

# Opinion



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Quick response to bad news needed

The bad economic news keeps coming, punctuated by an announcement that Cessna Aircraft now expects to lay off 4,600 workers, including 4,000 in Wichita.

That makes it all the more crucial that local, state and federal leaders take smart, prompt action to respond to the downturn, help revive the economy and aid laid-off workers. To their credit, they are making some progress....

Though Kansas generally has fared better than most other states, it isn't an island apart from the economic storm battering the rest of the continent. In fact, Kansas was one of 13 states to reach a high in initial unemployment claims in December. It had 7,949 claims, more than double the previous December.

Despite the worsening problems, there has been some good news. Legislative leaders are starting to work together to find a reasonable solution to the state's budget shortfall.

Democrats and conservative Republican lawmakers agreed to cut significantly less from education and social services but include other revenue adjustments.

Lawmakers still need to examine the impact of their proposed cuts on state agencies and essential services — such as whether the Kansas Department of Corrections would have to close prisons, end treatment programs and stop supervising parolees....

Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer and the United Way of the Plains are re-establishing a one-stop center where people who have been laid off could go for help from nonprofit, government and business entities. Cessna's announcement makes the need even more pressing.

These positive actions won't mean an end to the bad economic news. There will be more layoffs, hiring freezes and budget cutbacks in coming weeks and months. But such governmental responses are essential to help boost the economy and assist those who are without jobs, a growing number of whom are our friends and neighbors.

— *The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press*

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## Global positioning points out errors

I sent Cynthia off to Colorado Springs alone the other day. I made her take the Garmin global positioning navigation thingy the girls sent.

They know how easily she gets lost. They've been threatening to give her one for a couple of years, and this Christmas, it came in the mail.

Technically, they gave the Garmin to both of us. That's because they knew somebody had to play with it and figure out how to make it work. Cynthia and electronics are not exactly bosom buddies.

To prepare for this day, I've been taking the Garmin to work all month. I'd punch in the address of whatever office I was going to, then tell the Garmin to go there. It'd respond with an accurate estimate of my arrival time.

Of course, I could drive to most of these places in the dark with the lights off, but that's not the point. I figured it was best to try finding places you knew how to get to before going someplace where you could get lost.

I quickly figured out what the various maps, buttons and the like do. I set waypoints and filed addresses. I tried to fool the Garmin by taking wrong turns. It just tells you to go around the block.

In that respect, the Garmin navigates a lot like Cynthia. She's always missing her turns



### Steve Haynes

- Along the Sappa

and going around the block.

The Garmin can be pretty persistent when it thinks you're ignoring it. First thing I did was turn off the annoying female voice that tells you when to turn. Not that I'm not used to ignoring instructions from a woman, but this one doesn't know when to give up.

For the most part, the little bugger picked direct, fast routes to wherever I wanted to go. A couple of times, I noticed that you can fool it. Sometimes it doesn't recognize locations in the middle of a block, and tries to place you on the nearest street. Other days, it'll plant the flag for a target squarely in the middle of a block and dare you to go there.

The mapping software is awesome. The database has nearly all the streets and roads in and around area towns, and for the most part it's accurate. It shows highways and county roads, and knows the speed limit by the mile

on most state highways and major city streets. These are up to date; it shows a little speed-limit sign in the corner of the screen, and the limit will change as you pass a sign with a higher or lower speed.

Before Cynthia left home, we programmed in the address of her hotel in the Springs. It figured a route around the northern fringe of town down to I-25 that I'd have trouble navigating with a map.

Cynthia said the only flaw in the route was a junction where the Garmin said to go left, but the intersection had been replaced with an interchange and a right-hand exit. Even Garmin can't keep up with the road crews, it appears.

Other than that, she said, it gave her all the necessary turns. Of course, she missed most of them in the city. She said by the time she realized she was actually at the turn, it would be too late to get into the left turn bay.

But, she added brightly, the Garmin told her exactly when she'd missed a turn — and how to go around the block.

*Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.*

## House bills coming out of committees

This week, things have started to pick up. Bills are starting to come out of the committees. House Republicans will start consideration of the bills beginning Monday, Feb. 2. Here are three issues that are generating news:

#### BUDGET

As we move into the third full week of the session, we are finally beginning to see legislation in the House for debate. I am not a member of the Appropriations Committee, so have not been very involved in the budget process other than to make my district's wishes known.

This week, Appropriations will debate the Senate-passed spending reductions for the current fiscal year and the full House should have it for debate later in the week. The bill includes an across-the-board cut of 1.5 percent and does not affect the education budget to the extent of the previous bill, protecting our small rural schools. The remainder of the cuts come from "one-time" money such as fee sweeps and further targeted cuts.

This is just the beginning of the budget process. Once an agreement is reached on the current-year (2009) budget, both chambers will have to turn their attention to the deficits expected in 2010 and beyond. According to new numbers by the nonpartisan Legislative Research Department, the governor's proposed cuts for 2009 will not be enough to get the state out of the red this year.

#### ABORTION BILL

This week, a bipartisan bill was introduced in the House that would protect a woman's physical and psychological health while advancing the state's interest in protecting fetal life. HB 2076, A Woman's Right to Know and See, would require that 24 hours prior to an abortion, the mother must be provided a list of free sonogram locations and with information for free counseling assistance for medically challenging pregnancies and contacts for free



### Jim Morrison

- Capitol Review

perinatal hospice services.

Thirty minutes prior to an abortion, when the mother consults with her doctor (required under current law), and a sonogram is used, the woman must be offered the opportunity to see and get a copy of the sonogram image and to hear her baby's heartbeat. Additionally, the bill requires that an anticoercion sign be posted in the clinic so that every woman is aware of her legal rights.

The bill is awaiting a hearing in the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs.

#### JUDICIAL SELECTION

A House concurrent resolution has been introduced in the Judiciary Committee to change the way justices are selected.

Some believe the current system of selecting Court of Appeals judges and Supreme Court justices gives too much power to lawyers. Under current law, a nine-member commission, five of whom are lawyers selected by other lawyers, submits a list of three nominees to the governor. The governor is then required to appoint one of those three. Kansas is the only state in the nation that allows lawyers to control the selection of the majority of a state judicial nominating commission.

HCR 5005 would implement the following reforms:

Change the make-up of the nominating commission to allow three appointments each by the governor, the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House. One of each appoint-

ing authorities appointees would be required to be a lawyer in good standing in Kansas.

The new nominating commission would still present three names to the governor, who would be free to either select one of those nominees or to reject the list and require that three new names be chosen by the commission.

The individual selected by the governor would then be subject to confirmation by the Senate.

*Even though these bills are currently garnering the most attention, I would still like to hear any ideas or concerns regarding issues that matter to you. It is an honor to serve as your representative. Use [jmorrison@ink.org](mailto:jmorrison@ink.org) as my e-mail or call me at (785) 296-7676 if I can help with anything.*

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### Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

