



Other Viewpoints

University dean sets pace for future

Since her arrival on campus two years ago, Neeli Bendapudi, dean of the University of Kansas School of Business, has been nonstop in her efforts to build a stronger, more vigorous and involved business school and encourage the public to realize the overall excellence of KU.

And, as last week's ceremonial groundbreaking for a new \$65.7 million business school building demonstrated, she gets results. Since her arrival in Lawrence, she has traveled the country telling alumni and friends about her dreams for the business school – the importance of a new building, as well as her desire to revitalize the school's curriculum.

Her enthusiasm and zeal is infectious, and she doesn't limit her efforts to the School of Business. She is quick to offer her help, if asked, to others on the campus relative to how they might advance or strengthen their own programs. She is an asset for the entire university.

A group of legislators are touring the state this week and next, visiting each of the six state universities, plus the KU Medical Center in Kansas City.

Their mission is to have face-to-face visits with a broad cross-section on each campus to get a better understanding of the financial need of the schools, how effectively the schools spend state money and how the schools can do a better job of educating and training students.

The best thing these lawmakers could do would be to spend as much time as they can with Bendapudi. They wouldn't get any double talk or pie-in-the-sky nonsense. They would get the unvarnished facts and hear what needs to be done to get the state's higher education system back on track.

The simple answer is the state needs more people like Bendapudi – leaders who put action over talk and who strive for excellence, people with a genuine enthusiasm and excitement for what can be accomplished with a commitment to educate and inspire young men and women.

The groundbreaking for a new School of Business building should serve as an eye-opening event and perhaps a model for what could be accomplished throughout the university, as well as throughout the Regents system, with visionary leadership and enthusiasm.

– *The Lawrence Journal-World, via the Associated Press*

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*EXCEPTIONS MAY APPLY.

European trade faces regulatory hurdles

During the last decade, growth of U.S. agricultural exports to the European Union has been the slowest among this country's top 10 export destinations. If U.S. farmers and ranchers had an opportunity to compete, trade with Europe could become a growth market for them.

"Regulatory barriers have become a significant impediment to that growth," says Steve Baccus, who farms in Ottawa County and serves as president of the Kansas Farm Bureau.

In mid-October, Baccus spoke to members of the North American and European Union agricultural conference in Mexico City. He also serves as chair of the American Farm Bureau Federation trade advisory committee.

Long-standing barriers against conventionally raised U.S. beef, ongoing restrictions against U.S. poultry and pork and actions that limit U.S. exports of goods produced using biotechnology remain the greatest obstacles between the United States and the European Union, Baccus says. It's harming our trade relations with Europe.

"Last year, we shipped more than \$8.8 billion worth of agricultural and food products to the EU," Baccus notes. "In turn, they shipped



John Schlageck

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Kansas Farm Bureau

back about \$16.6 billion. As big as those numbers are, they could be a whole lot bigger if barriers to trade were removed."

Baccus says European ag leaders admitted for the first time in Mexico City they understand the damage these restrictions are doing to them and their ability to compete in world trade.

European farmers and ranchers understand the strides biotechnology has made, Baccus says. They know their inability to use these advances is hampering their ability to remain competitive.

As with previous meetings between the two groups, the U.S. trade committee continually reminded the Europeans to let their consumers decide.

"We've talked to them about providing their consumers with both organic and convention-

ally grown foods," Baccus says. "We've also talked with them about giving shoppers the opportunity to buy conventionally produced beef or hormone-free beef, and that's a misnomer."

Baccus believes agricultural world trade is about options for this country's overseas customers.

"We've said for years that the consumer is king," he says. "We believe they should dictate market trends, not government."

When and if this change occurs, Baccus said, U.S. farmers and ranchers will be willing and able to meet the food needs and desires of people around the globe.

"It's interesting that people throughout the world embrace new advancements in health care, the work place and their homes, but when you talk to them about food in this context, they become nervous about using modern technology," Baccus says. "We'll continue to tell our story."

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, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Missing Halloween party has an upside

As school was ending on Friday, Lenny stopped by my locker to see me. "Do you want to join us for some Halloween fun tomorrow?" "What are you going to do?" I asked.

"We're going to help some kids stay healthy," he replied, "and then we're going to have a party at my house."

I didn't know what he meant by helping kids stay healthy, but I knew I couldn't go. I had already promised my parents that I would carry out our family tradition.

My parents didn't care much for Halloween. Traditional trick-or-treating was out. My father was not about to let his children roam around the neighborhood begging for anything, especially candy. When I was young, we children had felt left out of the fun of the season. That was why my parents came up with a plan on how we could celebrate the holiday in a way they felt was appropriate.

My mother made lots of homemade divinity candy and tons of cookies. We then dressed in costumes, and my mother drove us around the community, stopping only at the homes of the elderly. Instead of begging for treats, we took them some.

Many of them were widows and were lonely. They would invite us in and share stories, and it seemed to make life better for everyone.

When I became old enough to drive, I was the one that drove myself and my younger brother and sister. But this year my younger siblings had parties to go to, and it was left to me, alone, to carry on the family tradition. I

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had already promised my mother that I would. "I'm sorry," I told Lenny, "but I already have plans."

"You aren't going around visiting old people again, are you?" he asked. When I nodded, he laughed. "Man, you're 17 years old. That kind of stuff is for kids." When I said I still planned to do it, he just shook his head. "It's your loss. You're going to miss out on all of the fun. Maybe if you hurry you can catch the end of the party."

He laughed again, and, along with all of the other guys with him, teased me a bit more before heading off to catch the bus home.

All day Saturday, as I worked, I thought about it. I had never been to a Halloween party, and I kept telling myself it would be OK if I skipped visiting the elderly this once. But then I would remember how much some of the widows looked forward to my visit, and I knew it did matter. I considered that maybe if I hurried I could still have time at the party, too.

That evening, my mother prepared a box for me with lots of plates full of candy and cook-

ies covered with plastic wrap. On a piece of paper she listed out each house I was to visit.

As I stopped at each home, I was always invited in. Often I was offered hot chocolate, and the visits would go on longer than I planned.

I saved the home of Mrs. Levin for last. She was a sweet, little widow whose children lived far away. She was very lonely and loved having company. My hope of catching some of the party faded as she told me about each of her children, and then started sharing stories about when she and her husband were young. I realized I wouldn't be missed at the party, but my visit made a big difference to Mrs. Levin.

It was really late when I left Mrs. Levin's home, and I figured the party was probably almost over, so I just headed home. Even though I felt disappointment at missing the party, I had enjoyed my evening.

Lenny wasn't at church the next day, so I found his mother. "Where's Lenny?" I asked, laughing. "Is he still in bed from staying up too late partying?"

But there was no humor showing in her face as she answered. "He and the others with him were arrested for mugging little kids for their Halloween candy. They're still in jail."

I knew then that that was one party I was glad I had missed.

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• Bruce Tinsley

