

Atwood changing trends in positive way

By Ron Wilson

**Director
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development
at Kansas State University**
"Changing the trend lines." For those of us who study graphs and charts depicting the demographic trends of rural Kansas, the thought of redirecting those trends positively is a remarkable achievement. We've seen too many examples of long-term population loss, out-migration and declining jobs and school enrollments. Today we'll learn about a community-based initiative which is changing the trend lines in a positive way.

Last week, we learned about Chris Sramek who moved back to his hometown of Atwood in 2001 to create a private meteorology business. He wanted to be close to family and farm, but he saw his community facing many challenges and got

involved to make things better.

When the local economic development director retired, the board selected Chris Sramek to replace her. It was a part-time position, so it enabled Chris to continue to build his meteorology business at the same time.

In his new position, Chris got involved with bottom-up economic development efforts such as Ogallala Commons, a multi-state grass-roots initiative for sustainable development and a Nebraska initiative called HomeTown Competitiveness.

In 2008, Kansas Farm Bureau launched its own initiative based on the Nebraska model. It was called the Kansas HomeTown Prosperity Initiative. This model emphasizes local leadership, strong local development organizations, community philanthropy, and youth engagement, attraction and entre-

preneurship.

Atwood/Rawlins County was one of three locations selected for the Kansas HomeTown Prosperity Initiative.

This would then become the Kansas Entrepreneurial Communities Initiative, which supports entrepreneurs and trains business coaches in partnership with NetWork Kansas, the Kansas Small Business Development Centers, and others.

So what happened in Atwood? Lots of things, according to a report from Kansas Farm Bureau. A new dental clinic was brought to Atwood after three years of work. A new High Plains Food Co-op was created, through which 40 farmers direct market their products to Denver using online orders and monthly deliveries.

Atwood became the state's first E-Community as designated by NetWork Kansas. Improvements

were completed at the high school and the movie theater downtown. An entrepreneurship fair was conducted including a business plan competition for junior high and high school students.

One interesting element of the change in Atwood is the high level of leadership by women.

"Female leadership in this whole process has doubled in the past ten years," Chris said. The report notes that Atwood is full of strong female leaders such as the former mayor, city council members, economic development director and the chamber of commerce director.

Another change is regional cooperation. Students in the Rawlins County town of McDonald cross the county line to go to school in Cheyenne County, which creates some intense rivalries. "Twenty years ago, that was like the enemy line," Chris said.

"Now we're doing projects together."

Such cooperation is important for rural communities like McDonald, which has a population of 155 people. Now, that's rural.

Still, what are the bottom line results? One finding by Kansas Farm Bureau was that personal income by non-farm proprietorships in Rawlins County grew to record high levels.

Another finding came from the 2010 Census: For the first time since the 1930s Census, Rawlins County grew in population - a stark contrast to the typical rural pattern of population loss.

What does this mean for the schools, for example? From 2000 to 2007, local school enrollment had plunged by 34 percent.

But from 2008 to 2011, enrollments have stabilized or even slightly grown. For the first time in

a long time, the lines on the charts are trending upward.

In September 2011, Kansas Farm Bureau held its annual governor's tour in Rawlins County. In addition to a farm tour, some 60 Rawlins County High School students came to the community meeting with the governor.

"The governor turned to the students and asked, 'If you had an opportunity, how many of you would want to come back to Atwood?'" Chris said.

"In contrast to the old days, a most all the kids raised their hands. That's when you sit there and think, 'This is making a difference.'"

We commend Chris Sramek and all those involved with the Kansas HomeTown Prosperity Initiative for helping move those trend lines up.

Band instructor receives honor

Goodland School District Band Instructor Deanne Langness was named as the Northwest Kansas Music Educators Association's Outstanding Junior High Music Educator at their meeting on Saturday, Nov. 5, at Hays.



Langness

Her students actively participate in honor concert and Jazz bands and some have participated at the state level honor jazz band and concert band. Students also compete in regional and state solo and ensemble festivals, High Plains Marching Festival, large group festivals and community performances.

Langness is a member of PEO, Kansas Music Educators Association, Music Educators National Conference, International Clarinet Association, National Music Club and is a lifetime member of Sigma Alpha Iota.

She graduated from Garden City High School with High Honors,

Garden City Community College with two Associates of Science and a Bachelor of Music Education from

Fort Hays State University Summa Cum Laude. She did graduate work at Kansas State University at Manhattan and Kansas Newman University at Wichita earning her Master in Education Degree in the field of curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in English for speakers of other languages.

She was nominated for the Fort Hays State University Torch Award and received the 2006 High School Teacher of the Year Award from the Northwest Kansas Music Educators Association.

After graduating from Fort Hays State University she was a 5 to 12 band and 7 to 12 vocal position at Atwood. After four years she taught in Johnson City and Oberlin before moving to Goodland.

High Plains Museum looking for information

The High Plains Museum and the City of Goodland Police Department are working together to create an exhibit that details the history of the Goodland Police. Director Karen Anderson of the museum would like anyone with information about the police to contact her. She

is also looking for objects related to the history of the police that could be loaned to the museum during the exhibit run in 2012.

