

Governor has plan to boost rural population

You have to hand it to Gov. Sam Brownback. He's not only talking about doing something to help reverse the population decline in rural Kansas; he's got a real plan.

The governor proposes a five-year rebate of income taxes for anyone who moves to a Kansas county suffering double-digit population declines. That includes most of northwest Kansas excepting Colby and Thomas County, but Colby would benefit greatly if the surrounding counties stopped bleeding people.

While many politicians have talked about stopping the population drain in rural areas, Brownback's is among a handful of actual plans.

No one can say for sure how many people might be influenced to move to rural counties, of course. But the state can hardly lose.

The rural population drain is hurting the entire economy. While our population as a whole is up, rural losses kept the state's growth down below that of others. That threatens the loss of one of our four remaining congressional seats, not this time, but perhaps 10 years down the road.

So the entire state has a stake in our plight. We're all in this together.

The state can't lose on the money end, either.

If few people move to rural areas and claim the rebate, then it won't cost the state much. If a lot of people take the state up on this offer, then rural Kansas will prosper and people will be paying more taxes and the state will benefit in the long run.

From our perspective out in rural Kansas, this program cannot hurt. If it's a winner, the state will be paying. Cities and counties and school districts will reap the rewards.

And let's face it, folks. Something is better than nothing. We're losing our way of life. We need some help.

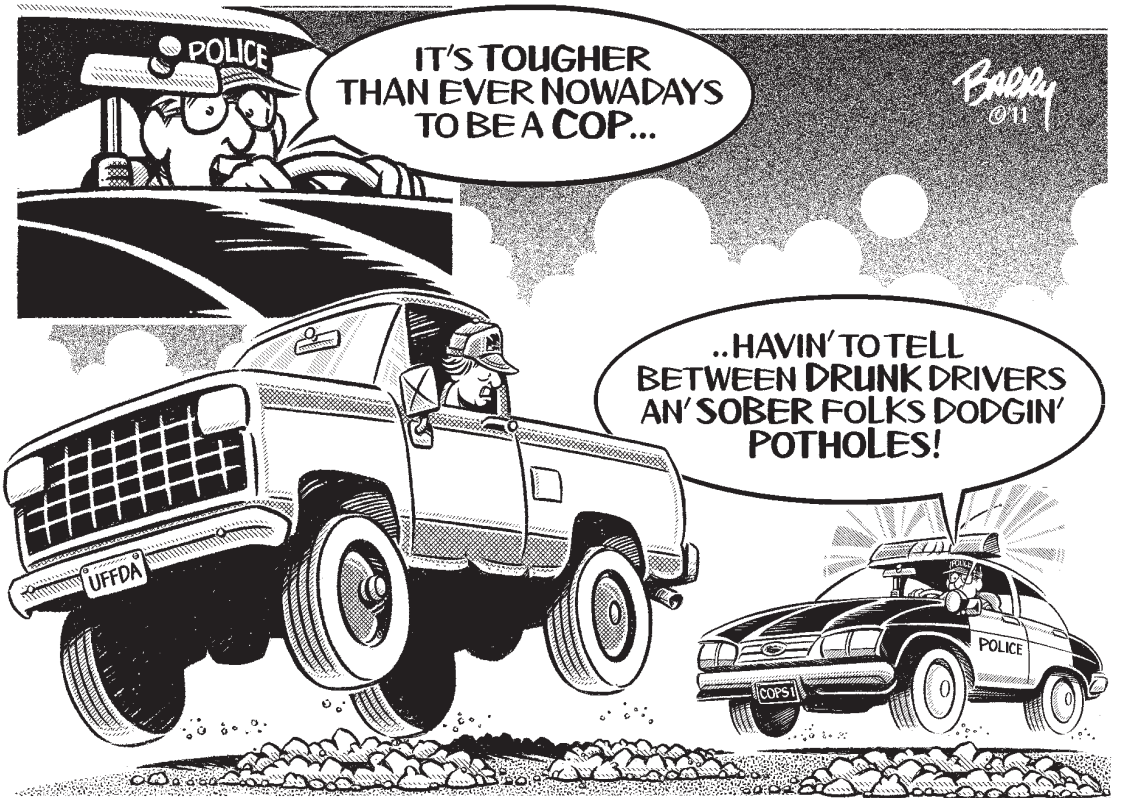
It's hard to imagine any program that could help rural counties any more than this one. We've seen the standard economic development efforts, and they have not accomplished much.

