Fort Hays affiliation is leveraging shared strengths to expand opportunity, build technical grit, and prepare graduates for evolving workforce demands.



## Forge Kansas: Building opportunity across Central and Western Kansas

Forge Kansas is strengthening Central and Western Kansas by connecting people, employers, and communities with education, training, and support— right where they live and work.

A byproduct of the Affiliation partnership among Fort Hays State University, Fort Hays Tech | North Central, and Fort Hays Tech | Northwest, Forge Kansas was created to expand access to opportunity while fueling long-term regional growth.

Led by Ben Schears, vice president for economic and workforce development at FHSU, Forge Kansas brings together experienced professionals dedicated to workforce growth and community prosperity.

The team also includes Samantha Voorhees, North Central director of apprenticeships and workforce development, and Salah Rall, Northwest director of apprenticeships and work-based learning.

Forge Kansas offers services in economic and workforce development, housing resources, childcare and family support, and community development. Together, these efforts reflect a commitment to building sustainable prosperity for generations to come.

Learn more at [www.forgekansas.com](http://www.forgekansas.com).

## Robbins Banking Institute Lecture Series connects FHSU community with Kansas banking leaders

The Robbins Banking Institute at Fort Hays State University hosted its third annual lecture series event on Feb. 24, with a panel of three prominent Kansas bankers: Kurt Knutson, founder and CEO of Level 3 Freedom; Earl McVicker, Chairman, President and CEO of Central Financial Corporation (Manhattan); and Leonard Wolfe, Chairman, President and CEO of United Bank & Trust (Marysville). Kansas Bankers Association members and the FHSU community were on hand to make connections and learn more about banking opportunities.

Other speakers during the morning's event included Dr. Melissa Hunsicker-Walburn, Dean of the Robbins College of Business and Entrepreneurship at FHSU; W.R. Robbins, namesake of the Robbins Banking Institute at FHSU and CEO of Farmers Bank and Trust; Dale Winklepleck, Robbins Banking Institute Advisory Council Chairman; and Lawson Bailey, a senior majoring in finance with a banking concentration at FHSU.

The three panel members, each of whom started their own bank in Kansas, discussed leadership, vision, and the future of community banking.

