

Ostmeyer hopes to be promoted to the Senate

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the classroom, he said, and that is his priority, but he wouldn't support a property tax increase to fund education.

Ostmeyer said property taxes are already high enough, and are starting to create a burden for small businesses. He suggested that the sales tax could be used to fund education instead.

Ostmeyer also touched on the state's budget. He said the state was \$50 million to \$60 million positive this year, and the numbers are look-

ing better.

He said the state is still feeling the effects of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The state has a tax structure in place, he said, but the economy still hasn't turned around yet.

Ostmeyer said other issues he sees include a law on used car valuations for sales tax purposes that went into effect July 1, and the destination sales tax issue that was put on hold until Jan. 1.

He said the way the car sales tax law works right now is a "bad idea." The law requires people to pay sales tax on a used car based the book

value instead of what they actually paid. It only applies if someone buys a car from a private seller or auction and not a dealership. People who buy junkers have found themselves paying tax on the price of a vehicle in much better shape.

The law was passed because tax officials thought people often understated what they paid in private transactions to keep taxes down.

"It's something we can fix easily," Ostmeyer said. "Something has to be done."

He said the destination sales tax is "detrimental to small business,"

adding the state will have to see what the federal government is going to do before the state moves.

On the horizon, Ostmeyer said, he sees several matters that could be important in northwest Kansas, including health care, an animal identification system for cattle, homeland security and economic development.

He said health care will probably continue to be an issue as counties must deal with insurance for their employees and medical lawsuits keep cropping up.

"I'm not sure where we need to

start," Ostmeyer said, adding that the health care savings accounts the Legislature approved are a start.

For farmers, he said, animal identification tags and emergency response plans for counties in case of disease are going to be an issue, and federal money is available for that and homeland security use.

He said economic development will take time, but efforts will benefit the entire state, including western and northwest Kansas. He emphasized taking care of the area and the people here, including getting people to come back.

Ostmeyer said he is pro-business and thinks communities need good schools, hospitals and more in order to survive.

"The best economic development a community has is its own people," he added.

Ostmeyer said he isn't in favor of more casinos in Kansas. He said there are two many problems associated with gambling, problems that far outstrip the financial benefit of having them in the state.

"I don't support gambling," he said, adding that he would instead favor tax increases over gambling.

Monument farmer wants to work for Kansas families

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but force teachers to beg for money for supplies from parents.

Peterson said he isn't convinced that the state needs to raise taxes.

"As your state senator, I will work to solve our budget problems in three steps. First, I will make sure that all administrative costs in our state government are similar to those of a well-run business or charity — 3 to 5 percent of total costs.

"Second, I will argue forcefully

that our spending priorities change. We need to spend more for our schools and less in other areas of our government.

"Finally, if taxes must be raised, I will fight any increase in property or vehicle taxes. These taxes hurt our seniors who are on fixed incomes."

Peterson feels controlling health care costs and economic development are important to northwest Kansas..

"I will work for the Kansas family morally and physically," he said.

"I believe that it is morally wrong to take money from cigarette, alcohol, and gambling syndicates. This is dirty money. These companies prey on families. My opponent takes their money.

"Physically, I will support families by working to improve our health care, our schools, and our economic opportunities. We should not force families to choose between proper health care and food. We should not force families to gamble by going without some type of basic health insurance. I will

work to help these families.

"I will work hard for economic development in Senate District 40. I will use every opportunity to promote northwest Kansas as a great place to live, retire, and do business. I will work to build networks between local entrepreneurs and venture capitalists.

"Finally, I want to make Kansas 'senior friendly,' and promote northwest Kansas as a retirement destination.

"We have many blessings that make this area a great place to retire:

good health care, good transportation, low crime, low cost homes, clean air and solid community volunteers. We need to count our blessings and use what God has given us.

Peterson and his wife Rebekah have two children, ages 12 and 10. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kansas with a major in geography and quantitative methods (statistics). Two years ago, he became nationally registered as an emergency medical

technician and is a volunteer with the Logan County Emergency Medical Service.

He is the past chairman of the U.S. Farm Service Agency state committee and now is vice-chair of the Kansas Agricultural Remediation Board. He was appointed to the board by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and confirmed by the Kansas Senate in January.

Peterson serves as one of the northwest Kansas representatives on the Rural Life Task Force appointed by Gov. Sebelius.

Leaders went over year's hits and misses in economic development

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Leaders went over the hits and misses in economic development of the past year with about 45 members at the Sherman County Economic Development Council's annual meeting last Tuesday at the Goodland Elks Lodge.

Executive Director Carolyn Applegate said the office has received inquiries for a lot of projects.

"Most of the time, we don't talk about the ones that didn't happen," Applegate said, "but there are many different projects going on at the same time."

Among the misses she listed for the year was a request for a 120,000-square-foot building with access to

75,000 gallons of water per day.

"We were not in the running on this," Applegate said, "but we do check out every possibility.

