

Location Recommendation: Hays, Kansas

Executive Summary



Growing, young population of 21,000 further bolstered by nearby university

Established dining scene with a population often dining-out

Vacuum of professional sport teams in the area

Background

The Federal Hockey league was tasked with selecting a suitable location for a Western Division expansion team. **The purpose of this summary is to evaluate the two finalist locations, Hays, KS and Alpena, MI, and provide a recommendation for the expansion.**

The Federal Hockey League's ideal expansion location meets the following:

- Small but stable or growing community with no major professional or university teams nearby
- Local dining options already available with a utilizing population

Recommended Action

Of the two finalist locations, **Hays, Kansas is the more suitable expansion site.** While population growth of 0.9% is expected in the next few years, the populations

earning \$100,000-\$149,999 and \$150,000+ each are expected to increase greater than 20%. Hays has an excellent, young (median age of 31) demographic keen on dining out and would take advantage of a newly formed minor league team.

Fort Hays State University provides an influx of approximately 16,000 students in the winter months, adding an additional base of fans during the heart of the league's schedule.

Nearby highways and interstate allow for easy travel from nearby locations, expanding the potential fan base tied to this newly formed organization. **A local airport with flights to Colorado** logistically also allows for easy away game travelling.

Rejected Option

While a suitable finalist, Alpena, MI did have some **significant issues** that made it a non-ideal expansion location. The availability of an airport with service to Detroit and Minnesota would effectively facilitate away game travel. Nearby highways would have generated an expanded fanbase beyond just Alpena.

Alpena also was the site of a CJHL team, demonstrating that the resources needed for a minor league organization are available.

However, with a **decreasing overall population already smaller than Hays' that is projected to decrease further** (by 1.2% in the next few years) and a **tourism market only viable in the summer months** after the conclusion of the season, the location does not have the suitable size to warrant expansion.

While there is a community college nearby, the influx of students is minimal especially when compared to the state university located in Hays. Hays' population itself of almost 21,000 more than doubles Alpena's.

Action Steps

1. Begin discussions with Hays city leadership around the needed facilities (ice rink, lodging, etc.) and their availability
2. Begin community outreach to the local population to generate excitement around the newly formed team following selection
3. Alert other teams within the Federal Hockey league of the decision to allow for early preparation and a successful expansion season