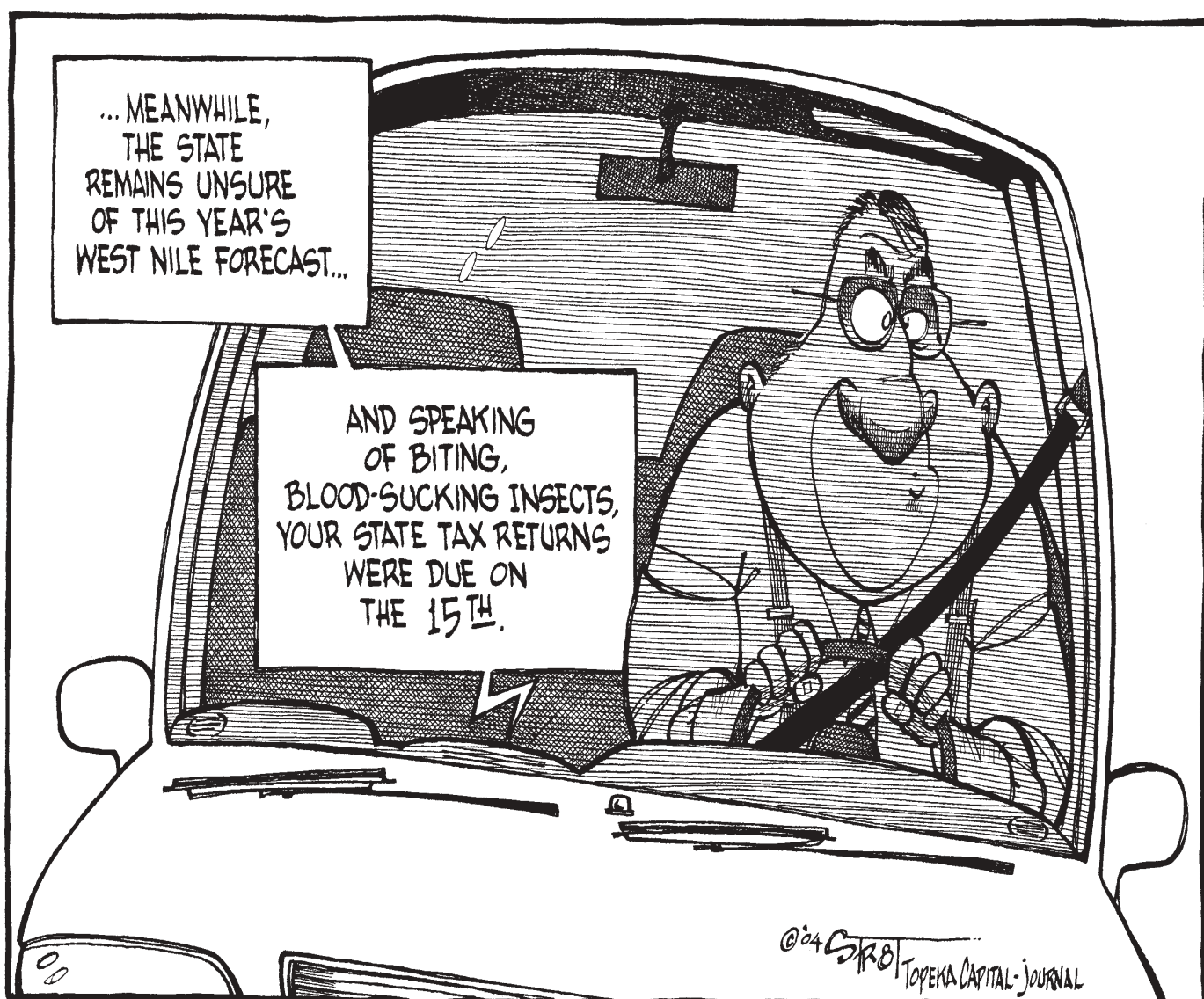


## Will the jobs really come to rural Kansas?

State Sen. Stan Clark wants to move state jobs out of Topeka and into rural Kansas. Hooray for him! Unfortunately, this is one of those "we'll-believe-it-when-we-see-it" ideas. Sen. Clark came up with the plan as a solution to a problem in Topeka. The problem the Docking Office Building — a white elephant that the state would like to remove. The building, put up nearly half a century ago, has little insulation and, until a short time ago, no switches to turn off the lights. It's big. It's impossible to heat or cool. And, bottom line, it's expensive. Back when the state had a surplus every year and had a hard time knowing what to throw money at next, nobody cared that the Docking Office Building was a gas guzzler to make all the SUVs in California shudder. Today, however, every cent counts and the state wants to spend less on natural gas and more on people programs. One suggestion is to save money by shutting down the Docking Office Building, affectionately known as the SOB when it was the state's only office building. The problem is, when you have up to 2,000 people working in a building you want to close down, you have to put them somewhere.

