

## Other Viewpoints

### Kansas Chamber misses on jobs list

John Doll sounded surprised to hear he didn't make a list supposedly tied to job growth. As a newer lawmaker with just one session under his belt, the state representative for Garden City hasn't established much of a voting record on the issue. Ditto for fellow GOP Rep. Russ Jennings of Lakin.

Yet the Kansas Chamber of Commerce saw fit to exclude the two and Rep. Don Hineman, a Dighton Republican, from its list of "pro-jobs legislators."

Others no doubt surprised by the list were folks on the front line of local economic development efforts. They know best how their representatives support job creation and were quick to question the "pro-jobs" list from a Kansas Chamber aligned with the wealthy Koch brothers, Americans for Prosperity and ultraconservative Republican Gov. Sam Brownback.

Economic development officials in Finney County know Doll and Jennings embrace their endeavors, and support economic growth initiatives that best serve their districts. Ditto for economic development forces in Scott City who reported regular communication with Hineman.

Naturally, the Kansas Chamber didn't specify which votes helped legislators make its so-called "pro-jobs" list. But it's easy to see the group's true goal was to prop up lawmakers who would support the crusade from Brownback and his allies that brought us an unwelcome policy of income-tax breaks for wealthy Kansans — a strategy deemed worst in the nation by tax policy experts from opposite ends of the political spectrum, one conservative and the other left-leaning, who predicted such tax avoidance wouldn't energize the economy with the significant job growth Brownback and company envision.

Doll, Jennings and Hineman apparently are viewed as lawmakers who would resist rubber-stamping an ultraconservative agenda that only promises to penalize low- and middle-income Kansans.

So, the three are indeed representing the interests of the people they serve.

As for not making the Kansas Chamber's "pro-jobs" list, they should not feel slighted.

First, it's necessary to consider the source. And, Kansans should take a hard look at those state lawmakers favored by an organization intent on serving the rich at great cost to others in the state.

— The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press

### Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

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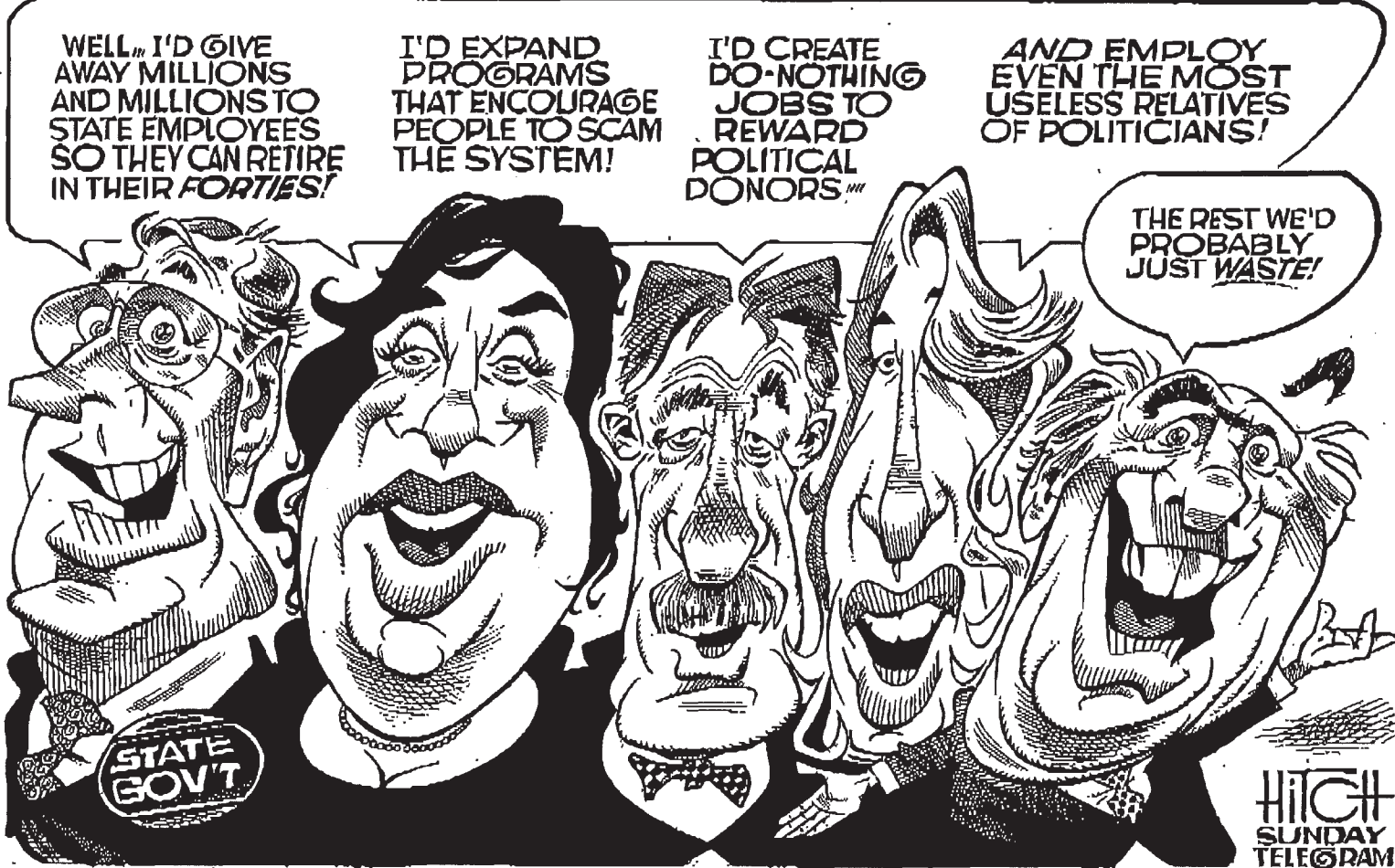
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## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON POWERBALL?



