

“Wild About Kansas”

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & HOUSING

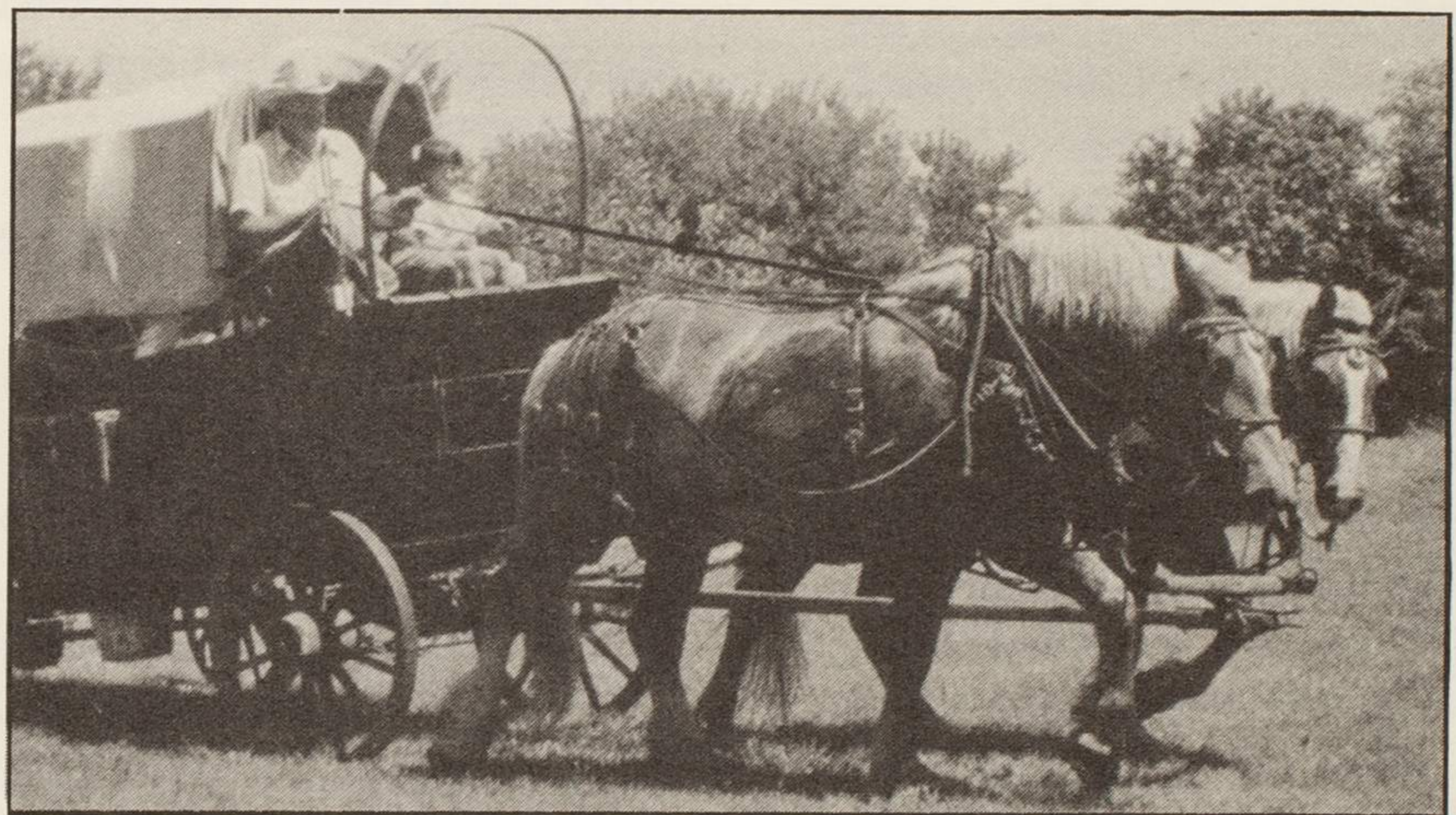
TRAVEL & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

September 1995

FLINT HILLS WAGON TRAIN TRIP BRINGS #1 TOUR OPERATOR TO KANSAS

Connecticut-based Tauck Tours, the largest tour company in the United States, will come to Kansas for the first time next year. Tauck will launch 25 eight-day Heartland tours stretching from Chicago through Iowa, Missouri and Kansas. Tour participants will get two days in Kansas, including an overnight in Wichita. The centerpiece of the Kansas segment will be the Flint Hills Overland Wagon Train Trip in El Dorado. Other stops include the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka, the Eisenhower Center in Abilene and Cowtown Museum in Wichita.

Sonya Woertz has worked for the last five years to get Tauck to come to Kansas. Efforts over the past few years have included: continuing to meet with Tauck representatives during the National Tour Association marketplace; providing updated tour information and ideas on a consistent basis; and including Tauck in all direct mail efforts.



Additionally, many members of the travel industry in Kansas have worked to promote their destinations to Tauck individually.

Finally, Tauck director of product operations Phil Otterson's interest was piqued with the suggestion, by Woertz, of the Flint Hills Overland Wagon Train Trip! This became the idea for the centerpiece that Tauck would use to promote their new Heartland program. In June, Otterson and product manager Chris Ryan came to Kansas for a special familiarization tour. Their experience with the hospitality and people of Kansas, the quality attractions, and the wagon train in particular, convinced them to bring Tauck to Kansas.

“Tauck is known worldwide for their quality programs and discerning criteria for including destinations and attractions,” Sonya said. “As the tour company that has been named number one in the nation for the past five years by the American Society of Travel Agents, many of the country's other leading operators look to Tauck for successful program ideas - and follow their lead when developing new destinations.” Sonya continued, “We can expect to experience spin-off business from other tour companies as a result of Kansas' inclusion in the Tauck 1996 catalog.”

Tauck has scheduled the Heartland program tour dates for May through October 1996. Current plans call for the Heartland tour to become an ongoing Tauck program.