

Cattle drive heritage to be celebrated

By Ron Wilson, Director
Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University

The calls came to Kansas from Germany, China, Japan, Namibia, and all over the country. What do you suppose they were calling about? Would you believe, a cattle drive? This isn't a cattle drive from a hundred years ago. It's a modern event that's drawing international attention. It will include longhorns, horses, campfires and cowboy singing. It's the Great American Cattle Drive, and the proceeds go to benefit the National Drovers Hall of Fame.

Say "howdy" to Mark Roehrman, President of the National Drovers Hall of Fame Board of Directors, sponsor of the cattle drive. Mark is owner of several downtown businesses and buildings in Ellsworth, where the proposed National Drovers Hall of Fame will be located. Mark has rural roots, having grown up in the nearby town of Kanopolis, population 541 people. Now, that's rural.

Mark explains that a "drover" was America's first real cowboy. It was the name given to those cowboys that drove the cattle from Texas to Kansas in those historic cattle drives of yesteryear. Their destinations were places like Abilene, Caldwell, Newton, Wichita, Dodge City, and Ellsworth.

Ellsworth appreciates that western history. A store named the Drovers Mercantile in downtown Ellsworth is an example.

Three years ago a visionary group of citizens got together to honor that history in another special way: By organizing a National Drovers Hall of Fame and planning to locate it in a historic building in downtown Ellsworth.

The building has been called the architectural gem of Ellsworth's historic downtown. It was built by a man named Edward Wellington, who graduated from Harvard and came west to Kansas. He founded a sheep ranch near Ellsworth and then came into town where he and a partner built a beautiful building to house his insurance, abstracting, and real estate business. That building is still called the Insurance Building, although it has housed various enterprises since then and has stood vacant for some 20 years.

Board members of the National Drovers Hall of Fame point out that this historic building would be a wonderful site for the hall of fame and museum. In the three years since the board has been organized, they have achieved non-profit status from the IRS, worked with a structural engineer to stabilize the

building and patch the roof, and gotten the building listed on the state and national register of historic places.

Remodeling the building and constructing the hall of fame and museum will require some major fundraising. So the board is sponsoring this special event to honor this western history and serve as a fundraiser: A modern-day version of the Great American Cattle Drive.

At the end of September 2006, a three-day event is planned to relive the days of the drovers driving Texas longhorns up the Chisholm Trail to the Ellsworth rail head. A herd of 64 longhorns will come from Oklahoma for the event. Riders will pay a fee to participate and drive the cattle cross country. They can provide their own horse or lease one.

Each night there will be a chuckwagon supper and singing around the campfire, featuring the wonderful cowboy singer Michael Martin Murphey. In Ellsworth, Johnny Western will be featured at a cowboy concert on Friday night and Michael Martin Murphey will do the End of the Trail concert on Saturday night. Proceeds will go to benefit the National Drovers Hall of Fame and the preservation and use of the historic Insurance Building to be its site.

For more information, go to www.nationaldrovers.com.

The calls have come to Kansas from coast to coast, and as far away as Germany, China, Japan, and Namibia. It demonstrates the fascination which people around the globe have with the American west. This is part of the Kansas legacy, which too many Kansans take for granted.

So we commend Mark Roehrman and all those involved with the National Drovers Hall of Fame and the Great American Cattle Drive for making a difference with their creativity and appreciation of history. I'm thankful they are demonstrating a great deal of drive.

And there's more — about 800 miles more — in our next column. The mission of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development is to enhance rural development by helping rural people help themselves. The Kansas Profile radio series and columns are produced with assistance from the K-State Research and Extension Department of Communications News Unit.

Audio and text files of Kansas Profiles are available at <http://www.kansasprofile.com>. For more information about the Huck Boyd Institute, interested persons can visit <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/huckboyd/>.

Brewster royalty



JAY KELLEY for the Colby Free Press
Andrew Starns and Sarah Flanders were crowned king and queen Friday during Brewster High School's homecoming festivities.

Airman graduates basic training

Air Force Airman Jared R. Simmering has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Simmering

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is the son of Dan and Angie Simmering of E. Cherry St., Colby, Kan. Simmering is a 2006 graduate of Colby High School.

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Area residents complete insurance class

The Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging announced the following people have completed a three-day training session to become Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas counselors: Thomas Melroy, Norton; Jessie Holzmeister, Logan County Hospital, Oakley; MaryAnn Schmitt, Prairie Manor Good Samaritan Center, Sharon Springs; Jane Encinias, First Call for Help, Hays; and Kyler Fetters and Erica Landis,

SKIL of Western Kansas, Hays. The following counselors were recertified: Glenna Clingsmith and Mary Ramey, Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging, Hays; Carol Guyer, Goodland; Kathy Lee, Centennial Towers, Hays; Kristin Fairbank and Brad Rohr, SKIL of Western Kansas, Hays; Larry Bodine, Hays; Mary Lou Donahey, Logan; Donna Swager, Wheat Ridge Acres, Goodland; Virginia Terry, Goodland Regional Medical

Center; Joanne Wendelin, Decatur County Hospital, Oberlin; Louise Berndt, Quinter.

The counseling program is funded by a grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. The purpose is to provide non-biased trained volunteers to assist with questions and problems concerning Medicare and other health insurance. Contact the agency at 1-800-432-7422 or (785) 628-8204 for a referral to a counselor.

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