"We were excited about an aircraft museum from California that wanted to relocate. We worked with the High Plains Museum to see if we couldn't put something together using the first helicopter as a key. We didn't get that.

"There was a medical warehouse out of Texas that wanted to locate in western Kansas on I-70. We pitched the old Gibson's building, but the company chose the western Kansas city of Lenexa.

"Cracker Barrel was another that we worked with for four months, and their decision came down to

making money on Tuesday and Wednesday. A presentation was hand-delivered to their corporate office showing the latest figures for traveling on I-70, and they did give it special consideration before saying no."

Among other ongoing projects Applegate said are the possibility of having a Veterans Affairs outreach clinic in cooperation with Goodland Regional Medical Center.

"We have positioned ourselves very well with the VA," she said. "We do not know when a decision on this might be made in the next year or two.

"We were working with Canola growers in Washington about shipping their product down here by rail

to the ADM sunflower plant at Caruso. The growers seemed pleased, and Kyle (Railroad) and ADM were working with the growers, but nothing has happened recently. ADM said it would take about six weeks to switch the plant from handling sunflowers to handling canola.

"The move of 21st Century Bean out of Texas to Ruleton is waiting on final plans, and I have not heard anything more."

When Applegate came to Sherman County two years ago, the county had received a \$90,000 micro loan grant, but not one small business loan had been processed. State red tape had the program bogged down.

She reported that 57 businesses contacted the office about the program and that seven loans had been processed using all \$90,000.

"When the money comes back in, we will be able to loan it back out," she said, "and can modify the process to streamline it."

She said the office had been glad to help the Goodland School District find an eBay advertising expert who helped sell the Edson Gym for \$50,000 to a couple from California, who are going to move here and open a sheep-milk soap factory.

"We were happy to assist in this," Applegate said.

Randy Hrabe of the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development said his office is working on a tax

credit program to raise \$2 million for business development in northwest Kansas.

"It takes partnership to make things happen," Hrabe said.

Rick Breninger, owner of Sunflower Computer, said he appreciated the support from the economic development office, noting that his was one of the businesses that received a micro loan.

"It really helped me," he said. "With it I was able to buy some stock to be able to take care of my customers needs, and a sign so people could see where we are.

"It must be working, because we are getting known all over the area, and I appreciate the work that was done to help me get the loan."

Nominations open for three positions on Economic Development Council

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Nominations for three positions on the Sherman County Economic Development Council were opened Tuesday at the agency's annual meeting.

Council Chairman John Garcia said the nominations will remain open until noon on Tuesday, Nov. 9, when the council will meet at Gambino's to vote on the three names to be submitted to the county commissioners for appointment to three-year terms.

Garcia said the terms of Patty Eckhardt, Harlan D. House and Dave Daniels are expiring.

He asked for nominations from the floor, and the names of Gary Slough of S&T Telephone; Rick Breninger of Sunflower Computer; Max Alderman, a farmer; and Colleen Smith manager at Hank's Cafe were nominated. Daniels was

nominated for reappointment.

Garcia said he had been contacted by Dale Neill of Goodland Sinclair as a nominee.

Anyone interested in being nominated for the council can contact Garcia or another member.

"I want to talk to you from my heart," Garcia told the crowd at the Elk's Lodge. "We all live in Sherman County. We may not always have the same opinion.

"I want to welcome you because you are the people we represent, and we want to tell you the good things. We want to hear from you about your ideas.

"There are challenges out there. We have made it through tough times, and we have done it because we are together. We are not perfect, but we will keep trying if we work together.

"When we come together for the best interest of Sherman County, we

will continue to make progress. We are headed up."

There was some concern that the economic development office will have to move very soon because the landlord, Pete Whalen, has a potential buyer for the building.

Vice Chairman Daniels said there was a verbal agreement with the landlord about the office, but he was not sure where it stood because the landlord was out of town.

He said the situation came to their attention because Kyle Gordon, who has been subletting space to the council, apparently had not been paying all the bills. The situation was discovered when the city came to cut the power because the utility bill had not been paid. Daniels said the executive committee may have to be called for a special meeting if things change before the next meeting.

Duane Timm reported that the

incentives committee had met on Oct. 4, and decided they need to meet with City Manager Ron Pickman and the Sherman County commissioners to get a clear idea of what each is willing to offer new businesses.

Steve West reported that the Industrial Park committee had been working with the Goodland Development Corp. to reconvene the park board.

"The Industrial Park dates years back," West said. "We want to be able to talk to people who might want to locate in the park. We are to assist them, and there is a company interested in investing."

Don Newell, head of the web site committee, said the committee has met and worked up a proposal.

"This is a tool to sell our community," Newell said. "We need a place for them to go to find out about economic development opportunities."

Presentations from those interested in developing the web site are to be presented next month.

"We want to have links to as many sites as possible," he said.

The next regular council meeting will be 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 16. The council will meet at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 9, at Gambino's to select council members.

Internet tonight! Call 899-2338.

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