

If the Salina story was limited to the recounting of the successes and failures in the community's efforts to convert Schilling Air Force Base to civilian usages it would not be a complete record of accomplishment; nor would it reflect a very dramatic change in community attitude. Despite the irony of the slogan "City on the Move," while our Air Force friends were moving away, the city is truly on a comeback trail. The evidences of this condition are many and there are no apparent signs that the enthusiasm is waning or that important developments are declining. Salina can proudly say that it did not roll over and play dead. The Statler-Hilton Inn, a striking and sprawling complex in downtown Salina, will be under construction in a few weeks. Construction contracts have been let and the block-long site has been cleared. A large percentage of its cost will come from local sources. The citizens of Salina, only a few months after the announced Schilling closing, voted a two-to-one mandate for the construction of a new combination county courthouse-city hall-governmental center and new city library. The vote was taken on the stormiest day of the winter and was the largest in history for a special election. This project became involved with the urban renewal program and the clearing of a two-block downtown area will soon begin. A second urban renewal program will soon be finally approved enabling a local industry to accomplish a major expansion. Plans are being developed for a downtown multi-story office building. Building permits for commercial and industrial construction within the city itself are at an all-time high. At least three dozen business establishments have completed or are in the process of completing major renovations or new structures. The spirit hereabouts is one of determined optimism born by adversity. Salina's unemployment level, while slightly higher than a few years ago during the glorious days of boom, is below State and National averages. Westinghouse ballooned Salina's hopes and there are current rumors that their initial program will be expanded. The reason Salina can look forward to good years ahead is directly related to the spirit of zeal, efficiency, and capability of all the citizens who were so willing in giving their time in the transition period from a military to an industrial economy. Not surprisingly, some three hundred people are actively engaged in work on various boards, commissions and committees. These people, without exception, are capable, willing, and have had the right kind of experience to make a splendid task force for the work that has been done and will be done in the future. Retail sales are up, people are spending money and bank clearings and deposits have been showing increases over previous years.

Salina is on the Move!

"I don't know if your people know this," said Bradford, whose Office of Economic Adjustment provided early and continuing advice and encouragement following the Schilling closure, "but this has been a remarkable feat. I cannot say enough about what this community has accomplished and will accomplish. I use you all the time as an example to other communities facing similar problems."