

▼ TOURISM

Abilene targets trolley

Committee envisions tourists riding trolley to town's tourist sites

By **TIM UNRUH**
The Salina Journal

ABILENE — A group of tourism promoters sees a trolley to ferry tourists around Abilene as an amenity worth pursuing.

An eight-person committee has launched an effort to raise at least \$50,000 for a rebuilt trolley. Events are planned, and a special fund has been established to make a tour in Abilene just a bit more special.

"These people come to Abilene expecting a unique experience," committee member Vivien Sedowski said, "and we want to see that they get it."

The trolley is viewed as an added feature to an economy that targets tourism.

"We have a number of really fine museums in Abilene," she said. "We think this would be the next natural step up."

The wish for a trolley has been expressed many times

How to help

Anyone wishing to donate to the fund-raising effort may send checks to:
Abilene Trolley Fund
Box 232
Abilene, KS 67410

over the past decade, she said, and it was a main topic in January during the Abilene Convention & Tourism Bureau advisory board's retreat. Sedowski is the board's chairwoman.

So, townsfolk took action.

"It's not a CVB (convention & tourism bureau) project," Sedowski said. "We want it to be a community project."

A trolley is a nostalgic part of a tourism town, she said, but it also serves a purpose by letting people park, pay a fare and take in the town as it stops at each of Abilene's attractions.

"I think it would make it a lot simpler for out-of-town visitors to find their way around town," said Dan Holt, director of the

Eisenhower Center and Library, "and provide a very easy way of transportation."

Sedowski said the trolley would belong to the city.

New models of the tour wagons on wheels are sold for up to \$250,000. The Abilene group would opt for a rebuilt one and arrange the service so that it would pay for itself.

"Our plan is to generate sufficient revenues through advertising in the trolley, and fares," Sedowski said, "so it would not be a detrimental experience to the citizens of Abilene."

She said the group has explored grants and government assistance, because the trolley would serve as a mode of transportation within the city, but so far it hasn't found a source for outside money.

"The first thing we have to do is get the trolley here," Sedowski said. "Then we'll work out the format of use."

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