

Mini-summit sets priorities for region

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
Community leaders from the 18 northwest Kansas counties met Tuesday to look for ways to boost the area's economy and draw up priorities which will form the agenda for a regional economic summit in Goodland on Wednesday.

About 60 representatives with various backgrounds gathered at the Comfort Inn in Colby to develop ideas and specific things the state can do to help in the areas of agriculture, tourism, service business and production business.

Larry McCants, president of First National Bank of Goodland, who is the regional chairman, opened the session with some history about how the state developed at the end of the Civil War. After 140 years, there needed to be some new thinking "outside the box" about how ways left over from that early development could be changed, he said. "One thing about Kansans is that they will do anything you ask, but nothing of what you tell them to do," he said. "It is time for a new list of things that need to be done, and we need to keep in mind that strategic planning works."

McCants said the mini-summits — the one in Colby and one today in Hays — are designed to set the table for the regional summit to be held at the Goodland Elks Lodge from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Mountain time) Wednesday.

Lt. Gov. John Moore is leading the effort, which will culminate in the Kansas Prosperity Summit. There are six other summits being held across the state to develop regional priorities that will be drawn together on Oct. 1, in Wichita.

The state Department of Commerce, which Moore heads, is guiding the regional and statewide summits. McCants said the goal is to develop a statewide economic policy that is based on regional needs.

Mike Walker of the Docking Institute at Fort Hays State University gave the group some population and economic figures about the 18 counties to give them a perspective on the region as a basis for discussion.

The group was divided into segments by topic with a facilitator for each. These groups spent about 2 1/2 hours discussing and developing priorities to be forwarded to the regional summit.

Clare Gustin, representative of Sunflower Electric Power, was the facilitator for the ag group. Brenda McCants, chairman of the state film commission and a member of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau board, led the discussion on tourism. Randy Hrabe, director of Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission, worked with the production businesses. Ken Palmgren, an Edson farmer and former head of the Kansas Wheat Commission, was the facilitator for the ag group.

Each group brought their priorities back to a general wrap-up session, and these will be fleshed out by the university staff and McCants for the regional summit.

Priorities for the service industry group centered around the aging population, the number of people who are moving back to the area and those who are moving away from nearby metropolitan areas such as Denver.

They also felt improving commu-

nications and helping entrepreneurs start businesses were important. They discussed infrastructure needs, and said the state needs incentives for young people to stay or move into rural areas. Today, they said, we educate kids, send them to college and they move on to the cities. This "brain drain" needs to be addressed, the group said.

The production business section led by Hrabe said the top priority is to convince the population that agriculture can no longer solely support the economy. Changes in the industry have led to a need for less labor on the farms as they have gotten bigger. He said there are reasons to live on the High Plains, and that there is a good work ethic.

The group felt that "value-added" ag production — where farmers control some of the processing and marketing — is important, but that it depends on outside factors. They felt that there was potential for growth in existing businesses, and that there needs to be more investment in young people to bring them back after they go to college.

One suggestion was to develop

regional venture capital pools for business startups that can't get a bank loan. They felt that having good management in small businesses is important and that one thing that could be done would be to start a chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives to help businesses.

Hrabe said the group felt the biggest risk was not doing anything.

The tourism group said that marketing is the top priority, and that it should be a collaborative regional effort. Ms. McCants said there was a sense that criteria for existing state grant programs need to be revised to create a regional funding pool, and to reward regional efforts.

She said the group felt that convincing people believe that tourism is important will go a long way toward improving the image of the state.

Agri-tourism was something the group felt needed to be explored, going beyond the current hunting programs for pheasant, deer and other seasons. One suggestions was to support more prairie dog hunting as a means of controlling the rodents

and making money, and possibly as a new "cash crop" for farmers who have dog problems.

Thinking outside the box, she said, the group felt that something like a "dude farm" might be successful, drawing people from the cities to work on farms or take part in harvest.

Education was another major priority for the tourism group, who felt everyone in a town should be involved because a community's image is set by the first person a visitor contacts. McCants said the economic impact of tourism is a boost to the economy, and that positive awareness might pay off in the future.

The group suggested incentives at the state, region and local level, especially when trying to bring companies in looking to produce films or television programs in the region. McCants said the state lost out on Little House on the Prairie movie filming because Canada offered more incentives than Kansas.

The ag people, led by Palmgren, said people need to recognize the value of agriculture to the economy,

despite the drop in farm numbers. They said it is important to develop the ag infrastructure of the area, including storage and transportation.

He said there is a lot of interest in wind farms, but there may not be enough electric transmission lines to move the generated power to places where it is needed. He said that might be a higher priority after the recent blackout in the northeast part of the country.

Farmers need to make a profit for what they grow, the group said, and the state needs to relax regulations which hamper expansion of dairy and hog farms.

One suggestion to develop young people was a farm apprentice program with the help of the schools, banks and other organizations.

Palmgren said there is a need for tighter quality standards because sometimes customers are not getting what they pay for. The ag people believe there needs to be a plan for terrorism and a Kansas organization to sell Kansas products.

"Ag needs more people to keep the economy sound," Palmgren said. "We need strong downtowns."