Sen. Clark's idea is to move their jobs out into rural Kansas. We like that. Unfortunately, we don't think it will fly, because we've tried to get people to come out here. Just try having a statewide meeting in, say, Salina. Salina, as everyone in eastern Kansas knows, is really near the western edge of the state. Folks in Hays probably pay Colorado taxes as far as they're concerned, and there's nothing but dull, flat, empty country the rest of the way to Denver. In the Legislature, they all love western Kansas, of course. Why some of their best friends are western Kansas folks. And they want to help us. They might even send us money. When it comes to sending people out here, it isn't going to happen. After the first couple dozen Topeka bureaucrats say they'd rather quit than move out to central or western Kansas, the governor and Legislature will decide that this was a really bad idea and forget it. The state could just hire new people, but they won't do that. Unions and pressure groups might object. So, they'll turn to us and smile and say they tried. Then they'll build a big new office building to replace Docking and we'll get the bill.

— Cynthia Haynes



## Who can figure Mother Nature's mind

They really should call spring the silly season. I know that term is usually reserved for the legislative session, but Mother Nature gets downright giddy during the spring. Easter was sunny and cool, but flowers were popping out all over the place. In front of my house, the daffodils I planted along a wall were all in bloom and the tulips were budding. The forsythia was fitfully blooming and the crocuses were past their prime. It was really a beautiful day. Steve mowed the yard and we enjoyed the cool sunshine. Then we had to go to work. We always work on Sundays. Usually, we go in late and work until midnight or so. At 12:10 a.m. Monday morning, I stepped out into the darkness and spotted the first few tentative snowflakes. With the drought we have been having, all moisture is welcome and I remembered the snowstorm we had six or eight

### Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



years ago when they almost had to cancel prom because there was such a bad storm a day or two before the big event. However, I was praying for a snowstorm that would melt quickly — like right away, so I wouldn't have to deal with bad roads on the way to work the next day. The next morning, I awoke to about six inches of snow on the back deck. The ornamental pear tree, which had been in full bloom, hung heavy with snow on its branches and flowers. The tulips, which had been ready to open, were clamped tightly shut. I was more than an hour late getting to

work. The roads were icy, and I decided to give the plows a little time to do their work. The day warmed up, like it was supposed to do, and Tuesday was beautiful. By Wednesday, temperatures were back up in the 70s and 80s and the snow was almost gone. Even the tulips had consented to open up and show off their beauty. Wednesday night, we got home from work early and cooked outside on the grill. Then we washed off the picnic table and ate outside under our gloriously blossom-filled pear tree. I had really worried that the cold snap would cause all those beautiful blossoms to fall off. Sitting there as the perfume of the tree drifted by and the cats took turns slipping in and out of the house, I know I loved spring and I loved Kansas. However, I was wondering if someone didn't need to give Mother Nature a Prozac. She seems a little confused. Oh well, maybe she's blonde, too.

## It's been a busy week for government in the federal legislature

### Bringing Physicians to Kansas Communities

Senator Sam Brownback and I recently introduced legislation to reauthorize a program to recruit physicians to serve in rural areas. The J-1 visa waiver program, set to expire on June 1, allows foreign-born, U.S.-educated physicians to practice in rural areas that have a shortage of physicians or specialty doctors. The J-1 visa program gives international medical graduates the opportunity to stay in the U.S. if they agree to practice in areas that are experiencing a shortage of doctors. Since 1993, 115 foreign doctors have served in Kansas communities through this program, and 67 physicians, or 58 percent, have remained in practice in the state following the completion of their three-year service obligation. For many areas across our country, this program is the only way that rural hospi-

### Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



tals can get qualified physicians to serve in their communities. By retaining this program, hospitals and clinics are allowed to hire physicians, who have studied and trained in medical schools throughout the United States, to practice in areas that might not otherwise have a doctor.

### Showing Strength for Ft. Riley in Junction City

On Wednesday evening, I attended the Show of Strength Banquet in Junction City. The annual event, hosted by the Old Trooper Regiment, was held in conjunc-

tion with Ft. Riley's Congressional Staffers day. Each year, congressional staff members from the Kansas delegation come out to Ft. Riley to tour the post and talk to soldiers and commanding officers to get a better picture of the importance of Ft. Riley to the Kansas economy and the role it plays in our nation's defense.

