



We need to change way government spends cash

With this year's federal deficit expected to hit a record \$1.7 trillion, attention has been focused on the national debt and deficit spending as never before, from Congress to the "tea party" and with both major political parties.

The national debt is now \$14.35 trillion and climbing. States have \$1.18 trillion in debt and local government \$1.73 trillion.

Plus, the unfunded liability for Social Security is estimated at \$131.7 trillion. Everyone recognizes that the huge and growing debt threatens our economy and our way of life. No one seems to know what to do.

People made it clear last fall, however, that they want things to change.

And the truth is, any solution will be painful, as European nations have discovered. Spending is addictive. Every state or federal program, every grant and "entitlement," goes to someone. Government spending provides jobs, helps people live, feels good to those who get the money.

So how do we break the cycle and bring some sense back into state and national capitols?

Dr. Ed Flentje, a Washburn University political science professor in Topeka, made some suggestions in an "Insight Kansas" column last month.

Dr. Flentje recalls, as an advisor to former Gov. Robert Bennett in the 1970s, hearing the governor say again and again, "Spending is more responsible when the government that spends is the government that must finance that spending."

In other words, it's a lot easier for government officials at any level to spend money someone else has taken from the taxpayers. Yet that's exactly how the system works. Billions raised by the federal government are passed through to states for highways, schools, "homeland security," you name it. And much of that money trickles on down to the local level.

Have you ever heard a local official say, "We can get federal money for that," or "Well, it's federal money. Not our money?"

Of course, the city or county officials didn't have to raise taxes to get the money. The federal government just "gave" it to them. Never mind that the federal government is broke, deeply in debt and has no money to give. It can always borrow more.

Except it can't. The government has borrowed so much now, it's credit rating is threatened. Dr. Flentje says people have trouble understanding this system:

"This behemoth has become incomprehensible to the public, breeding cynicism, distrust and outright anger at government - national, state, and local government," he writes.

He says Alice Rivlin, the founding director of the Congressional Budget Office and former vice-chair of the Federal Reserve Board, has a handle on the problem. Though she held posts in the Clinton administration, most recently, she helped Rep. Paul Ryan shape the House Republicans' budget plan.

Nearly 20 years ago, he said, Ms. Rivlin proposed two steps to settle this hash:

- "Devolution. The federal government should eliminate most of its programs in education, housing, highways, social services, economic development and job training."

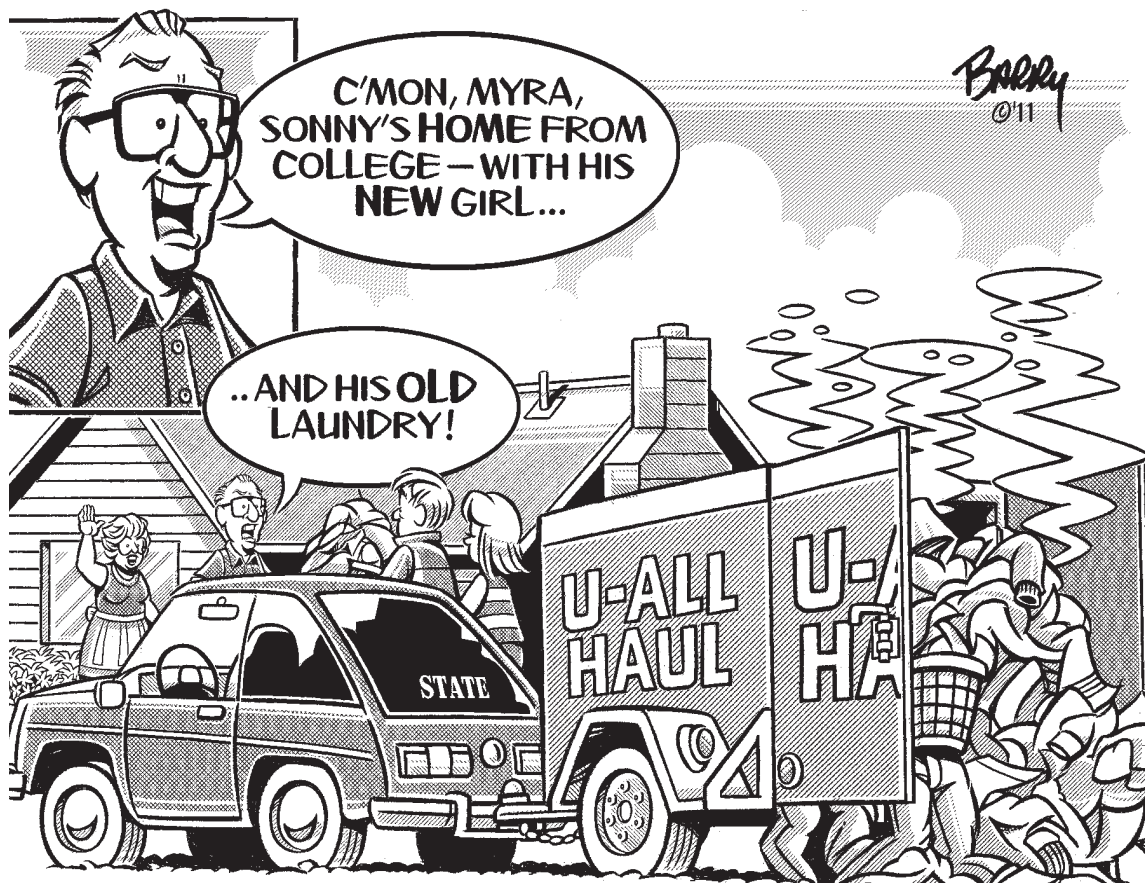
- "The productivity agenda. The states should take charge of the primary public investment needed to increase productivity and raise incomes, especially to improve education and skill training and modernize infrastructure."

