WITH RETIREMENT LOOMING, JUNCTION CITY VETERINARIAN CASEY

Thomas knew he'd eventually have to sell the animal hospital he'd owned for more than 30 years. Of course, there was one small challenge: How would he find a buyer?

That's when Thomas learned about RedTire, a University of Kansas program that connects college graduates who want to own a business with business owners wanting to retire. The program's goal is to prevent businesses from closing because an owner can't find a successor.

With assistance from RedTire, Thomas completed the sale of his Flint Hills Veterinary Hospital in February, ensuring the business will live on in Junction City.

“It's exactly what we needed,” Thomas said, “at exactly the right time.”

In effect, RedTire is a matchmaking service. KU staff screens prospective replacement managers and businesses, then identifies good matches for purchase opportunities. From there, RedTire helps negotiate the purchase, establishes a purchase loan, and helps the new owner run the business.

RedTire is assisting nearly 20 business owners like Thomas. “It’s a great program for businesses and communities,” Thomas said. “Without RedTire, this transaction wouldn't have happened.”
AS STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
School of Medicine–Wichita, Drs. Doug and Shelly Gruenbacher already knew they wanted to practice medicine in Kansas.

But it was their fourth-year rotation at Gove County Medical Center that helped them decide Quinter, Kan., was right for them.

“We fell in love with this community,” said Shelly, who along with her husband has a busy practice that draws patients from eight counties. “This has been perfect for us as doctors and parents.”

KU continues to encourage medical students to follow in the Gruenbachers’ footsteps. KU-trained physicians practice in 87 percent of Kansas counties and comprise half of all Kansas doctors.

Despite KU’s efforts, Kansas faces a crucial physician shortage. That’s why KU is pursuing new health education facilities in Kansas City, which would enable the school to train 50 more doctors each year.

Between seeing patients and raising four children, the Gruenbachers still find time to host KU medical students doing rotations.

“Quinter is perfect for us,” Doug said, “and we love helping future doctors consider communities like this.”

KU'S HEALTH EDUCATION INITIATIVE

- A new Health Education Building will enable KU to increase its class size by 50 students a year.
- Half of all doctors in Kansas trained at KU.

KANSAS BRIDGES

Kansas has approximately 25,464 bridges on the state, county and city roadway network.

The KU study was conducted by School of Engineering researchers Eric Fitzsimmons, postdoctoral researcher in civil engineering; Tom Mulinazi, professor of civil, environmental and architectural engineering; and Steve Schrock, associate professor of civil, environmental and architectural engineering.

The Kansas Department of Transportation provided $20,000 to fund the study.

DETERIORATING OR OUTDATED BRIDGES ALONG LIGHTLY TRAVELED ROADS ARE A budget dilemma for county leaders across Kansas.

With that in mind, University of Kansas engineering researchers completed a study to help county leaders make decisions about a bridge’s future. The study compares the cost benefits of replacing a bridge with the cost of traveling extra miles to detour if a bridge is closed or removed.

Seventy-eight of Kansas’ 105 counties have bridges on low-volume rural roads in dire need of repair, replacement or removal. With an estimated cost of $150,000 per bridge — and nearly 1,000 bridges across the state defined as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete — replacement bridges are an expensive proposition.

The study analyzes potential detours for all 992 deficient or obsolete bridges on rural roads with fewer than 25 vehicles a day.

“This study is a tool that county leaders can use to weigh the costs of closing or repairing a bridge,” said Eric Fitzsimmons, a postdoctoral researcher in civil engineering and co-author of the study. “We’re confident this will help county leaders in the planning and budgeting process.”

MORE INFORMATION

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MORE INFORMATION

MORE INFORMATION
COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES

KU's new Somali language course is designed to help a range of individuals — including educators, health professionals, employers, policymakers, and workers — better communicate with Kansas' growing Somali population. The course will also be useful to students wanting to work abroad in business, medicine, journalism and law.

U.S. military officials at Fort Leavenworth have expressed interest in the Somali language course.

KU teaches 40+ languages, more than any other Big 12 school.

Somali natives aren't the only ones who speak the language. Somali is widely spoken in the neighboring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti, as well as throughout the Middle East.

The Kansas African Studies Center is one of five international area studies centers within KU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

MORE INFORMATION  KASC.KU.EDU

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