



Other Viewpoints

Heavy lifting on budget goes on

Kansas governors and legislators over the past 15 months have done a credible job of balancing the state’s expenditures against declining revenues....

But the heavy lifting isn’t done, as evidenced by the state’s latest revenue collections, and we would urge caution when elected officials turn their attention later this year to the work of a special commission formed to explore the closure, consolidation or relocation of state facilities for cost-saving measures.

These include the Kansas Neurological Institute in Topeka, Parsons State Hospital, the Rainbow Mental Health Facility in Kansas City, the Kansas School for the Deaf in Olathe, the Kansas School for the Blind in Kansas City, and the Beloit Juvenile Correctional Facility.

Among those six, the Beloit facility would appear to be the one most easily closed as it houses only about 20 juveniles who could be transferred to facilities at Topeka or Larned. Estimates are that would save about \$4 million a year.

Beyond that, there are social as well as fiscal issues to address when considering the other facilities on the list....

Law enforcement officials in Johnson and Wyandotte counties already are warning against closure of the Rainbow Mental Health Facility, saying its absence would force them to treat the mentally ill they encounter more like criminals than what they actually are, people who need treatment....

There is a time for budget cutting, but it should be tempered with empathy for those among us who are totally incapable of caring for themselves....

The budgets of the facilities should undergo the same examination for cost efficiencies demanded of other state operations. But before facilities are closed or consolidated, our elected officials should ask themselves if they’re solving a problem or creating one, and whether the money savings are worth the social cost.

— *The Topeka Capital Journal, via The Associated Press*

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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.



We need help to get your stories

People often ask why an event wasn’t in the paper, or why their club or group’s meetings don’t get covered.

Sometimes I think people assume that we just automatically know about everything that happens — because, after all, we work at the newspaper — but for the most part, all we really know is what somebody tells us.

Some things happen on a regular schedule, and we get into a routine of covering them. The City Council, for instance, usually meets on the same days every month, and so do the county commissioners and the school board. Those we just plan on covering; the clerks will tell us about any special sessions.

We listen to the police radio and make regular checks with law enforcement agencies and at the courthouse, but even then, it’s impossible to know everything that goes on in a county. We often depend on tips to tell us when something unusual is happening.

When it storms, we know to call the weather bureau, but it might be that a big storm hit the southeast part of the county while we were out of town, and we wouldn’t know if someone didn’t call us.

We know to watch for wheat harvest in June and corn in the fall and school to start at the end of summer. Oh, there’s a lot we know. But there’s more that we don’t know.

That’s where you come in.

If you, as a reader, see something going on that you think might be news, why not call the paper? Our staff is small, the county is big. Even if we know about it, we might need the information you have.

We can’t be everywhere, but we try to hit the high spots, and a tip or phone call in advance is a big help.

Some guy riding through town on a coast-to-coast unicycle trip? Give us a call. Something happen down the street that should be in the paper? Or your company has a new facility or product line? We’ll always try to get something in if you give us a call.

The sooner you call, by the way, the better. If you call five minutes before a program, there’s not much chance we’ll have a photographer ready to rush out and take pictures. Give us a day or two, and we’ll try to make it.

If there’s a fire, it’ll be out if you don’t call ... right ... now. If the guy on the unicycle is in the next county, we probably can’t catch up to him. Same for the fleet of matching sports cars that stopped in town overnight.



Steve Haynes

• Letter From the Publisher

For features and Page 1 stories, we’ll try to send a reporter with a camera. If we can’t make it, or you want to try your photo skills, anyone with a good digital camera can take pictures for the newspaper. Just bring us your memory card or the raw pictures on a CD. You can e-mail pics to us. We’ll see if we can work with them, but don’t be disappointed if we can’t.

For publication, photos need to be clear, sharp and in focus. They can’t be reduced in size, or too much detail is lost. Quality is critical, as is content. That said, we’d like to run as many reader photos as we can. Send ’em on in.

