

Travel industry helps entire area

By SHARON CORCORAN
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An area's biggest industries are important to its economic development, and in Kansas, the travel and tourism industry is one of the main players.

The travel industry has a big impact, said Roger Hrabe, vice president of the Northwest Kansas Travel Council and economic development director for Rooks County in Stockton. People are spending a lot of money to visit Kansas, he said, and you can't ignore travel and tourism as an economic development tool.

Though many tend to think of tourism as the ocean and mountains, he said, it has an impact in Kansas, which has neither. People come to see the largest ball of twine in Cawker City, he said, to hunt or fish or to experience rural life — it all brings money in from outside. Even people on their way to the mountains have to stop off to eat, buy gas or spend the night.

A lot of economic development people probably don't make the connection between tourism, he said, but in 2004, travel and tourism brought \$5.6 billion into Kansas, providing 166,000 jobs and \$3.5 billion in wages.

The council promotes 18 counties of northwest Kansas, Hrabe said — Sherman, Wallace, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Thomas, Logan, Decatur, Sheridan, Gove, Norton, Graham, Trego, Phillips, Rooks, Ellis, Smith,

Osborne and Russell.

The 18 counties work well together, said Connie Grafel, secretary of the council and marketing director of the Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development Corp.

"One of us probably couldn't draw many people in," she said, "but if people come in for a few days and go around the area, we can give them plenty to do. We work well together as a region."

The council spends the most money on the Ultimate Guide to Northwest Kansas, Mr. Hrabe said, and attending tourism and travel trade shows.

"We promote the whole area," he said, "attractions, historical, cultural and recreation."

One community wouldn't have the money to do it alone, Ms. Grafel said, and wouldn't have as much to offer.

Someone coming to Oberlin might stop in Bird City for steak on the way, she said, and that's how the council can work to help travelers experience the whole area.

Hunting and fishing are the biggest draws here, he said; at trade shows in Kansas City and Denver, there is definitely a market for outdoor sports. The council also markets agritourism, he said, whether it be corn mazes, working farms or a bed and breakfast with nature-based activities.

The state has been promoting agritourism for several years, he

said; it's a growing industry. The state has formed an agri-tourism advisory council, said Donna Price, president of the travel council and director of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Mrs. Price serves on the advisory group, which has held regional agritourism conferences. Agritourism is huge, she said; it's definitely growing.

The travel council has partnered with several organizations, Price said, to pay for a study by Fermata to increase nature-based tourism. The study will take time, she said, but it will pull out Kansas' assets and give the groups direction in marketing them.

The Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the travel council, Southwest Tourism Group, Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Association (knowns as wKREDA), the Travel and Tourism Division of the state Department of Commerce, the Department of Wildlife and Parks and Fort Hays State University all are involved in the study, which should give more to reach visitors.

The marketing may include advertising on television and in magazines, she said; Fermata did this type of study on the Flint Hills region, and it was featured in the April issue of *National Geographic* in a 20-page spread.

The travel council does a lot to promote the area to people from

other states, Mr. Hrabe said, but doesn't leave out Kansans. The council always has a booth at the Kansas Sampler Festival, he said, which is a huge event for the state.

The Sampler encourages Kansans to visit their own state, Hrabe said, and to preserve our rural culture.

About 7,000 people attended the event the last two years in Garden City, he said; it gets enough attention that other states were coming to see how they can emulate it.

There is a formula to determine how much money travelers bring to a community, Grafel said; you take the county's annual guest tax and divide it by the number of the percent collected. Take that times 100, she said, to get gross annual hotel sales, then divide it by .40 because 40 percent of the money people spend is for lodging and the other 60 percent for other things, such as food, shopping and fuel. That will get you the total community-direct income from overnight travel, Grafel said.

Using that formula with Decatur County's 2006 guest tax, you would take the tax of \$10,217 and divide it by 3 because the county collects 3 percent. Then take that times 100 to get gross hotel sales for the year of \$340,567. Divide that by .40 to get \$851,417 community-direct income for overnight travel in just one county.

Travel and tourism is not the answer to concerns about population growth in northwest Kansas, Hrabe said; it's just a piece of the puzzle, and it takes a lot of pieces to make something happen.

