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# Special funds are not spare funds

It's probably good that the State of Kansas has almost \$2 billion squirreled away in more than 1,600 special revenue funds. The least those accounts do is provide a lot of safety nets.

Yet during a recession, it would be nice if lawmakers could use some of that money (identified by the Flint Hills Center for Public Policy) to ease the pressure on programs for the elderly, children, the infirm or on taxpayers in general.

Unfortunately, the money exists not simply because state agencies forgot or didn't need to spend it. In fact, as the Associated Press has reported, at least some of it is being spent as intended. The Employment Security Trust Fund, for example, ended the last fiscal year with \$340 million, which sounds impressive. A year ago, however, the fund contained nearly twice that amount - \$661 million. The balance has shrunk as the state has funneled benefits to unemployed Kansans.

Other funds are similarly dedicated and deserve respect. As state budget director Duane Goossen said, "Not all of these funds are alike. There are many different reasons why there may be money in a particular fund."

That doesn't, however, mean all those funds should be off limits to legislators who, after all, have the greater good to consider....

Yet legislators for whom tax increases are anathema and who instead have been whittling away at important programs and services in successive years would be remiss to not learn more. They should conduct their own review of these special revenue funds. Maybe some aren't so special, or have outlived their usefulness or provide more of a rainy day fund than is necessary.

These funds shouldn't be raided indiscriminately, but neither should they automatically be off limits.

-The Manhattan Mercury, via The Associated Press

### Where to write, call

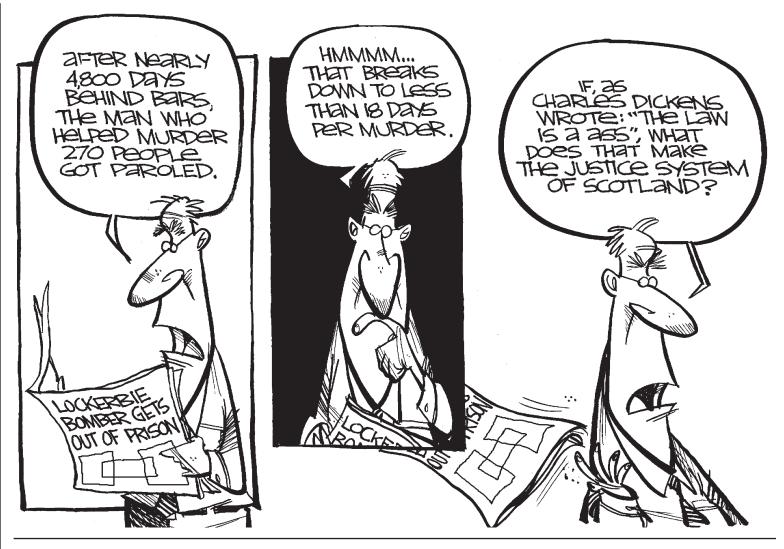
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# Change of seasons not always smooth

Writing at the end of Friday afternoon, I must report that it's been one of those weeks in which Murphy's Law was at work - you know, if anything can go wrong, it will. The corollary was also running strong: if anything goes wrong, it will do so at the worst possible moment.

It seems that just when we're gearing up to get big things done, dozens of little glitches interfere with the projects. Our work here at the paper seems to involve bigger things these days, with the switch from summer to fall activities to cover.

Society shifts gears in a big way about this time of year. As Andy Heintz wrote last week, the start of fall sports practice brings a surge of optimism to swarms of young athletes. The start of school brings a similar surge of hope to students and teachers alike, not to mention parents. The cynic in me is tempted to point out that this is likely to dim considerably within a week or so, as the reality of early mornings, homework, and all the day-to-day challenges begin to sink in.

Students, of course, come in all flavors. There are those who eagerly anticipate calculus class. There are those who, equally eagerly, plan how to cause the most chaos in the lunchroom. It's not hard to predict that both groups are likely to have a certain amount of success at their chosen goals.



forward to teaching those bright young minds in calculus, while some look forward to retirement.

Parents, of course, approach the start of school with an entirely different mindset. There is the first-day-of-kindergarten parent who is tearing up at the thought of sending "the baby" off into the cold, cruel world. Then there is the first-day-of-eighth-grade parent who breaths a sigh of relief at having survived summer vacation. Starting college brings a little of both feelings.

Even for those with little connection to schools, however, the end of August marks a change. Maybe it's the approach of Labor Day. We've very neatly set up our society with a pair of three-day holidays serving as bookends to summer. It creates a sharp line in our minds. Summer starts on Memorial Day, and ends on Labor Day.

is a time for 18-hour days in fields, gardens tor for the Colby Free Press. She collects ideas, Teachers come in all flavors, too. Some look and outdoor activities.) Either way, the pace of which are more portable than other stuff.

Call that influenza H1N1

life changes with the seasons.

The end of August serves as a buffer zone. School is back in session, but Labor Day hasn't declared the official end of summer vacation. In another month, there will be club meetings, and board meetings and athletic events and fall charity events and night classes and ...