The keynote speaker for the banquet was a former commanding general at Ft. Riley, Lt. Gen. Michael Dodson. Lt. Gen. Dodson spoke about the importance of Ft. Riley during the global war on terrorism. Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, the commanding general of the installation, also spoke about his support of his troops serving overseas.

Also in attendance was John Montgomery, the civilian aid to the Army. I would also like to thank Scott Stuckey and Dr. Casey Thomas for their hard work in putting this event together.

### Awarding the Purple Heart to Gier-Lewison

On Saturday afternoon, I awarded the Purple Heart to U.S. Army 101st Division Airborne Captain Katrina Gier-Lewison of Hutchinson. I originally presented Captain Gier-Lewison with her Purple Heart when I visited Iraq in August of 2003. I was honored to be included in Katrina's celebration with her family and friends and am thankful for her service to our nation.

Gier-Lewison is a member of the U.S. Army and a 2000 graduate of West Point. She was a Blackhawk helicopter pilot during Operation Iraqi Freedom and suffered combat injuries while serving in Iraq. Gier-Lewison also wrote several columns about her time in Iraq, which were published in the Hutchinson News. During the reception, she showed slides and photos from her time in Iraq. Gier-Lewison and her husband, and fellow Blackhawk pilot, Tyler, are currently stationed at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

### Touring the Future Salt Museum

On Tuesday morning, I joined Jay Smith, Executive Director of Kansas

Underground Salt Museum Project; Lee Spence, President of the Underground Vaults and Storage, Inc.; and Max Liby, President of the Hutchinson Salt Company in a tour of the future site of the Kansas Underground Salt Museum.

The Kansas Underground Salt Museum will include interactive educational opportunities related to mining, history, science, geology, health, economics and business. It will be the only museum of its kind in the western hemisphere, with most of the exhibits, programs and activities taking place 650 feet below ground in a working salt mine. There will be 100,000 square feet of underground exhibition space and 12,000 square feet for a visitor's center. The project will provide an estimated annual economic impact of \$10 million to the local and state economy and will create 50 new jobs.

With the Kansas Cosmosphere, the state fair and now the Underground Salt Museum, the city of Hutchinson is a leader in making Kansas a tourist destination.

### McPherson Honors Bob Wise and the Late George Hess

Tuesday, I joined with the McPherson Chamber of Commerce and the McPherson Industrial Development Company in honoring the accomplishments of local philanthropists and entrepreneurs Bob Wise and the late George Hess. The men were recognized at the 2004 Pioneer Awards Luncheon for their contributions to the prosperity of McPherson. Hess was selected for his kind generosity and giving spirit throughout the years. Wise was honored for promoting job creation and economic development in McPherson.

The Governor's Business Appreciation Awards recipients were also recognized. This year's recipients were McPherson Water Products, Wear Technology, Farmers Alliance Mutual Insurance and McPherson Business Machines.

### Visiting Businesses in Salina

On Tuesday, I spent the morning visiting with owners, employees and patrons

of Salina's downtown business district. Many folks expressed to me their concerns about the rising costs of doing business, including the effects of outsourcing and escalating health care premiums. I also stopped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service office and visited with Harold Klage, the state conservationist.

### Touring United Bio Energy Partners

On Tuesday afternoon, I toured the United Bio Energy Partners in Wichita. The company opened in 2003 and offers management consulting, in addition to feed, grain and ethanol marketing for ethanol plants. Ethanol production is an important component to Kansas' economy, as it creates yet another use for our Kansas commodities. There are six ethanol plants in operation in Kansas, with several others in development. During the tour I met with Jeff Roskam, the president of United Bio Energy Partners, as well as Bernie Hoffman, Greg Krisssek and Joe Wary.

### Visiting Kansas State University

On Thursday, I visited Kansas State University in Manhattan to view the research projects being conducted on the campus. I toured Mosier Hall and the veterinary medical complex, where students and faculty are working on testing for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and improving food safety. I also visited the Advanced Manufacturing Center to learn more about ways to improve our transportation infrastructure. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, it was useful for me to learn more about the testing process for this disease.

### In the Office

In the office for a tour of the Capitol this week were John and Betty Murrell of Emporia, and their children, Jacob and Jessica. Also touring were Marty and Karen Loving of Pawnee Rock. The Lovings are the parents of Matt Loving, an intern in my Washington, D.C. office this semester.