

# Lawmakers see signs of stability in state economy, budget

By JOHN HANNA

*Associated Press Writer*  
TOPEKA, (AP) — Key legislators said Tuesday they were heartened by a new report on state revenue collections, pointing to indications that the Kansas economy is stable. In the first nine months of the current fiscal year, which began last July 1, general revenue totaled \$3.18 billion — just \$5.7 million less than the state's economic forecasters had predicted last November, according to the report issued Monday.

Legislators use the forecasts as they write and vote on budgets. A new forecast is to

be issued April 20 — a week before legislators return from a long recess and decide if revisions are needed in the \$10.2 billion budget they have already approved and sent to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

House Speaker Doug Mays, R-Topeka, said he was especially encouraged that corporate income taxes in the first nine months of the current fiscal year exceeded expectations by \$18.8 million. The total — \$86.6 million — was more than twice the amount collected during the same nine-month period a year earlier.

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Chairman Steve Morris noted that state collected \$321.6 million in general revenue in March, compared to the official March forecast of \$315.9 million.

Morris, R-Hugoton, said rising commodity prices have helped agriculture, and he believes Kansans are feeling better about the economy.

"A lot of the recovery is psychological," Morris said. "If people say there's a recovery going on, it feeds on itself."

Relying on the November forecast, budget writers assumed the state would collect \$4.47 billion in general revenues during the

next fiscal year. Federal dollars, bonds, tuition and earmarked fees provide the remaining funds for state government operations.

In past years, a gloomy spring forecast has left legislators scrambling to rewrite their spending recommendations.

In 2002, as legislators were debating a 2003 budget, the forecasters became more pessimistic and lowered their revenue estimate by nearly \$125 million. In 2001, forecasters cut the estimate underpinning the 2002 budget by \$111 million.

Morris said the latest revenue figures

suggest to him that this spring's forecast will stay with the November figures or be more optimistic.

"My guess would be there would be some growth" in the economy over the next year, Morris said.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls, also saw corporate income tax collections as a positive sign. And while Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka, said it is hard to predict how estimators will adjust the financial forecast, "I'm certainly hopeful."

# Woman feels unappreciated when entertaining men friends

DEAR ABBY: When I date a man, I wine and dine him with gifts and candlelight dinners, but they never seem to be appreciated. Not only that, none of them ever do anything for me. I am always being stood up, heartbroken, used or taken advantage of.

What am I doing wrong? What do men want or look for in a woman? Also, should I be dating men who are separated?

— LONELY AND CONFUSED, COLUMBIA, MD.

DEAR LONELY: You're giving too much, too soon. Most men want a challenge and enjoy the thrill of pursuit. If you take that away from them, they take you for granted.

Men who are separated are still married. Moreover, they are just coming out of a bad experience. Unless your idea of a pleasant evening is hand-holding and commiserating, a good rule of thumb is to look for someone who hasn't recently been burned.

DEAR ABBY: I need some love advice. I'm scared of making a commitment to the man of my dreams. He's my sister's ex-husband.

I always knew I liked him, but now I know I love him. He and my sister were married for only a year and a half, and they have been divorced for three years. I have three small children and am currently in the middle of a divorce myself.

Can I break that unwritten rule about not dating the exes of your sisters or girlfriends and still feel like a good human being?

— CONFUSED IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR CONFUSED: Much depends on the degree of bitter-



**Abigail Van Buren**

• Dear Abby

**ness in the failure of your sister's marriage. Are they emotionally as well as legally divorced? Were there children involved? How mature is everyone involved? If the answers to my questions are: no, yes, and not very — accept that a union with this man will cause World War III in your family and be prepared to pay the price, which will be a bitter rift.**

DEAR ABBY: My mother passed away after a long struggle with breast cancer. She lived in our home; we were her caregivers, and her absence is mourned every day.

My problem is my mother's family. I have called and written to them, but have had little response.

My 90-year-old grandmother came to our home a few weeks after Mom died and went from room to room taking inventory of things she wanted her "boys" to have. She then called and gave me an additional list of "family" items she wanted for sentimental reasons. I know there is more to it than sentiment.