Theater's new seats are ready for use

SEATS, from Page 1

doesn't keep him from taking to the road with his brother. At this time of the year, he said, the cattle don't need a lot of care. He said his wife can just check on them and get her dad to help if necessary.

Ted said his nephews took him into the business.

"They talked me into it," he said. "I wasn't doing anything else."

Ted said he farms a little and lives just 10 miles from Chris.

The guys don't just install seats, but also put in sound systems, curtains and anything else a theater may need.

"We do all things in theaters," Darrell said.

And they enjoy having a variety of projects. Darrell said his favorite thing to do depends on how long he spent on the last one.

"We get tired of doing the same thing over and over," he said.

"We like a variety," Chris said.

They have worked in a number of theaters around the country. Darrell and Chris said Chicago is their least

favorite city on account of the traffic. They said they had to drive clear across town in heavy traffic just to pick up a piece of paper.

Along the way, Darrell said, they had to stop on a bridge that Chris didn't like. It moved up and down, Chris said, which was kind of scary.

As for the theaters, Darrell said they are all pretty much the same in any state except for size. He said they had worked in theaters will 5,500 seats and 24 screens.

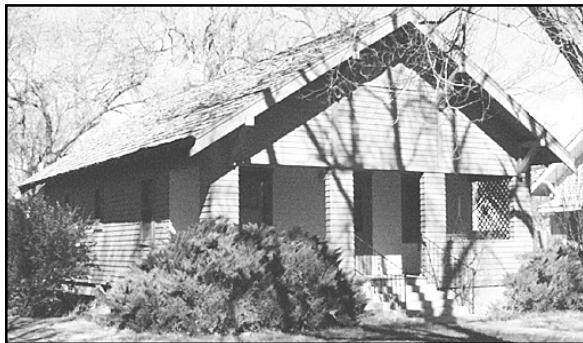
The brothers said the one thing the don't have a lot of time for in theaters is watching movies. They said they work 14-hour days most of the time. But they try to get a chance to see movies.

Chris said he wants to see Terminator 3 and is planning to see it sometime when he's on the road, since his wife doesn't want to see it with him.

It seems she doesn't share his taste. He said his favorite kinds of movies are science fiction and westerns.

It's an odd combination, Darrell said.

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Spanish Mass:
1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

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Minister: Tony Kafka
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Grades 1 through 5: 7 p.m.

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694-2242
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Sunday School: 10 am
Evening Service: 6 pm

Bible Baptist Church

Pastor: Glenn Hermanson
Fifth & Broadway
899-7368
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Morning Service: 10 am
Evening Service: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO
(719) 346-7984
Sacrament Meeting: 10 am
Sunday School: 11:15 am
Priesthood/Relief Society: 12 am

Iglesia Del Dios Vivo

La Luz Del Mundo
Spanish Speaking Church
Minister: Esteban Ortiz B.
1601 Texas • 899-5275
Daily Prayer: Sunday thru
Saturday: 5 am & 6 pm
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am

United Methodist Church

Brewster:
Pastor:
Worship Service: 10:45 am CST
Sunday School: 9:45 am CST
Winona:
Minister: Rev. Bob Winters
Worship Service: 9 am CST
Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Pastor: Loren Strait
Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233
Sunday: Worship Service: 10:30 am
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Activities: Junior High & High School Youth Groups,
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Kanorado United Methodist Church

Pastor: Leonard Cox
399-2468
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Worship Service: 10:15 am

Church of the Nazarene

Pastor: Matthew Delp
Third & Caldwell
899-2080 or 899-3797
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:50 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First United Methodist Church

1116 Sherman
899-3631
Pastor: Rev. Janet Hernandez
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Worship Service: 10:30 am

Goodland Bible Church

109 Willow Road • 899-6400
Pastor: Chad DeJong
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Morning Worship: 11 am
Evening Worship: 6 pm
Wednesday: AWANA (Winter)
and prayer: 7 p.m.

First Baptist Church

Pastor: Bud Chester
Fifth & Center • 899-3450
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Morning Worship: 10:30 am
Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Tuesday: Mens' Prayer Group: 6:00 am
Thursday: Night Bible Study: 7:00 pm

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

13th & Center
Church 890-2115 or Rectory 890-6969
Priest: Father Jerry Jones
Deacon: Sister Gretchen T. Good-Pankratz
Morning Prayer: 9:30 am, 4th & 5th Sundays
Holy Eucharist: 1st, 2nd and
3rd Sundays: 9:30 a.m.
Sr. Warden for emergencies during the week 899-3320

Grace Fellowship Church

104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423
Pastor: Bob Snyder •
Residence: 890-0134
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am
Worship Service: 11 am
Youth Group at Gattshall's at 5:30 pm
Adult Bible Study 6 pm

Seventh Day Adventist Church

1160 Cattletrail
Pastor: Arlin Cochran • 785-332-2888
Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 am
Worship Service: 11 am

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

13th & Sherman • 899-6161
Pastor: Scott Grimshaw
Sunday: Christian education/fellowship:
10:15 a.m.
Worship Service: 9 am
Wednesday: Confirmation: 6 pm

Church of Christ

401 Caldwell
899-6185
Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:45 am
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

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