

## **Rod Huse – Jake’s Wire Tighteners**

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

“Good fences make good neighbors,” wrote the poet Robert Frost. But what happens when those fences get loose or the wires start to sag? Today we’ll meet a Kansas entrepreneur who represents a company with a product which can fix such fences. It’s today’s Kansas Profile.

Rod Huse is a distributor for Jake’s Wire Tighteners. Rod is what one might call a “ruralpreneur” – an entrepreneur in a rural setting. He is a retired educator who has always been involved in business opportunities.

“I always had a business on the side,” Rod said. He taught in Wichita and in southwest Kansas and also ran the family farm which is located in the Scott County area. He taught technical education and small engine repair at Garden City Community College and then at Johnson County Community College.

To supplement his teaching salary, he built homes and invested in various products.

In 2001, he moved to Vassar which is near Lake Pomona south of Topeka. He continued to teach in Johnson County, retiring in 2010 after 32 years of teaching. At that time, he decided to pursue an opportunity with a business called Jake's Wire Tighteners.

Jake was a rancher in Texas who had a gift for fixing things. One day two of his bulls got to fighting and caused havoc on a fence. It looked like an all-day mending job. Jake walked back to his shop and, from small pieces of cattle panel, created a clip which he could use to mend the fence in no time. These worked so well that other people wanted some.

He developed and refined his idea, and it looked like a business opportunity. Then Jake was diagnosed with colon cancer and suddenly passed away. It was a sad turn of events.

In Jake's memory, his nephew - who had been his partner in the business startup - patented the clip and called it "Jake's Wire Tighteners."

As the business grew, Rod Huse in Kansas was contacted about becoming a distributor. "Before I took this on, I went to a lot of farm suppliers to see what (of this type of product) was out there," Rod said. "There was nothing close."

The wire tightener itself is a heavy duty clip with a couple of hooks. To use it, the operator hooks the clip onto a loose wire and uses a metal handle to roll and tighten the wire.

"It is quick, inexpensive, and very simple to use once a person learns the technique," Rod said. Turning the handle tightens the wire by rolling it on the clip itself.

"We roll the wire onto the clip - we do not crimp it," Rod said. "Anytime you crimp the wire, you weaken it. If you have wire that is really brittle, nothing can be done for it," Rod said. "But because we roll the wire rather than crimping it, it does work on rusty wire."

“For a quick and inexpensive repair, this is hard to beat,” Rod said. This is appealing to ag producers, but Rod has found benefits to others as well.

“This little clip will tighten about anything that fits in the handle,” he said. Rod has especially found applications on the shipping business, where businesses can use the clips to help secure a load for shipping.

Rod’s job is to secure distributors for the company. “We set up individual dealers as well as businesses,” he said. “It might be a farm supply store, a lumberyard, or a hardware store.”

He goes to farm shows to showcase the product to customers and prospective dealers. Rod has helped secure dealers all over the region, and there are dealers in Canada and Australia as well as the U.S. Meanwhile, Rod lives in the rural community of Vassar, with a population of 530 people. Now, that’s rural.

For more information, see [www.jakeswiretighteners.com](http://www.jakeswiretighteners.com)

“Good fences make good neighbors,” wrote Robert Frost. This product from Rod Huse helps keep those fences good and strong. We salute Rod Huse and all those involved with Jake’s Wire Tighteners for making a difference with creative entrepreneurship. That makes for good fences and a good neighborhood.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.