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For Immediate Release

Power of Connection Grant Awarded to Benefit Dysart Community *Child Care Facility Project Gains \$5,000 Support from Rural Initiative*

DYSART, IA – A local effort to meet child care needs has received \$5,000 through a Power of Connection grant administered jointly by ITC Midwest and the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC).

With a population of 1,400, Dysart is a community with a vibrant business district, excellent schools, many recreational opportunities and a good quality of life. For three years, the Little Knights Learning Center (LKLC) has served the needs of young families in the community, encouraging growth and strengthening community vitality.

LKLC is currently located in the Dysart-Geneseo Elementary School, which is part of the Union Community School District. However, a growth in elementary school enrollment is necessitating the LKLC move to a new location, which is a good problem for the Dysart community to have.

In response, the LKLC Board of Directors – with strong support from the community – has embarked on a building project for a 6,400 square foot daycare facility on land leased by the Union Community School District. LKLC accepts kids from six weeks to 12 years and offers a before/after school program. The new facility will be licensed for an enrollment of 85 to meet today's needs and allow for future growth. The state-of-the-art facility will include four classrooms, a before/after school daycare room, full kitchen, laundry room, director's office and staff break room. A playground that meets Department of Human Services standards is also part of this project. The new facility is expected to cost \$1.23 million.

The grant program, launched last year by ITC Midwest and IRDC, is intended to help fund feasibility studies, strategic planning and non-construction/equipment elements of a rural project. For the Dysart child care project, the funds will be used towards the architectural and design development phase of the building project.

"Little Knights Learning Center was excited to hear about the Power of Connection grant and how it could help us with our architectural costs," said Wanda Petersen, Board President of the Little Knights Learning Center. "This new daycare is going to be a great addition to Dysart by serving a need in our community and surrounding towns. We want to thank ITC Midwest and Iowa Rural Development Council for the opportunity to apply and for awarding us the grant."

"The lack of affordable, quality child care is constraining economic development throughout rural areas of the state and the region," noted ITC Midwest President Dusky Terry. "By working together, communities can overcome this challenge. Through the Power of Connection program in collaboration with the Iowa Rural Development Council, ITC Midwest is pleased to support the child care initiative

being constructed in Dysart to improve the overall quality of life and spur future growth in the community.”

Communities eligible for the Power of Connection program must have populations of under 10,000 and be outside of a metropolitan area. Power of Connection grant dollars cannot be used for construction, real estate or equipment.

For more information about program details, contact IRDC Executive Director Bill Menner at director@iowardc.org or call 641-990-4757.

About ITC Midwest

ITC Midwest LLC is a subsidiary of [ITC Holdings Corp.](http://www.itc-holdings.com), the largest independent electricity transmission company in the U.S. ITC Midwest operates nearly 6,700 circuit miles of transmission lines in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois and Missouri, and holds utility status in Wisconsin. ITC Midwest is headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and maintains regional operating facilities in Dubuque, Iowa City and Perry, Iowa; and Albert Lea and Lakefield, Minnesota. For further information visit www.itc-holdings.com. ITC is a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., a leader in the North American regulated electric and gas utility industry. For further information visit www.fortisinc.com.

About the Iowa Rural Development Council

The [Iowa Rural Development Council](http://www.iowaruraldevelopmentcouncil.org) is a non-profit public-private partnership featuring members ranging from federal agencies to utilities, universities and community colleges and for-profit entities. The Council is a federal Farm Bill-authorized organization that seeks to empower rural communities and bring together partners to advance the interests of rural Iowa.

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