Announcement of Child Nutrition Programs

Unified School District 294 131 East Commercial Oberlin, KS 67749
 Unified School District 294, (131 East Commercial, Oberlin, KS 67749) announces its participation in the Child Nutrition Programs administered by the Kansas State Department of Education. Local school officials have adopted the following household income guidelines for determining eligibility for Child Nutrition Program benefits.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES, SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008		
Household Size	Free Benefits	Reduced Price Benefits
1	\$ 13,273	\$18,889
2	\$ 17,797	25,327
3	22,321	31,765
4	26,845	38,203
5	31,369	44,641
6	35,893	51,079
7	40,417	57,517
8	44,941	63,955
9	49,465	70,393
10	53,989	76,831
11	58,513	83,269
12	63,037	89,707
For each additional household member add	+4,524	+6,438

Application forms and an informational letter to households are available at the principal's business office in each school. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. An application for reduced price or free Child Nutrition Program benefits cannot be approved unless it is complete.

For school officials to determine eligibility the households receiving Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Families (TAF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits must list the children's names, the Food Stamp, TAF or FDPIR case number, and the signature of an adult household member. Households not receiving Food Stamps, TAF, or FDPIR benefits must list names of everyone in the household, the amount of income each household member now receives, source of income, the Social Security number of the household member who signs the application or a statement that the household member does not possess one, and the signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct. The information is confidential and will be used only for the purpose of determining eligibility. The eligibility status may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials.

In certain cases, foster children are also eligible for Child Nutrition Program benefits. If a household wishes to apply for Child Nutrition Program benefits for foster children living with them, the household should contact the school for more information.

Under provisions of the reduced price and free benefit policy, the Determining Official will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the Determining Official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal may make a request either orally or in writing for a hearing on the decision. The Hearing Official is:

Dr. Pat Cullen, Superintendent of Schools, 131 East Commercial, Oberlin, KS 67749 785-475-3805

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Each school and/or the district's/organization's main office has a copy of the policy for reduced price and free benefits which may be reviewed by any interested party.

Preserves offer alternatives

Pheasant hunters who live in Kansas and Nebraska have been lucky to be able to hunt on both private and public lands.

For many, it's become more difficult to locate landowners who will allow access to hunt on their property.

One alternative is using a hunting preserve.

Well-run private hunting preserves offer longer seasons, larger bag limits and more consistent results than open field hunting. They are also less crowded and much safer.

More importantly, there is more action. There's no better place to train a new hunter — spouse, son, daughter or friend — than at a hunting preserve.

Preserves also are a more convenient way to enjoy a day in the field.

Preserve businesses are not for everybody, but for the hunter who is in a pinch for time, or wants immediate action or pampering, it is great.

Preserves provide everything from a warm cup of coffee in a clubhouse — heated by a pot-bellied stove — after shooting a warm-up round of trap to working with top-notch dogs in the field.

Hunters can choose half-day or full-day hunts, which sometimes include a hot lunch.

In a busy world, it is hard for time-pressed hunters to find a more convenient and flexible way to pursue their hobby.



The Jayhawker

By Jim Merriott

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It can be more economical for an out-of-state hunter to use a reserve because they will save money on a guide, an out-of-state license and probably lodging, meals and gasoline. Preserves will even dress out your birds.

It usually runs an out-of-state hunter about \$25 per bird on a game preserve, or around \$500 per trip on a regular hunting trip with no guarantee of taking home game.

Hunters don't have to purchase licenses as they are not required on private for-pay preserves. Hunters pay for the game as they shoot and receive a receipt of purchase.

It all depends on what a hunter wants and what they are willing to spend.

Hunting preserves are state-licensed areas that offer extended seasons or year-round hunting for ring-necked pheasants, bobwhite quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge, mallard ducks, wild turkey and other birds, depending on locale.

They are open to the public on a daily fee or an annual membership basis, or both.

If you are looking for a different experience, maybe a hunting preserve is it.

For information, see Black's Wing & Clay website at blackswingandclay.com or write Black's Sporting Directories, Box 2029, 43 West Front St., Suite 11, Red Bank, N.J., 07701. Phone (732) 224-8700 or fax (732) 741-2827.



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Local construction firm needing construction workers.

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 Call Sappa Valley Construction,
 Oberlin, Kansas 785-475-3130



THE OBERLIN HERALD

and the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce welcome ASC Towing and Repair to the business community

The Chamber Board welcomed Chuck and Susan Harms, who recently opened ASC Towing and Repair at their home at the former Danny and Judy Elwood farmstead at the south edge of Oberlin. They moved to Oberlin from Kersey, Colo. Their services

include 24 hour towing and roadside services; free removal of unwanted scrap iron, automobile, truck, recreational vehicles and machinery, in any condition.

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers to *The Oberlin Herald*:

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Community Hosp/young couple

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ad in Goodland