My mother had these things for 40 years, but for some reason, it's not OK for me — her adopted daughter — to keep them.

I realize they were only "things," but my hurt is palpable because they represented a family connection I thought I had all these years.

I knew I was adopted, but it took my grandmother to make me realize that in her eyes adoption means

"unworthy." Any advice would be appreciated.

— FEELING UNWORTHY IN TEXAS

**DEAR FEELING UNWORTHY: Your grandmother's behavior is appalling. Has she always been this way, or could she be suffering from dementia? If she has all her marbles, then please note that the items your mother brought to your home were hers regardless of who covets them — and cannot be removed without your permission. Did your mother have a will? Did she have an attorney? Please discuss this with a lawyer — and if necessary, a grief counselor to help you during this difficult period. You have my sympathy for the loss of both your mother and your illusions about the people you considered to be your family.**

DEAR ABBY: I read with interest the letter from "Worried Sick in Alabama," whose mother was about to give money to a known con man. The same thing happened to my mother, who didn't stop "lending" money until \$67,000 was gone.

The district attorney, two police departments and an attorney who specializes in elder issues sympathized with me, but no one could do anything.

They told me, in effect, that as long as people are mentally competent, they can do whatever they want with their own money. Trusting, naive and misguided do not constitute incompetence.

Finally, I hired a private detective who found pending felony theft charges and other incriminating facts about the guy who was conning my mother. I believe she was persuaded more by the fact I hired

a private detective than by what he dug up. She did quit writing checks, but I live in constant fear that some other con artist will find her.

I encourage "Worried" to find some way to invest her mother's money so that Mom won't have instant access to it.

If possible, she should be convinced to let her daughter pay her bills for her, and set up a checking account where two signatures are required.

This is a difficult and, I suspect, widespread problem. I don't know what the answer is, because it includes issues of dignity and self-worth, as well as independence. I know elderly people who have lost their good judgment, and will lose their ability to pay their own way because of it.

— STILL WORRIED IN ALABAMA

**DEAR STILL WORRIED: Perhaps the next letter will ease your mind. Read on:**

DEAR ABBY: We at the National Center on Elder Abuse read the tragic letter from "Worried Sick in Alabama." Sadly, her story illustrates how financial crimes pose a growing threat to the well-being



and independence of our "greatest generation." It is cause for concern when a senior grants unusual access or control of his or her assets to another person in suspicious circumstances.

A challenge in detecting this is that victims may be reluctant to reveal financial abuse or accuse their abuser out of fear of retaliation or losing their independence. They may also feel embarrassed or reluctant to get the perpetrator in trouble.

In addition to consulting an attorney and contacting law enforcement, our advice is to report concerns to Adult Protective Services, the long-term care ombudsman or the state attorney general's office. Call the Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Aging, at (800)

677-1116 (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST) to quickly find the numbers of your local agencies. To learn more about how to prevent, recognize or respond to elder abuse, neglect or exploitation, please visit our Web site at [www.elderabuse-center.org](http://www.elderabuse-center.org).

Thank you, Abby, for helping millions of American seniors with your informative and sensitive advice.

— AMY HANLEY, NATIONAL CENTER ON ELDER ABUSE

**DEAR AMY: Thank you for a helpful letter; you will never know how many people you have helped today. It breaks my heart that these services are necessary, but I'm grateful that you are there to protect vulnerable seniors from predators.**

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**ATTENTION**

Colby High School, Brewster High School, and Golden Plains High School

**Senior Parents!!**

Hurry in parents!!  
Deadline is May 3rd!!!

The Colby Free Press is now planning the Senior Graduation Tab and will be giving parents a chance to put a baby picture in along with a short message from the family.

We will automatically feature your student's picture and information, but this will be your chance to put in a baby picture to show how much *your* senior has really changed over the years!

Call Crystal @ 462-3963 for more information or stop by the office at 155 W. 5th in Colby.

**TANNER B. BROWN**

*I will attend Hutchinson Community College.*

PARENTS:  
Mike & Jeanene Brown

*Tanner Brown - Way to go! We're so proud of you. "May you live all the days of your life" Love, Mom, Dad, Chanda and Cassie*

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