

Reinvent Horton Launches GoFundMe Fundraiser

City Council and community members of Horton, Kansas have teamed up with Marcus Lemonis, entrepreneur and host of CNBC's reality series *The Profit*, to make several renovations to their downtown business district in an effort to ignite much needed revitalization and economic development to the small town.

After Lemonis met with business owners, community members and city officials in January 2014, plans were put in place to develop the *Reinvent Horton Committee*, whose goal is to rebuild the downtown area of Horton, attract new business and give an economic boost to the community. For the past nine months the community has made a statement regarding their devotion, with members cleaning up the town by picking up trash, clearing brush, removing dilapidated structures and re-painting historical business properties. The committee is also developing plans to seek outside support for the town's recovery from major metropolitan areas such as Kansas City and beyond.

The Mayor of Horton, Tim Lentz commented, "Our vision is not only that we change the look of our town to attract new businesses and people, but to also preserve our history and rekindle a sense of pride in this community. We hope to inspire other small communities in America to reinvent their towns and to know that if you believe in it and work hard enough, anything is possible."

Lemonis' involvement dates back to December 2013, when an 88-year-old World War II veteran and business owner in Horton was jailed because he couldn't afford to make repairs to a downtown building in order to bring it into compliance with city code. The story went viral, and Lemonis tweeted an offer to pay for the repairs in addition to touring the small Brown County community. On his TV show, *The Profit*, which is returning with new episodes Tuesday, October 14 at 10PM ET/PT, Lemonis invests his own money to help turn around struggling small businesses.

"As we approach our ninth month milestone into this effort, we are about to begin a costly but necessary step to enhance our streets and curbs in the downtown area, in order to attract new businesses," added Mayor Lentz. "The Horton City Commission has approved up to \$240,000 for this project, and Reinvent Horton is also utilizing \$28,000 from donations to go towards the costs. The estimated project total is \$400,000, leaving us with a deficit of \$120,000."

Interested parties can mail donations for the revitalization plan to **Reinvent Horton at 205 East 8th Street in Horton, Kansas 66439**. A GoFundMe crowdfunding page has also been set up for the city of Horton at <http://www.gofundme.com/fnxyag> in an effort to gain support and garner national attention.

"After meeting with the members of the Reinvent Horton Committee, I was inspired by their commitment and determination to restructure their city. It was important to me to

not only contribute by purchasing and rehabbing properties in an effort to promote to the restructuring of the city but also to help the town put the correct plans in motion to completely overhaul their downtown business area,” said Lemonis. “Small businesses are the core of America’s business structure and I see potential for the Horton community, and hope their growth will inspire other communities across the country.”

Lemonis has currently invested in five buildings in the downtown area of Horton. Three of the properties will be renovated and leased as store fronts to attract new businesses and plans are underway to demolish two buildings to develop a park complete with benches and a jungle gym for children’s enjoyment and outdoor entertainment.

Surveys posted on the city’s website

<http://www.cityofhorton.com/reinvent-horton.html> and Facebook page www.facebook.com/ReinventHorton directed to residents seeking information on which new downtown additions they feel would most help their community. The top responses for new businesses included offerings of delicatessen and fast food chains, clothing stores, bakeries, gift shops, a movie theater, evening and weekend fine dining, soda fountain, an ice cream/doughnut shop, a bowling alley, a youth center, antique stores, preschool and a museum.

Many Signals Communications