Bringing new jobs to rural areas is tough. The basic problem is the decline in farm numbers, a trend that's been rolling along for more than a century. It's finally gotten to the point that there's almost no one left in many rural areas. A lot of farmers live in town, and many plan to retire soon.

With our cities becoming more and more crowded, rural America offers a way of life that includes room to breathe, contact with nature, unpolluted skies and low crime. It's an ideal place to raise a family, but few want to try. Economic challenges, finding a job, are a big part of that.

So we hope the Legislature will pass this part of the governor's program, and quickly. Even if the cost starts to mount, the state will win. We'll be able to afford it.

And there's nothing else on the horizon that might help much. —Steve Haynes



News From the Past

10 years ago - 2001

The St. Francis High School Advanced Music Class will be presenting "A Little Bit of Magic" on Jan. 7.

Tony and Tammy Howard took over Ideal Super Market having purchased the business from Pauline Hixon. The Hixon's (Chic and Pauline) had bought the Ideal Super Market 47 years ago.

Elaine Kehlbeck has retired as Cheyenne County Clerk and Terry Miller took over following the swearing in ceremony.

The postage rate raised a penny, going from 33 cents to 34 cents to mail a letter.

Sublette Truck Sales, located on U.S. 36, is offering a line of used vehicles and trucks for sale. Ed Wiswell, owner has been adding more cars, pickups and trucks to the line.

Robert Van Allen is a new member of the Cheyenne County Hospital Board. Leon Brethower was elected chairman of the board for the third year. Other officers include treasurer, Kelly Gienger, who was reelected and Rueben Schultz, who will serve as secretary, taking the place of former board member, William Leach.

Residents need to know that St. Francis now has a 24-hour, seven-day a week, recycling site

south of the museum on U.S. 36. The Cheyenne County Development Corporation has been instrumental in bringing in Jeremiah Wickham with the Kansas Recycling Resources who proved bins at the site for residents to deposit their recycled items.

Calamity Jane, portrayed by Joyce Tierer, will be the featured guest at the Bird City Kansas Day festivities on Jan. 29.

Francis O'Leary will soon be teaching classes on making silver jewelry.

45 years ago 1966

Melvin Schlepp, a member of the Cheyenne County Soil Conservation District since 1960 has received a 1965 Soil Conservation Bankers Award. Also receiving a Bankers Award was Elton Keller who has been a member of the Cheyenne County Soil Conservation District since 1961.

Theda Denison has retired as mail clerk at the post office after serving for nearly 36 years. Theda had nearly 22 years of service as an employee of the post office department, and prior to that had worked in the post office for her father for 14 years when he was postmaster and when the office was a Fourth Class office.

50 years ago - 1961

M.M. Erickson of Bird City

was elected as chairman of the Cheyenne County Commissioners.

The St. Francis Post Office will move to its new location in mid January. The equipment for the new office is here, and a man from the post office department is now at work putting all the fixtures, service windows, boxes, etc. in place. All the fixtures are completely new and will give St. Francis the latest and most modern post office in the entire area.

75 years ago - 1936

Otto Boesch and Leeman Barnes have sold their Waco biplane, with which they gave yeoman service and were the only means of communication across the Republican Valley during the trying days of the Memorial Day flood.

Miss Margerie Firkins received word this week that she had been added to the list of those in the high school, who have received honors from a National Scholastic Organization.

The Cheyenne County State Bank is starting off the new year by having its office room in the south end of the building redecoreated.

Because of the pig roast dinner on Monday night the next regular Scout meeting is being postponed until Tuesday.

