

# KDOT ITP Grant Narrative: ANY Airport 2026

## Q2.1. Proposed Project Title

Rural UAS Innovation & Aviation Activation

**Q2.2. Project Scope and Description - *Succinctly describe the objectives and major milestones of this project. This information will be used as the official scope of the project so please use concise and clear language describing what this project will entail. If more than one Sponsor, specify what each Sponsor's funding commitment is going towards and also the scope of responsibilities for each Sponsor. All justifications for the need can be made in the Significance and Need section below.***

The Rural UAS Innovation & Aviation Activation Initiative will introduce emerging aviation technologies, expand aviation education and workforce opportunities, and increase utilization of Anthony Municipal Airport through two coordinated project components.

1. Rural UAS Innovation Program: The City will procure UAS technology, equipment, and training resources and implement UAS education, training, demonstrations, and community programming at Anthony Municipal Airport and within the Anthony community. Programming will provide hands-on exposure to UAS technology and practical rural applications, including agriculture, infrastructure, and other community uses. In partnership with WSU Tech and other industry partners, the project will support UAS education and workforce development opportunities, which may include multi-day training for students and community members, Part 107 preparation, technology demonstrations, and other programming developed to meet local needs.

2. Aviation & Airport Activation Initiative: The City will work with WSU Tech and other partners to expand aviation education and workforce pathways, including opportunities associated with Choose Aerospace and Aviation Maintenance (A&P General) education for local students. The project will also support airport activation planning and the development or procurement of innovative educational and technology displays, materials, and outreach resources designed to increase aviation awareness, community engagement, educational use, and utilization of Anthony Municipal Airport.

Grant funds will support technology and equipment procurement; training and program participation costs; educational and event displays and materials; and professional and administrative services necessary for UAS programming, industry and partner engagement, program development, project coordination, and management support.

Major milestones will include procurement of project technology, equipment, and materials; development of programming with WSU Tech and other partners; implementation of UAS education, training, and demonstration activities; advancement of aviation education and workforce pathways; deployment of airport educational and technology displays and outreach activities; and development of an airport activation plan to guide continued programming, partnerships, and airport utilization beyond the grant period.

**Q2.3. Significance and Need - *Describe regional significance of need for the project with respect to region, state and/or local transportation systems, and why Innovative Technology Program funds are needed.***

Anthony Municipal Airport is an existing public-use transportation asset serving Anthony, Harper County, and the surrounding rural region. The airport currently supports general aviation and agricultural aviation, but the community has limited local access to emerging UAS technologies, aviation technology education, and structured aviation workforce pathways. The project provides an opportunity to leverage an existing transportation asset to introduce technologies and educational opportunities that are not currently available within the community.

The need is particularly relevant in rural Kansas, where UAS technologies have growing applications in agriculture, infrastructure, inspection, public services, and other transportation-related activities, yet smaller communities may have limited access to the technology, training, and partnerships necessary to understand and adopt these capabilities. At the same time, Anthony has identified aviation education, workforce development, youth engagement, and increased airport utilization as community priorities.

The project has strong local and regional support. The City of Anthony and Anthony Airport Board have participated in project development, and the City has engaged WSU Tech as a key partner in both UAS education and aviation workforce development. This partnership provides Anthony access to aviation expertise and educational resources that would be difficult for a rural community to develop independently.

KDOT Innovative Technology Program funding is needed to move the initiative from planning and partnership development into implementation. The grant will allow Anthony to acquire UAS technology and training resources, establish new aviation programming, leverage WSU Tech expertise, and invest in airport educational and activation resources while limiting the financial burden on a small rural community.

The initiative also supports the direction of the 2025 Kansas Advanced Air Mobility Roadmap by expanding rural participation in advanced aviation technologies, strengthening workforce

development, connecting education and industry, and preparing rural communities for the evolving aviation transportation system.

**Q2.4. Project Benefits- *Describe the nature of the transportation benefits that could result from the project (i.e. safety improvements, economic impacts, multi-modal enhancements, retain or recruit business, promote job growth, etc).***

The Rural UAS Innovation & Aviation Activation Initiative will provide benefits across five key areas: transportation innovation and safety, workforce and economic impact, airport utilization and community engagement, partnerships and sustainability. These benefits will expand the role of Anthony Municipal Airport as a rural transportation and technology asset while creating sustainable access to emerging aviation technologies in south-central Kansas.

**Transportation Innovation & Safety:** The project will introduce UAS technology, equipment, and programming that do not currently exist within the Anthony community. Students, agricultural producers, businesses, and community members will gain hands-on exposure to technologies with applications in agriculture, infrastructure inspection, mapping, data collection, and other rural transportation and community needs. Programming developed with WSU Tech and other aviation partners will incorporate aviation safety, responsible UAS operations, airspace awareness, and applicable regulatory requirements, helping participants understand how UAS can be safely integrated into communities and the aviation environment. UAS technology can also support activities that reduce the need for people to perform certain inspections or data-collection tasks in difficult or hazardous environments. Locating these resources at Anthony Municipal Airport provides an appropriate aviation setting for safety-focused education while expanding rural access to emerging transportation technology.

**Workforce and Economic Impact:** Partnership with WSU Tech will connect Anthony-area students and residents with UAS and aviation career pathways, including UAS training and Part 107 preparation opportunities and development of pathways associated with Choose Aerospace and Aviation Maintenance (A&P General) education. Building awareness, skills, and connections to aviation careers can strengthen the regional workforce pipeline while supporting industries that increasingly use UAS and aviation technology.

**Airport Utilization and Community Impact:** UAS programming, technology and educational displays, aviation outreach, and airport activation activities will create new opportunities for students, residents, industry partners, and community organizations to engage with Anthony Municipal Airport. These activities will broaden awareness of the airport's capabilities and strengthen its role as a transportation, educational, workforce, and economic asset for the community and region.

Partnerships: The project builds on collaboration already established among the City of Anthony, Anthony Airport Board, WSU Tech, the aviation industry and community stakeholders. This foundation allows the project to move from concept development into implementation while leveraging outside aviation and technical expertise that would otherwise be difficult for a rural community to develop independently.

Sustainability: KDOT funding will leverage the City's local investment to establish reusable UAS technology, training resources, educational displays, programming, and partnerships rather than supporting a single event or activity. These resources can support multiple programs, participants, and community activities beyond the initial grant period. An airport activation plan will provide a framework for continued programming, partnerships, airport utilization, and pursuit of future transportation investment.

Together, these investments will provide Anthony with both immediate programming and long-term capacity, creating a scalable approach for using an existing rural airport to expand access to innovative transportation technology, strengthen aviation workforce pathways, support economic activity, and prepare the community for continued evolution of Kansas' aviation transportation system.