If your club or school is doing something interesting, it might make a story. If you want a notice on your meetings, please write them up and send them in. It’d be impossible for us to get them all otherwise.

The bottom line is this: We need your help. Send us news, tell us about news, give us news, and we’ll do our best to get it in the paper. We promise that every item and nugget will get in somehow, maybe not on Page 1, but somewhere in the paper.

If you think it’s important enough to get it to us, it should be important to us to get it in.

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.

Energy bill promises big ‘tax’ bite

To the Editor:

I would encourage everyone to contact our senators and as many other senators as possible, asking them to not enact the energy bill that includes the so-called “cap and trade” regulations. Cap and trade is a “tax that will affect every working family and every small business in America,” according to our congressman, Jerry Moran.

Increased gas and electric cost as a result of cap and trade are estimated at \$2,979 per year “tax” for every household. This irresponsible taxation will be unbearable.

A student of history would tell you that our nation stands on the brink of an economic disaster comparable to that which brought down the Weimar Republic in Germany in 1933 and introduced Adolph Hitler to the world.

Our nation is in trouble. By ignoring the warnings of our Founding Fathers, we have allowed our constitutionally provided freedoms to be eroded by national leaders, in both major political parties. Thomas Jefferson said, “When all government shall be drawn to Washington as the center of all power, it will render powerless the checks provided and will become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated.”

The United States of America is evolving into a socialistic democratic dictatorship, contrary to what it was created as: a Constitutional Republic. We, as a people, must demand that our national leaders adhere to the Constitution. The promotion of universal health care, gun control, forced redistribution of wealth and the suppression of religious expression all are part and parcel of the Marxist agenda.

Another area of concern is the usurpation of state sovereignty. Section 8 of our Constitution enumerates the powers of Congress and the much disregarded Tenth Amendment reserves to the states, “or to the people,” all other powers. The actions of our leaders constantly violate this amendment, and yet they are never called into account for their traitorous actions. This cannot stand!

In a U.S. Supreme Court ruling June 27, 1997, Justice Scalia wrote, “The federal government may neither issue directives requiring the states to address particular problems, nor command the states’ officers, or those of their political subdivisions, to administer or enforce a federal regulatory program. It matters not whether policy making is involved, and no case-by-case weighing of the burdens or benefits is necessary; such commands are fundamentally incompatible with our constitutional system of dual sovereignty.... Residual state sovereignty was also implicit, of course, in the Constitution’s conferral upon Congress of not all governmental powers, but only discrete and enumerated ones.... But the Constitution protects us from our own best intentions. It divides power among sovereigns and among branches of government precisely so that we may resist the temptation to concentrate power in one location as a solution to the crisis of the day.”

Another decision of the Supreme Court, dated 1992, says, “We have held, however, that state legislatures are not subject to federal directives.”



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

We should be demanding that our state legislators not meekly submit to the EPA, OSHA, the Federal Reserve, the IRS and all the other Federal alphabet-soup agencies. In doing so, they are violating the principles enshrined in our Constitution.

It would be beneficial if our national and state leaders read, understood and obeyed the Constitution. As we celebrate our nation’s independence on Saturday, we should remind ourselves of the principles on which this great nation was founded and bind ourselves to the sacred duty of ensuring that future generations enjoy the benefits of living in a Constitutional Republic.

Mike Baughn, Brewster

Mike Baughn is mayor of Brewster and a former sheriff of Thomas County.

Just give a number

To the Editor:

Regarding Rodney C. Eisenbise’s letter of May 27 about the Census Bureau, my husband and I decided a long time ago that the questions they ask are none of their business, so we just let them know how many people live here.

In my opinion, the questions they ask are an invasion of our privacy. Oh yes, they tell you it is to help them decide on money, either from Topeka or Washington, but why on God’s green earth do they need to know how many bathrooms your home has? Next thing you know they will be asking how many times you each flush it?

Give us a break, lawmakers! I encourage you, just as Mr. Eisenbise did, to just tell them only how many people live at your home.

Jari Skiles, Colby

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