Legislative News

By Ward Cassidy



120th District Representative

I saw a quote this week that really struck home: "You should only get even with those who have helped you." Thanks again to all of you who supported me and I am working hard to represent you. It is difficult to update you on everything that is going on. The legislature is moving quickly and all of the committees are sending out bills fast and furious. I have now voted 10 times and feel that all of those votes represent Northwest Kansas values. It is going to get a lot tougher voting, as there are many issues coming up that have many ways to be interpreted.

Major items discussed in the House this week: Pay - go, on the surface a common sense approach to budgeting. The pay-go rule would prohibit any floor amendment that would increase spending without a companion piece that identifies where the budget would be cut to fund the net increase. This is a tough pill to swallow, for some legislators, but I believe with our debt load we should show fiscal restraint, and I voted for the bill.

After four hours of debate on the House floor, we passed Governor Brownback's freeze bill which transforms a projected \$50 million deficit for the current fiscal year into a \$37.5 million positive ending balance. As I said last week, every dollar saved this year is worth two dollars in next year's budget. Let's hope the Senate agrees and sends the bill to the Governor.

During the four-hour debate, an amendment was offered taking all state funding away from Planned Parenthood to insure that state dollars are not used for abortion services. The money would be prorated to local health clinics instead. It passed the House with

91 votes and I voted for this bill. House members debated the ins and outs of closing their party caucus meetings to the media. Both parties say they will hardly ever do that. I do believe that there should be transparency in government and feel that it is unnecessary on most all occasions. The vote to do so passed, and I supported the majority.

The executive order to abolish the Arts Commission and transfer their duties to the Kansas Historical Society has been a hot topic since Governor Brownback issued it. I truly support the Arts and hope that the change works. We heard an excellent presentation by the State Library Association in my Education Budget Committee. Libraries are such an important tool for our state and Northwest Kansas and I am hoping the cuts will be limited. This organization is doing a great job of adjusting to budget shortfalls and still providing new and outstanding services.

I appreciate the letters and e-mails discussing "suitability." We have to do a good job of providing quality education for our youth. Boards of education are going to have to work very hard to support their local schools and communicate their importance to their communities.

A big item coming up - Should legal concealed carry permit holders be allowed to possess firearms in buildings which do not offer metal detectors and security officers (college campuses).

I presented my first bill to the Finance Committee that will allow professional corporations to become members of professional accounting partnerships. In simple language, it would allow someone that farms to be a partner in a professional corporation without having their farm being held liable. We have several folks in Northwest Kansas that farm and would like to do accounting. This will allow us to keep accounting firms growing.

Thursday, Feb. 10, the House proposed a constitutional amendment to not allow the federal health care reform package. If approved by two-thirds of the House and Senate members it will be put on the ballot for Kansas voters in the November 2012 election. I voted for it.

Contact me with your comments and concerns at ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov, 785 296-7696.

GOD SAYS

The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Psalms 145:8, 9

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



In my travels along I-70 there is one sight that amazes me with each encounter.

Traveling between Hays and Salina is a forest of monstrous, modern windmills to the north of the interstate. Hundreds of these giant towers with massive propellers churn the prairie winds both day and night.

I've seen them colored pink by the setting sun, brilliant white during the day and hidden at night, except for a myriad of blinking red lights.

Also off the road is the smaller reminder of yesteryear that are much fewer in number. Some of the old, wooden windmills still stand, dwarfed by their larger cousins.

The two together speak of Kan-

sas, past and present. We are a state that continues to move toward the unknown future. But from the people that have come before we have a good road map of what does and does not work.

Ever moving on it pays to remember, and learn from the past.

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Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 11 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

United Methodist
Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
512 S. Scott
Pastor Morita Truman
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Seventh-Day
Adventist Church
785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor Jerry Nowack
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Communion 3rd Sunday

Solid Rock Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

First Christian Church
Pastor Jeff Landers
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster
Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m.
Church Service 10:15 a.m.

First Baptist Church
2nd & Scott • 332-3921
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,
Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

St. Francis Community Church
332-3150
204 N. Quincy Street
www.sfccfamily.com
Pastor: David Butler
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Communion - Every 2nd Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Ken Hart
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Communion 1st Sunday of the month

St. Francis Equity

St. Francis Herald