Opinion



Other Viewpoints

State will benefit only from results

As a small state with a declining population and a worsening financial picture, Kansas needs to be smart about promoting economic development.

The state has at least five major initiatives and a host of smaller ones aimed at recruiting employers and growing the jobs base. But the efforts don't always fit together neatly, the result being an incomplete puzzle with some pieces missing and others out of place.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius wants to rearrange the picture by eliminating one of the largest pieces.

She has vetoed the Legislature's recommendation that the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corp. receive \$12.1 million in state funding next year, and proposed that some of its functions be transferred into the state Department of Commerce.

Supporters of the agency, known as KTEC, are fighting to keep it intact. They say the loss of its network and expertise will slow economic development.

The agency is well-connected within and outside of Kansas, and has unquestionably helped to recruit businesses, encourage entrepreneurs and assist universities with technology-related programs. Some studies have given Kansas a high rating for its entrepreneurial climate, and credited the agency's work.

But a recent review of the agency by an Indianapolis-based research firm, Thomas P. Miller and Associates, raised questions about whether it is accomplishing its mission. The state continues to rank in the bottom quartile of many technology-based rankings, the study noted....

States are smart to spend money to recruit high-tech companies that will create good-paying jobs and provide opportunities for talented workers.

But those efforts must be done strategically and with clear goals in mind. Success must be defined not by activities — of which KTEC can list many — but by measurable results. Evaluators over the years have had difficulty assessing its outcomes.

Kansas' budget struggles and the new opportunities emerging in the biotech and energy industries suggest that a revamp of economic development efforts is in order.

Sebelius's veto is intended to get that job started. Lawmakers should seize the opportunity.

The Kansas City Star, via The Associated Press

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Try a cleanup for fund raising

To the Editor:

Since the city and county have announced the spring cleanup, I would like to suggest a fund raiser for school and community groups.

Pick a half-mile stretch on one of the main streets and collect donations to be made for the successful cleanup of that street and the adjacent area. The most-used ones in the city are easily marked out on stretches on the half mile lines.

Going west to east, it is half a mile from Range to Franklin and from Franklin to Country Club Drive. Then plan on working north to south on Franklin or Country Club, since the Rotary Club had adopted Range for its regular cleanup project.

Starting on the north at the Kyle Railroad tracks, it's half a mile to what would be First Street — actually the seldom-used Union Pacific tracks between Second and Webster. Another half a mile will take you to Pine Street, and the next half mile to College Drive. Its nearly a mile from College Drive to the Frontage Road (Willow) and there is no half-mile cross-street so it would take a larger group to work those areas.

It seems like a team of four to six could work a half mile of street, sorting the recyclables and plain old trash as they go. Be sure to wear good gloves.

A larger group could work more or longer segments. It would be good to "reserve" the stretch(s) of street your group would like to work so most of the main streets could be covered. (Perhaps the *Colby Free Press* would post reserved segments on a map at their office.)

I, as a donor, would much prefer to pledge money for such a project than to "pay kids to play" as with the bowlathon or walkathon, or some sales project where the group gets orders for cookies, candy, magazines, and only gets a fraction of the price for goods I frequently don't want or need.

Sharon Steele, Colby



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

Red Cross says thanks

To the Editor:

This is National Volunteers Week. During this special week, on behalf of our branch of the American Red Cross, I would like to express our appreciation for all our volunteers' efforts this past year. As many people know, volunteers make up a huge majority of the workforce in the American Red Cross.

Whether someone volunteers in blood services, in our health and safety division, working disasters in our jurisdiction or even nationwide, or supports us in the office, we couldn't function without the help of our volunteers!

We want to acknowledge all time and effort these people put inot the Red Cross mission. We know that time is precious, and if someone volunteers on a regular basis, it takes quite a commitment on their part. And for that, we are especially grateful. We realize volunteers have a choice of where to donate their time to and we thank ours for choosing the Red Cross.

People volunteer for the Red Cross for different reasons. Maybe you've received a blood transfusion, or work in the medical field and know how precious our blood supply is and how quickly it can be depleted, so you choose to work at a blood drive. Or maybe you enjoy teaching, and appreciate knowing you've made a difference by teaching a health and safety class. Or maybe your heart goes out to stranded motorists that have nowhere else to go when the highways shut down during blizzards, so you choose to help at storm shelter.

Ever been affected by a disaster, or know someone who has? Then you might help us work disasters. Or maybe you just like to serve your community by helping in our office or on our advisory board. Maybe you've got a gift of creativity and can help us with our fund raising so we will have the money to serve our community when the need arises.

As you can imagine, the need for volunteers is great. No matter which facet of the Red Cross you choose, it takes all of us to make the Red Cross successful. If you know of someone looking for a volunteer opportunitie, please have them call our office to see if we can find a good fit for their interests and talents.

Again, we appreciate you, we value you and we thank you!

Sherry White, Colby executive director Thomas County Red Cross

Volunteers keep going

To the Editor:

Kansans are generous and dedicated to their communities. 772,000 Kansans volunteer 97.3 million hours of service a year to community causes. The estimated value of volunteer hours is \$1.9 billion a year.

Kansas ranks ninth among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in volunteerism.

This is national Volunteer Week. Volunteers are dedicated, compassionate people who give of themselves to help others. One small but mighty volunteer group in this county is the Hospice volunteers. They are an outstanding group of people trained and educated to provide the best for those on Hospice care. You may not hear a lot about them because they work quietly behind the scenes.

This National Volunteer Week, join me in appreciation for some of our local heroes, your local group of Hospice volunteers.

Amanda McKenzie, Phillipsburg manager of volunteers, Hospice Services Inc.

Do we have a problem?

What is the solution to our financial and social problems? Or, as some folks ask, do we really have a problem?

Unless you have a cellar full enough of gold bricks that, if they devalue to 10 cents on the dollar would still be worth enough to carry you 'till the mortician is called, you have a problem. And then you still have a problem unless you are physically able to defend that gold against all marauders. You've also got a problem in that gold has no nutritional value.

Financial collapse of a nation usually means a total collapse of the governing body and system. Without some form of government, no individual can defend themselves against the hordes, and property titles have no value. The percentage of world nations that are teetering close to the edge of collapse is great enough to cause chaos around the world.

Without regulations, man's lust and greed makes for a very inhospitable environment. Survival of the fittest may be acceptable in the animal world, but man is capable of scheming and planning in ways that prevents a level playing field for all men and women. I picked



Ken Poland

Ken's World

up a quote off the Internet, attributed to James A. Garfield, our 20th president: "Whoever controls the volume of money in any country is absolute master of all industry and commerce."

A pure capitalistic system, without regulation or limits, puts our financial system and industrial complex into fewer and fewer hands.

It doesn't appear that "self regulation" has worked. Neither peer pressure nor religious conscience (whatever the flavor) has worked, nor will they work. When wealth and physical power allow men to regulate themselves, corruption and abuse are inevitable.

As long as God gives man freedom of choice, man must make rules and regulations

to protect himself from those who have no moral compass. I am one who believes God's Kingdom is not of this world, as we know it.

Our Democratic Republic is the most capable system of government in the world. Unless we develop an equitable set of regulations for all people, and especially the huge financial institutions and mega national and international industrial complex, we will become slaves to the fittest and return to the dark ages and the feudal system.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwinc@cheerful.com.

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail s.haynes @ nwkansas.com or colby.editor @ nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

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