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For Immediate Release

Mount Ayr Day Care Study Awarded Power of Connection Grant *Center Relocation Assessment Gains \$5,000 Support from Rural Initiative*

MOUNT AYR, IA – For 24 years, the Ringgold County Child Care Center (RCCC) has been providing critical services to families in the Mount Ayr region. But next year, the Mount Ayr Community School District will take over four-year-old preschool and Head Start classes. And that will force RCCC to shift its service base to younger children and requiring an update to the existing facility. The planning for that transition will be aided in part through a \$5,000 Power of Connection grant administered jointly by ITC Midwest and the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC).

Ringgold County Economic Development Director Jodie Geist said the transition to younger children creates new opportunities for RCCC and for the entire region.

“The day care center is a critical need in our community,” Geist said. “With the change to a 0-3 day care, we will be able to add 30 spots for children, four to five full-time jobs and seven to eight part-time jobs. We cross our fingers that the HVAC system will hold on one more year. The staff at the center is wonderful, and they will make things work to the best of their abilities until this project has been completed.”

Geist said the RCCC board is working with an Indianola construction firm, but before the work can begin a series of engineering and design steps must be taken. She said the Power of Connection grant will help defray those early costs in what will ultimately be a \$700,000 project.

“This is a great project and much needed to maintain a day care facility in our community,” said Geist. “We are grateful to ITC Midwest and the IRDC for their partnership and for these grant dollars.”

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.

“Child care is obviously a critical challenge for many communities across Iowa – and Ringgold County is adjusting to a new environment by creating new opportunities,” said ITC Midwest President Dusky Terry. “Through the Power of Connection program in collaboration with the Iowa Rural Development Council, ITC Midwest is pleased to support the planning work that will assure Ringgold County has a successful child care center for many years to come.”

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.irdc.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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