**BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS
GROWING AVAIL SEEKS TAX ABATEMENT**

Zach Harris of Avail Enclosures petitioned the Economic Development Advisory Council for a seven-year property tax abatement to support the company’s expansion. Avail is fulfilling an order for 300 industrial power units, driven by rising demand to power AI supercomputers, with production occurring at a rate of four to five units per week. To meet demand, the company has invested heavily, including a new 40,000-square-foot concrete pad with electrical infrastructure to facilitate operations.

As one of Pittsburg's oldest employers, Avail currently has 137 workers and aims to expand to 160 employees. Harris emphasized the economic benefits, citing average starting wages of $20/hour and ongoing recruitment efforts at local educational institutions to retain talent.

With nearly $7 million already invested in recent expansions, Avail continues to strengthen the regional economy. The EDAC recommended approving the tax abatement to offset construction costs, highlighting Avail’s role as a valuable economic partner in Pittsburg.

*Dustin R. Strong – The Morning Sun*

**FRONTENAC GETS UPDATE ON NEW HOSPITAL**

At a recent city council meeting, Danny Taylor and Paula Baker of Freeman Health Systems updated the council on the new hospital project north of Frontenac. While progress may not be visible, extensive engineering work is underway, including traffic studies and core sample drilling. The hospital will feature an ambulatory surgery center, potentially opening before the full facility. Staffing for the hospital has generated local interest and has caused concern.

Additionally, the city council addressed concerns over heavy truck traffic and passed a new ordinance to impose fines on delivery trucks violating designated routes, aiming to reduce wear on city streets.

The council also implemented new restrictions on truck traffic, including weight limits and "No Thru Trucks" signs. These measures aim to protect local infrastructure and manage traffic flow, which is expected to improve the city’s economic resilience by supporting both new hospital development and more efficient transportation.

*Dustin R. Strong – The Morning Sun*

**GORILLA RISING PROJECT REACHES MILESTONES**

Pittsburg State University’s "Gorilla Rising" project is set to significantly impact the local economy. The project includes the construction of a new building for the Kelce College of Business and the renovation of the historic Besse Hotel into student housing, retail, and academic spaces. The combined investment of private, public, and state funding, along with city partnerships, is expected to boost downtown vitality.

By accommodating university programs and providing commercial space, the project will create job opportunities, support local businesses, and attract both students and visitors. With construction expected to be completed by 2026, the development is poised to revitalize Pittsburg’s downtown, enhancing its economic dynamism.

*Staff Reports – The Morning Sun*

**NEXT YEAR**

Pittsburg is experiencing significant progress and exciting developments, with several major projects set to enhance the community. A key initiative is the replacement of the fifty-year-old wastewater treatment plant, with construction starting next year. The Kelce School of Business will relocate to a new downtown location.

Additionally, the Gorilla Rising project will create sixty student apartments in the renovated Besse Hotel, including commercial space and an expanded Center for Reading. The Research Park is also advancing, with plans for a new “prove-out” facility to support the National Institute for Materials Advancement, enabling testing for new materials. A new KBI Regional Crime Center, enhancing collaborative efforts in law enforcement is also being built in the Research Park.

Downtown renovations are underway, with four commercial projects, five multiunit residential developments, and a new event space planned, costing around $200 million. As Pittsburg prepares for its 150th anniversary in 2026, next year promises to be a milestone of growth for the community.

*Jay Byers – The Morning Sun*

**THE VALUE OF MANUFACTURING**

National Manufacturing Week highlights the continued economic significance of manufacturing in the U.S., despite its decline in job share from 40% in the 1940s to 10% today. Manufacturing remains the fifth largest employment sector, contributing 12% to GDP and 35% of American productivity growth.

Average compensation in manufacturing is 9% higher than in other industries. It is also responsible for 60% of U.S. exports, 55% of patents, and 70% of R&D spending. Each manufacturing job creates 7-12 additional jobs in related sectors.

In towns like Pittsburg, manufacturing remains vital, supporting specialized industries with custom products that meet unique demands, enhancing the region's economic resilience and growth.

*Jay Byers – The Morning Sun*

**‘TRADE PULL’ SHOWS CITY’S GROWING STRENGTH**

The economic impact of Pittsburg’s retail development has been significant, driven by its increasing trade pull factor (PF). Initially, Pittsburg’s PF was below 1, suggesting it was losing shoppers to neighboring cities like Joplin.

However, following the development of the North Broadway commercial area, including major retailers like Home Depot, the PF rose to above 1, signifying that the city began attracting shoppers from outside the community. This increase in retail activity has led to substantial economic growth, with new national retailers like Buffalo Wild Wings and Marshall's expanding in the area.

As a result, the city’s retail sector generates a large portion of local government revenue through sales tax, which supports vital services such as public safety, street maintenance, and economic development.

The city’s PF of 1.88, one of the highest in Kansas, underscores the strength of its retail economy and its ability to attract shoppers beyond its population.

*Jay Byers – The Morning Sun*