

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lana Gordon at 3:30 P.M. on February 7, 2008 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Robert Olson- excused

Committee staff present:
Emalene Correll, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Ryan Hoffman, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jason Long, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Matt Todd, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Ann Deitcher, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:
Secretary Dave Kerr, Commerce Department
Carole Jordan, Commerce Dept., Dir. of Agricultural Marketing & Commercial Development
Renee Lippincott, Representative, Office of Rural Opportunity, Sterling, KS
Wally Kearns, State Director, Kansas Small Business Development Center

Representative Hill offered a conceptional motion to introduce legislation relating to the economic impact on Emporia by the closing of Tyson businesses. This was seconded by Representative Treaster and passed on a voice vote.

The Chair introduced Wally Kearnes whose testimony focused on disaster recovery assistance and the use of the additional funding provided the KSBDC. (Attachment 1).

Mr. Kearnes told the Committee that between May 10, 2007 and February 1, 2008, the Kansas Small Business Development Center provided 2,383 hours of staff time to disaster recovery assistance at the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) in Greensburg, Haviland, Trousdale and southeastern Kansas.

The KSBDC assisted home owners and business owners through one-on-one counseling, over the phone or online in the following areas: Personal financial statements; applying for direct loans from SBA; reconstructing profit and loss statements and balance sheets; rebuilding databases/computer recovery; business plans; financial projections and, goals and business recovery strategy.

Their goal is to meet with approximately 60 businesses that desire to rebuild in Greensburg. They will utilize the diverse expertise within the KSBDC and over 400 resource partners enrolled in NetWork Kansas.

Questions and answers followed.

Appearing next was Carole Jordan who gave a status report on the Office of Rural Opportunity. (Attachment 2).

Ms Jordan spoke of the Governor's Rural Initiative which was passed by the Kansas Legislature in 2007 and offered five rural development "enhancements". These consisted of Office of Rural Opportunity, (ORO); Small Communities Improvement Program (SCIP); Community Capacity Building Grant (CCBG); Kansas Small Business Development Center (KSBDC) Enhancement and Kansas Main Street Enhancement.

Renee Lippincott spoke briefly regarding her role as an ORO Representative saying that her personal motto is "whatever it takes to get the job done" and she appreciates the far-sitedness used in the creation of her position.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Economic Development and Tourism Committee at 3:30 P.M. on February 7, 2008 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

Secretary Kerr spoke to the Committee in answer to the question as to how Sterling College was chosen initially to partner with the Commerce Department. He said that the president of Sterling College called and asked what role they could play in the process. He felt that since there were more “rural kids” enrolled in the smaller colleges around the state, tapping into their creativity and knowledge of rural Kansas would be helpful in solving the problems in rural Kansas.

When the college president was asked if he would be willing to provide office space as well as additional resources if the Department were to relocate on their campus. In turn, the Department would tap into their faculty and students in terms of real live value-added resources they had to help these small towns do things like market research, strategic planning and business plans.

Following this, Secretary Kerr approached the Community College System to see if they would be willing to host two other sites as trials to provide the same type of service.

The thought was that it not only would provide a whole level expertise for the community but also would provide those students with real life work experience before they get out of school and also builds their ties with rural Kansas and how they can be involved in communities so they’d be less likely to leave Kansas.

Secretary Kerr pointed out that the bottom line was they got free office space, a free computer system and all the resources they have to offer without cost to the State.

Questions and answers followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2008.