

at several strategies from leaving area

doing what Roemick calls the small-business approach to economic development. He said they spend just as much time trying to bring in small businesses as they do trying to attract large companies.

One strategy the county is using is a tax revitalization plan. Roemick said the plan offers businesses a 10-year tax abatement if they spend from \$5,000 to \$100,000 to build a building or remodel an old one.

He said the businesses would receive 95 percent of their property taxes back in the first three years. In the fourth year, the percentage of the taxes they get back will decline by 10 percent and this will continue until the abatement expires.

Roemick said a lot of farmers have taken advantage of the tax-abatement plan by building new storage buildings. He said Mizer Milling and Beardsley Equity, two grain elevators in the county; used the abatement to expand.

Roemick said the county also works with Network Kansas, a company that teams with development associations to help small busi-

nesses and entrepreneurs in the state. The company works with the council to provide loans to businesses that want to expand.

He said the county is also working on developing business within the communities, focused on hunting, recreational and agricultural industries.

The council is helping hunting and recreational businesses through marketing strategies, he said. Beaver Creek Ranch, Beaver Creek Gamebirds, the Great Outdoor Gunshop, Lanka's Labs and Lanka's Gamebirds are examples of such businesses in the county, Roemick said.

The president said the council is focusing on companies that evolve around the mechanization of agriculture.

These companies would do things like consulting with farmers about customized spraying applications and using tractors with global positioning systems, he said.

grew during mid century, as 1900s came to end

a "rural" county.

Part of attracting new people to a community is attracting new businesses; creating a larger labor market and encouraging people to move to town. Toward that end, the city of Colby voted in an economic development sales tax in 2005. The quarter-cent tax is designed to help attract business that will bring in jobs.


Thomas County has had several successful projects, including the McCarty Dairy and expansion of Citizens Medical Center, that have brought a lot of jobs to the area. Citizens in particular continues to bring doctors into Colby who also bring their families. The most

recent arrival, Steven Bear, brought his wife and five children with him.

New workers at the McCarty Dairy also brought their families with them, adding to the Golden Plains School District, which includes Rexford, Selden and the surrounding rural area.

There have also been some failed projects that would have brought in workers, such as Embark Health.

The company, which sold end-of-life services, had planned to employ more than 100 workers here, but lack of cash forced it to close down earlier this year.



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