## Rain makes near-miraculous difference

If it's not a miracle, it's pretty close.

With nearly two inches of rain over the last two weeks, and more in some areas, northwest Kansas looks like it has been transported to another world: one that's green and gentle, where dust is but a memory, where it rains every few days and the crops are thriving.

I know many corn fields have been damaged by drought and heat, some may be beyond repair. Milo may develop late and be threatened by an early frost. The amount of grain to be collected this fall is an open question, but at least it looks like we'll have some.

Fields that two or three weeks ago were brown and stunted have been growing again, and corn plants that had not developed are blooming. The weather is cool enough that the plants might pollinate. Maybe it's not too late for the ears to develop.

But even if there's no corn, fields that were a total loss might now be cut for silage, with farmers getting some feed out of the deal for their stock to munch over the winter.

The difference from a month ago is dramatic. Dry, brown pastures sprout new growth of grass. Flowers are blooming where nothing but yuccas stood out in July. Fields where milo plants were struggling now are crowded with emerging heads. Corn that had all but given up to the drought is getting taller and still grow-



**Steve Haynes**

• Along the Sappa

In Oberlin, we are now at about 10 inches of moisture for the year, which is less than half our "normal" average. Another half inch overnight Monday put us about 3/4 of an inch ahead of last year at this time, however, and by the end of the year, we could be somewhere near normal.

Mark Buller, a forecaster at the Goodland weather office, said a ridge of high pressure which had kept the storm track north of us from last summer into this year has shifted to the south and west, allowing more rain here. He said the outlook is for normal weather the rest of this month. Fall is expected to be a little warmer than normal with about normal rainfall.

And that doesn't sound too bad. It doesn't mean the drought is over, however. Droughts come and go on their own schedule, and they don't appear or disappear over-

night. It takes more than a few rains to break one, but you have to start somewhere. Maybe this is our start.

The crops out in the field have not been "saved" yet, even if they have gotten a second (or third or fourth) chance at life. It will take more rain to make grain for a harvest, plus time for plants to mature.

But if nothing else, we can enjoy a lush, green countryside in August, when we're used to nothing but brown pasture and dry creeks. Heck, down along the Smoky Hill River, they're worried about flooding. Floods in August, in western Kansas!

It could take some getting used to, but I wouldn't count on it. For if there's one thing you can depend on with the weather here, it's that about the time you do get used to something, it'll change.

Just enjoy the nice days and green fields while you can.

More on Turkey next week.  
Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

[Editor's note: though many around Colby have had more rain, the official total from the Northwest Research-Extension Center is .62 inches for August.]

## Revitalization program offers benefits

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to inform Thomas County taxpayers about the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which became effective Jan. 1, 2012. This is a great opportunity for anyone wishing to make changes to their real estate while "phasing in" the property tax burden resulting from that change.

The process and application begins in the county appraiser's office. The application needs to be completed and accompanied with a \$50 fee. I would suggest that you plan your construction project to allow us the time needed to process your application request, in some cases up to 15 days. Some improvements which don't qualify under the program include sprinkling systems, fences, patios, gazebos, garden structures, landscaping, hot tubs, swimming pools and irrigation wells.

For information, stop by the appraiser's office or call 460-4525. It is my privilege to serve you as the recently appointed county appraiser.

Bruce C. Webb  
Thomas County Appraiser

### Statehouse Visitor Center needs your contribution

To the Editor:

The restoration of the Kansas Statehouse is



### Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

nearing completion and one of the final projects is construction of a new Visitors' Center on the north end of the building.

All visitors to the Statehouse will pass through the center to access other parts of the building. An inlaid marble floor map of Kansas and its 105 counties, about 15 feet by 30 feet, will be placed in the main hall. The map will allow visitors, including school children, to learn about the county place names and our heritage. Young Kansans will be able to identify their home county, stand on the tile and see its location in relation to others.

The Kansas Association of Counties has asked the help of commissioners in all 105 counties in raising \$1,000 per county to pay for this map as a measure of pride in Kansas counties and as a reminder to future generations about their importance. I have been designated as the Thomas County contact for the project by our commission, which has determined to raise Thomas County's \$1,000 con-

tribution by public subscription, not with tax money.

Raising the \$1,000 to have our county included in the map gives all of us the opportunity to express our pride in Thomas County, her heritage and her status in Kansas. I am asking current and former Thomas Countians to consider making a contribution. These may be made by check, payable to the Thomas County Community Foundation, with memorandum notation: Kansas Statehouse Thomas County Map Fund. Mail them to the Thomas County Community Foundation, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 14, Colby, Kan., 67701 or to me, Mike Baughn, Box 159, Brewster, Kan., 67732.

My goal is to have the \$1,000 raised by Monday, Sept. 23, so that it can be forwarded to Topeka on or before Oct. 1. Please join me in this unique opportunity to participate in a way of showcasing Thomas County to the rest of Kansas and to the world.

Should more than the \$1,000 goal be received, I will work with the foundation to use any average in establishing a fund that will allow for contributions to future endeavors highlighting Thomas County and our prairie heritage.

Mike Baughn, Brewster  
3rd District county commissioner

### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774  
roberts.senate.gov/public/

**U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966.  
Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

**U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 136-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399  
Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

