

Reams: Great Plains is among world's largest industrial parks

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OSWEGO — Great Plains Industrial Park staff hopes to get the park recognized in many different places, most for economic opportunities that would bring jobs to Southeast Kansas.

Brad Reams, Great Plains director, and Bob Wood, Great Plains board member, visited with Labette County commissioners Monday about the park as part of a monthly update on activities. During the update, Reams discussed some of the research he conducted last week into the largest industrial parks in the nation.

"We didn't show up on any of those lists," Reams said. He sent comments to people creating those lists.

Reams said he calculates that Great Plains, at 14,000 acres, is the eighth largest industrial park in the world based on the list he's seen.

"It's a pretty nice moniker if we could get that certified we're the eighth largest in the world," Reams said.

He said the list gives him an idea of where Great Plains is ranked in the world.

Wood told commissioners that the acreage also makes available large swaths of land in case a developer needs 2,000 contiguous acres for a project. The park could accommodate that.

Reams said solar projects are possible and environmental engineers were onsite Monday looking at solar project grounds. The park is looking to be a place for innovation and sustainability in its prospects.

Green energy is part of that as is agribusiness. Reams said Great Plains is allowing

the FFA organization, private business, Kansas State and Labette County High School students to use three igloos at the park to develop interior growing areas for crops, from green leafy vegetables to cucumbers to possibly hemp, up to six crops a year.

Reams mentioned the Foreign Trade Zone status that the park is seeking, which would make space available to companies to store goods or manufacture items without having to pay tariffs on the goods for a time. This may require the erecting of a building on the grounds to accommodate manufacturing or storage. Companies prefer buildings with rafters 30 feet above the floor to accommodate tall racks for storage. He said the 1206 building has those tall ceilings and it could be expanded.

Watco in Pittsburg is working with the park to explore the businesses the FTZ could attract.