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Student defends thesis, ‘Causes of Retail Pull in Nebraska Counties and Towns’

MANHATTAN, KS, November 4, 2004- Rex Nelson, McCook, Nebraska, defended his thesis, “Causes of Retail Pull in Nebraska Counties and Towns,” Monday, November 1, 2004. Nelson is Executive Director for the McCook Economic Development Corporation.

Nelson used County Trade Pull Factors as a benchmark for retail trade in Nebraska, and developed a theoretical and a statistical model to explain changes in this measure. The theoretical model suggests that retail trade in a given county is a function of the customer base, the buying power of those customers, and the quality of the retail environment.

“This has been a richly rewarding project, in particular the collaborative aspect that brought a conceptual model developed at Kansas State University by Dr. David Darling together with retail trade data from Dr. Bruce Johnson’s work at the University of Nebraska,” Nelson said. “This work has increased my level of understanding of the complex dynamics of the rural economy and will help me be more effective in my professional field of rural economic development.”

“Rex Nelson’s research adds to the knowledge base in several fields,” Major Professor, David Darling said. “The model does an excellent job explaining why the retail community in different Nebraska counties vary in ability to hold on to and then pull in trade.”

“The research is useful in the fields of retail development, regional economics, and geography. Main Street coordinators, retail site locators, and economic developers will find the results interesting. Therefore, the research is both interesting to academics and practitioners,” Darling said.

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K-State's Master of Agribusiness is an award-winning, distance education degree program that focuses on food and agribusiness management. Students in the program are located in 30 states within the United States and 12 countries abroad. They range in age from 25 to 55 and work in every sector of the food and agribusiness industry.

The program, launched in 1998, was the first graduate agribusiness program in the nation to be offered through distance education. The executive style, distance education delivery breaks down barriers associated with earning a master's degree, such as access to a university campus, job changes, relocations and job-related travel.

"We have developed a program that meets students' educational needs, and we deliver it in a format that meets their schedules," said Allen Featherstone, director of graduate studies for K-State's department of agricultural economics. "Students can access the program regardless of where they are."

The MAB program was awarded the University Continuing Education Association/Peterson's Award for most innovative distance education program in 2001. Additional honors include: American Distance Education Consortium's National Excellence in College & University Distance Education Honorable Mention, Spring 2001; University Continuing Education Association Credit Program of Excellence, Spring 2000; University Continuing Education Association Region V Credit Program Award, Fall 1999.

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