Wow. Put the responsibility for raising taxes with the people who actually spend the money. It may be an idea whose time has come. It's certainly as good a suggestion as we've heard.

And we can't wait to hear the wailing from all those who feed at the public trough.

Until we can face reality, though, our debt issues aren't going to vanish. It's simply time to get real.

—Steve Haynes



The Gardener

By Kay Melia
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Have you ever visited a garden or yard of a friend or neighbor and been greatly impressed by what you saw?

I certainly have!

But when I do that, I try not to be too surprised because if I showed too much amazement, I would be indicating to my host that my own effort might seem much less impressive than their's and I don't like to admit that. But there it is, and we all should do more garden visiting to have good looks and ask more questions about the efforts of those you respect.

The gardening fraternity always appreciates those who seem to know what they're doing out there in the backyard. And there is much to be learned from other gardeners. But only if you ask questions about what you see. I know of no successful gardener who refuses to discuss why his garden looks good. Most gardeners like to talk, and most times we should listen intently

So, you might ask, what is it that this so-called "good gardener" knows that I don't know?

For starters, if you know for a fact that he is producing more than you, I'll bet you a couple of zucchinis that his garden soil is superior to your's. That's a good place to start, because, all factors considered, if your soil is not sufficiently enhanced, your garden will NOT produce as much as the guy down the street who plows in lots of leaves, grass clippings, dry manure or other organic materials in the fall of the year.

Maybe it's the method of irrigation he uses. Ask him how he assembled his drip system, or find out how he utilizes those soaker hoses efficiently. Or perhaps he owes his success to the old ditch type of adding moisture to his crops.

If you see a particularly healthy row of green beans, ask him what variety they are. What's their name? Where did you get the seed?

If you see that his tomato vines

are loaded with blooms or fruit, and are a healthy shade of dark green, ask what kind they are and what he did to have such good looking plants. Learn about the names of other beans and tomatoes and all the other things you plant. Believe me, some are better than others!

But you know, when it's all said and done, I would bet three zucchinis that this so-called "good gardener" guy simply puts in a lot more time out there than you do.

Paying close attention to what you started out there is the bottom line! It's the gardener who pulls the weeds and adds the moisture at the proper time that reaps the big crops. The amount of time spent on the job is paramount!

It's kinda like this. The lady asks the guy what he's going to do today. The guy says "nothing." The lady says "but that's what you did yesterday." The guy says "but I haven't finished yet."

The middle of May is approaching. It's time to get to work!

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



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It seems we often get caught up in the unimportant daily activities of our lives and miss the bigger picture.

I had an opportunity to stop and think about the honor given me by being in the presence of a great American.

Several years ago I spent a Sunday afternoon interviewing a very quiet and unassuming little old man in an empty bar-room in McDonald. Little did I know the story from that day would be one of the biggest in my writing career.

The gentleman's name was Lou Webb. I knew going in that he was

a veteran of World War II, but that was about it. Lou was the last person to blow his own horn and he had to be coaxed to trust me with his tale. But as we sat in that quiet room his story began as a trickle and turned into a flood as the years came back to his memory.

When the war began Lou had training in radios which made him a valuable member on an Army Air Force B-24 bomber. Lou saw service in England, North Africa and Italy.

The first part of his experience alone made for an incredible article. His plane, "Hot Freight," had flown

almost enough missions to allow her crew to return stateside. But during a bombing raid over Germany it collided with a Nazi aircraft and Lou, the lone survivor, parachuted to earth and, for two years, was a guest in a prisoner of war concentration camp.

If the war hadn't toughened him up already, the months of waiting out the end changed Lou forever. Till the day he died, Lou would walk with this hands clasped behind his back, a sad reminder of his service given for his country.

Last Thursday Lou was laid to rest at the Cheyenne Valley Cemetery south of Wheeler. It was so fitting that a crisp and polished honor guard made the long trip from Fort Riley to send this old soldier home.

Indeed, my life was made better through the honor of knowing Army Airman Webb.

Honor Roll

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GOD SAYS
And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.
Genesis 28:15

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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

I want to express great gratitude to community members that contributed to Child Abuse Prevention efforts in April. Northwest Kansas Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect successfully distributed 9,000 blue ribbons and pinwheels and could not have done it without community help. A huge statement for child abuse prevention was made by all who wore their blue ribbon and displayed pinwheels during the month of April.

Unfortunately, child abuse re-

mains in all communities. But a community member can make an enormous difference in children's lives by giving them a voice. Children are our future. And as a community, it is our responsibility to keep them safe. If there is a suspicion or it is known a child is being abused or neglected, please report the abuse or neglect by calling the Kansas Protection Report Center at 1-800-922-330. In an emergency situation, call local law enforcement or 911.

Now that April has passed, please remain committed to keeping children safe in your community. For more information on how you can get involved in child abuse prevention efforts, contact the Northwest Kansas Prevention Center at (785) 460-8177.

Page Campbell
Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Director
Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center

<p>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.</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Salem Lutheran Church 332-3002 Pastor Chris Farmer Sunday School 10 a.m. Morning Worship 11 a.m. Communion 3rd Sunday</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Seventh-Day Adventist Church 785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams Pastor Jerry Nowack Sabbath School 9:30 Morning Worship 10:45</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC 202 N. College Pastor Glenn Isernhagen, Interim 332-2928 Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Communion 1st Sunday of the month</p>
<p>First Christian Church Pastor Jeff Landers 332-2956 • 118 E. Webster Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m. Church Service 10:15 a.m.</p>	<p>St. Francis Equity</p>	<p>St. Francis Herald</p>