But for now, we've got just a few things gearing up for fall, along with a few things winding down for the summer. The county fair is past, but the library is still on its summer schedule. The swimming pool is closed, but the parks are still busy. No one is quite ready to let go of summer.

Maybe that's why so many little things go wrong at this time of year. We're not quite done with one season, and we're not quite into another season, so we're trying to fit in both at one time, cramming our days with a combination of summer and fall. It doesn't all fit, and that's when things go wrong.

Somehow, though, the really important stuff will get done. Some of the not-so-important stuff will get done as well. Summer will turn into fall, and the stuff that got left out will be out of date. Will Murphy's law win? Not in the end.

Marian Ballard has collected careers as Summer is a time to kick back. (Or, summer counselor, librarian, pastor, and now copy edi-

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Four months after the outbreak of H1N1, you'd think the media would get it right. They haven't.

Turn on the radio or television, check out blogs, tweets and Facebook. Everyone is still calling the latest influenza, "swine flu."

That's wrong. Inaccurate. This disease is H1N1.

While this influenza can be found in swine, as well as birds, humans and other animals, it's a lot easier name to use for millions of people than H1N1, or North American Flu or Hybrid influenza. All three are more accurate.

This flu nickname attached to swine production is the last thing hog farmers needed.

Because of the unfortunate name choice, exports of U.S. pork have dropped, eliminating a key market rally that is typically seen each summer. This summer's rally was especially crucial; hog farmers have lost money since September 2007.

Hog farmers have lost more than half of their accumulated equity since September 2007. Hog farmers desperately needed a summer rally to return profit to their farms.

Yes, this false image associating this latest flu bug associated with swine has hit pork producers deep in the pocketbook. Since September 2007, pork producers have lost an average of more than \$21 on each hog marketed, and current hog futures show losses well into next year.

Ron Plain, University of Missouri Extension economist, anticipates losses of \$400 million during the last four months due to the market impact of the H1N1 hysteria.

Douglas County farmer Loren Baldwin has raised hogs on his family farm since 1997. Until recently, the young hog producer ran a 40head sow operation raising pigs.

"It's sad to say but the recent tag of 'swine

Bruce



flu' is probably going to finish off the family hog business," Baldwin says. "Coupled with the high input prices, linking this influenza with our swine production will be the straw that breaks our backs."

The Douglas County hog producer recently sold all but two of his sows. He keeps the sows to raise pigs so he can process them and eat pork on his family's diversified farm.

Baldwin is worried about producers who raise safe pork. They are good, hard-working multi-generational farmers, but they're fighting an uphill battle.

The cruel irony about this whole H1N1 scenario is that Kansans and other Americans should all be eating plenty of pork, beef and other protein sources to fight off the flu virus this coming season. Nutritionists believe and will tell you that minerals and vitamins, especially Vitamin B, once again found in protein like pork, strengthen the body's immune system.

"Pork is a healthy, nutritious food," Baldwin says. "It tastes wonderful and it's good for you. You cannot get the flu from eating pork.'

H1N1 influenza is not a food-borne illness. The safety of pork and pork products has been affirmed by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has said U.S. pork is safe to eat. His statement is sup-

ported by recent research conducted by the National Animal Disease Center and international researchers.

Influenza is a respiratory disease and the virus is not found in the blood or meat of healthy pigs or in pigs that have recovered from the illness. Of course, sick pigs are never allowed to enter the food supply. Hog farmers have protocols established for caring for animals that develop illness. Ill pigs are not sent to market. Just like humans, pigs can get ill, but like humans, they recover.

Call this latest influenza by its correct name. It's H1N1.

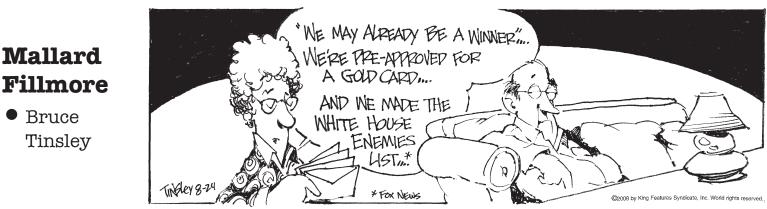
If the six and seven year old sons and daughters of thousands of swine farms across the United States know and can say H1N1, the media and those in public forums can surely do the same.

These dedicated family farmers eat the same food as other Americans. They eat the same bacon, ham and pork chops we do. They are just as concerned about and want to ensure their families have a safe food supply raised here in the United States.

The best way to help ensure the safety and security of our domestic food supply is to support the U.S. hog industry. Buy and enjoy U.S. pork and encourage your lawmakers to support trade agreements to open export markets. U.S. pork is safe and nutritious, and hog farming contributes needed jobs in the United States.

Think about the hog industry and the hog farmers the next time you talk about this influenza and the upcoming flu season. Get it right. Call it H1N1.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin.



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