

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lana Gordon at 4:00 P.M. on March 19, 2008 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Geraldine Flaharty- excused
Gary Hayzlett- excused
Broderick Henderson- excused
Don Myers- excused
Robert Olson- excused

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Ryan Hoffman, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Matt Todd, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Ann Deitcher, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Vern Swanson
Jerry Patterson, Chair Clay County Tourism Committee
Chuck Otte, Vice-Chair, Rare Bird Sighting Committee
Dennis Toll, Manhattan CVB
Rick Dykstra, Geary County CVB

The Chair called on Representative Swanson who introduced Jerry Patterson who told the Committee that in 2006 they had visitors from nine different states who came to Kansas to see birds. He called their attention to the names on the Kansas Birding Festival Committee saying how qualified they were. ([Attachment 1](#)).

Chuck Otte addressed the Committee next, speaking of the variety of birds seen in Kansas saying that we seem to be midway between everywhere which brings many bird species through Kansas. Calling it a “migratory superhighway”, he said how it brings “many species of birds right through Kansas every spring and fall migration, much to the delight of local and visiting birdwatchers”. ([Attachment 2](#)).

Telling the Committee that there has been an increase in bird watching of 266%, Dennis Toll also said that 76% of Americans say they want to visit somewhere they’ve never been before. He said how the Kansas Birding Festival offered participants the quintessential experience in Kansas nature-base tourism. ([Attachment 3](#)).

Appearing next before the Committee, Rick Dykstra said that first of all, he loved Kansas. He also said that he wanted the Committee to know that Kansas was not “bottom of the barrel stuff but the apple floating on top. All it needs is a little bit of polishing.” ([Attachment 4](#)).

Adding to what Mr. Toll had said about people’s reason for visiting somewhere, Mr. Dykstra said that 48% of these travelers are interested in “remote and untouched” destinations and 57% are attracted by an area’s culture.

A copy of the Kansas Birding Festival evaluation summary was distributed. ([Attachment 5](#)).

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Economic Development and Tourism Committee at 3:30 P.M. on March 19, 2008 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

Representative Swanson called the Committee's attention to former State Representative Kathe Decker who was attending the meeting. Representative Decker spoke of her late husband, one-time State Representative Steve Lloyd, for whom the Steve Lloyd Wetlands are named for because of his interest in the state's natural resources, saying how honored he'd felt to be remembered in such a way.

Also in attendance was Anthony Meals of Clay Center who'd spent the day "shadowing" Representative Swanson. The Committee applauded Anthony who was celebrating his 17th birthday.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 24, 2008.