



SB 187 – Extending the Rural Opportunity Zones Program

Prepared for the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
By Christy Hopkins, Director of Greeley County Community Development
Room 548-S, The Statehouse
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Greeley County Community Development strongly supports the extension of the Rural Opportunity Zone program. Our community has experienced great success in utilizing the ROZ program and we are eager to see it continue.

Currently, Unified Greeley County has 25 active ROZ student-loan repayment participants. Collectively, these 25 individuals have 17 children and the total number of individuals in their collective households is 55 people. In a recent survey conducted by the Kansas Department of Commerce, 9 of the 10 Unified Greeley County participants who responded indicated that the program was a contributing factor in their decision to move to Greeley County and remain living here. Please see the attached infographic for more Greeley County ROZ participant results.

Unified Greeley County is currently experiencing population growth, and was one of only 4 Kansas counties to experience greater than 3% population growth from 2010-2014 – the other three are in the Fort Riley region. From the opening day of school in 2013 to the opening day in 2014, Greeley County Schools increased its enrollment 25%. A number of factors influenced this increase – young families returning to the community resulting in larger classes entering pre-school and kindergarten than high school classes, additional jobs added by existing businesses and new developments, businesses establishing transition plans for the next generation of ownership, and more. Local tax valuations have increased over the past couple of years and three times more houses have been built in Greeley County since 2010 than were built from 2000 to 2010.

The Rural Opportunity Zone program is a highly useful tool that has helped our community achieve these successes. We strongly support the renewal of the Rural Opportunity Zone program that helps bring primarily young, educated, productive residents to rural communities statewide.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance. I can be reached by phone at (620) 376-2548 or by email at clhopkins@fairpoint.net.

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