For questions call (785) 890-4595 or email museumdir@goodlandks.us.

Worship warms the heart



Calvary Gospel Church

Pastor: Randy and Mary Payne
Fourth & College • 890-3605

Sunday: Kid's Church: 10 am
Morning Service: 10 am

Prayer and Praise: 5:00 p.m. except last Sunday of the month

Wednesday: Royal Rangers, Missionettes 6:30 p.m. during school year

Youth @ the Rock House, Sixth & Caldwell: 6:30 p.m.

Life Groups - Call for information

Join us on Facebook

www.calvarygospel.net

Goodland United Methodist Church

1116 Sherman 899-3631

Pastors: Dustin and Shelly Petz

Saturday: Worship: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: Adult Classes: 9:15 a.m.

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday: Wednesday Nite Live

5:45 - 6:45 p.m. Simple Supper "Free will Offering

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Classes for all ages

Pleasant Home Church

Serving the rural community

for over 120 years

Rt. 1, Box 180 • 3190 Road 70

(785) 694-2807

Pastor: Perry Baird

Sunday: Worship Service: 9 a.m.

Sunday School: 10 a.m.

Promiseland Baptist Church

Pastor: Rick Holmes • 890-7082

225 W. 16th

(785) 890-7944

Sunday: Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.

Morning Service: 11:30 a.m.

Evening Service: 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Bible Study Service 6:30 p.m.

Thursdays: Adult Bible Study 7-8 p.m.

Bible Baptist Church

Pastor: Clifford Middlebrooks

Fifth & Broadway

890-7368

Sunday: Sunday School: 9 a.m.

Morning Service: 10 a.m.

Evening Service: 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 p.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO

(719) 346-7984

Sacrament Meeting: 10 a.m.

Sunday School: 11:15 a.m.

Priesthood/Relief Society: 12 a.m.

Iglesia Del Dios Vivo

La Luz Del Mundo

Spanish Speaking Church

Minister: Esteban Ortiz B.

1601 Texas • 899-5275

Daily Prayer: Sunday thru

Saturday: 5a.m. & 6 p.m.

Sunday: Sunday School: 10 a.m.

United Methodist Church Brewster

Pastor: Dorine Chambers

Worship Service: 10:45 a.m. CST

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. CST

Winona:

Minister: Sheryl Johnson

Worship Service: 9 a.m. CST

Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Pastor: Rev. Carol Edling Jolly

Eighth & Arcade • 890-5233

Sunday: Church School - All ages 9:15 a.m.

Worship 10:30 a.m.

Youth Group: 1st and 3rd Sundays 5-7 p.m.

Thursday: Prayer Class - Noon

Pastor Carol's Class 5:30 p.m.

www.goodlandfccdoc.org

Kanorado United Methodist Church

Pastor: Leonard Cox

399-2468

Sunday: Sunday School: 9 a.m.

Worship Service: 10:15 a.m.

Church of the Nazarene

Pastor: Bob Willis

Third & Caldwell

899-2080 or 899-3797

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

Worship Service: 10:50 a.m.

Evening Service: 6 p.m.

Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

13th & Center

Church 890-2115 or 890-7245

Services: 5 p.m. Saturday evening

Goodland Bible Church

109 Willow Road • 899-6400

Pastor: Chad DeJong

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship: 10:45 a.m.

6 p.m. AWANA during school

Evening Worship: 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 6:30 youth group

Growth groups call for information

www.goodlandbible.org

First Baptist Church

Pastor: Travis Blake

1121 Main

890-3450

Sunday:

Coffee fellowship: 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship: 10 a.m.

Sunday School: 11:15 a.m.

Thursday: Bible study 9:30 a.m.

Wheatridge Center

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Pastor: Father Norbert Dlabal

307 W. 13th • 890-7205

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

5-5:45 p.m. Saturday or by appointment

Mass Schedule:

Saturday: 6 pm, Sunday: 10:30 am

Spanish Mass:

Sunday: 12:30 pm

Harvest Evangelical Free Church

521 E. Hwy. 24 • 890-6423

Pastor: Brian Fugleberg

Sunday: Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday:

Senior High: 6:30 p.m. at the church

Junior High: 6:30 p.m. at the church

www.goodlandefree.com

Seventh Day Adventist Church

1160 Cattletrail

Pastor: Jerry Nowack

Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 a.m.

Worship Service: 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

13th & Sherman • 890-6161

Pastor: Darian Hybl

Sunday: Christian education/fellowship:

10:15 a.m.

Worship Service: 9 a.m.

Church of Christ

401 Caldwell

890-6185

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 a.m.

Worship Service: 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 p.m.

The following sponsors urge YOU to attend your chosen House of Worship this Sabbath:

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Kansas
South of Ruleton: 40± acres with home, shop, misc buildings. \$99,000
Hamilton County: 960± acres. All 27-255-42. E2 28-255-42. \$1,344,000
320± acres CRP. 2 contracts expire 2012. S2 9-265-41. \$448,000
160± acres expired CRP. NW47-215-39. \$192,000
Sherman County: New...160± acres dry land. SE4 14-7-39. \$320,000

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