

from our viewpoint...

## Need to continue development effort

For the second time Sherman County voters have voted down a property tax for funding an economic development program by a large margin.

The voters message was clear against a property tax levy, but even those who put the issue on the ballot agree the city and county need to have an economic development program.

Questions about how to pay for the program are the key, and whether the current program is right for Sherman County.

When the citizen group was looking for a way to create a county economic development program more than seven years ago a state law was available creating the council by having the Sherman County commissioners pass a resolution.

The city and county were convinced to help fund the program. Several outside donations were made the first year from area banks and a grant from Black Hills Energy.

With the election results the question is what will happen to the economic development program, and the other programs being handled by the council.

In the city budget work session members of the Sherman County Economic Development Council talked about what might happen if the election did not approve the property tax.

The city commission had the \$50,000 in the budget, and decided to leave it in even if the ballot issue passed.

Last year when the city commission did their goal setting session one of the top items was looking at ways to improve the economic development program. Several city commissioners had suggested if the program did not improve it might be good for the city to take it over.

What has been obvious in the past year is the county commissioners are not interested in being involved in economic development efforts.

An example is the county agreed to accept the building at Broadway Ave. and 17th and when things got expensive decided to sell the building. When it did not sell they decided to sort of turn the operation back to the council. Every time something comes up about the building at least one commissioner says she wants to get rid of the building.

When the Department of Commerce put on an Economic Development 101 program the two commissioners who attended did not seem to get what was going on and actually spent most of the evening talking to each other and disturbing the program.

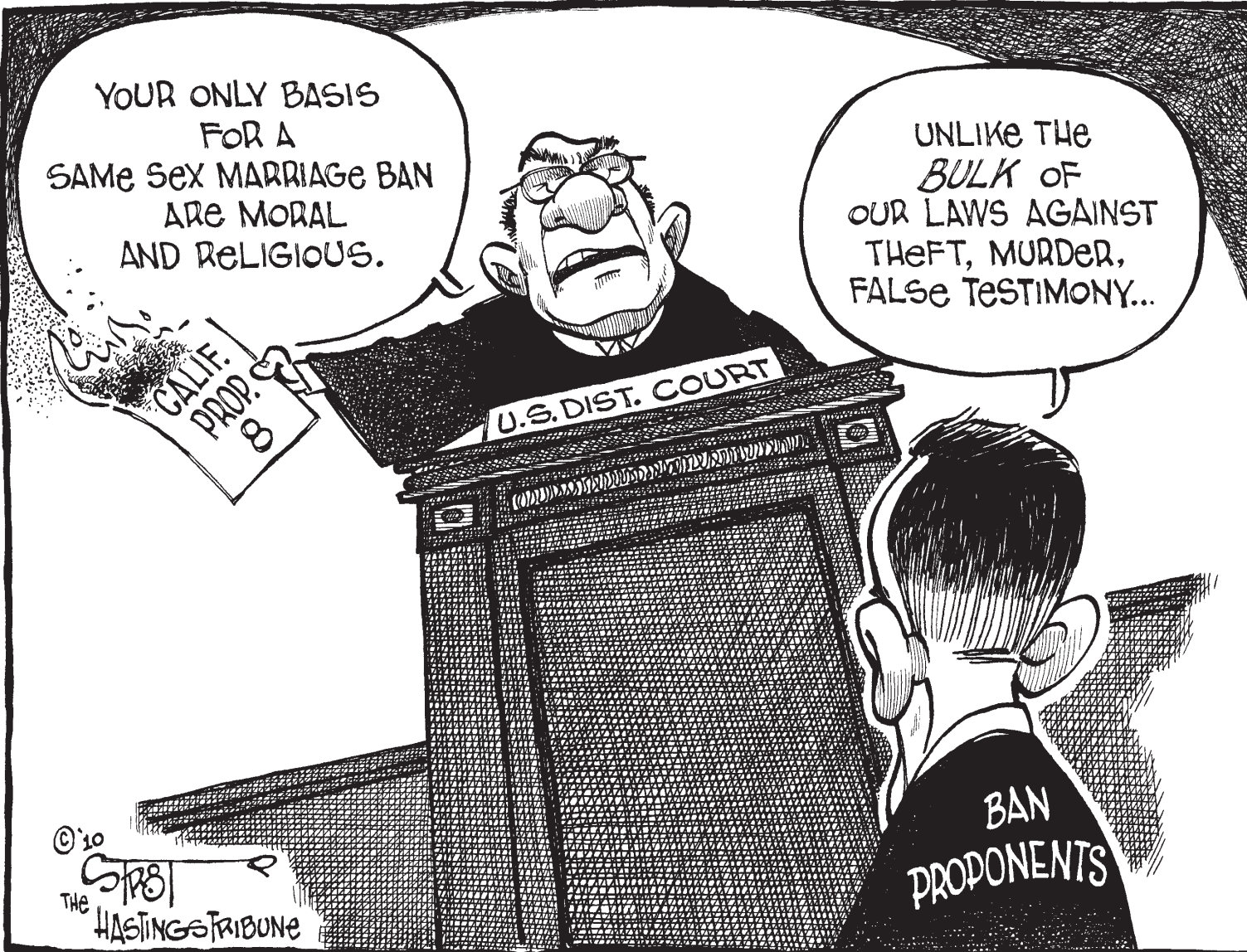
The proposed grocery store has hardly anything to do with the county and everything to do with the city and development council efforts.

The city administration and commissioners were involved in the negotiations for the incentives for the grocery store. The city had put together an incentives policy in December, and designed to apply to any new business who would apply.

What the county commissioners decide about the future of the Sherman County Economic Development Council may be what they feel the voters were saying in defeating the property tax levy. We feel the voters were objecting to the property tax and not to having an economic development program.

It might be an opportunity for the county to dissolve the development council as it exists, and let the city take over the program. As a home rule city the city could open an economic development program and the city has more to gain from the efforts.

Economic development is not an exact science, but it is important to the future of the community, and some how the program needs to continue. — Tom Betz



## GOP senate race got pretty crazy

The conversation got pretty crazy in the Republican race for the U.S. Senate, which was decided in the party primary on Tuesday.

Conversation? Some days, it seems more like a shouting match.

The two major candidates, U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran of Hays and Rep. Todd Tiahrt of Goddard, both tried to show that they were the farthest to the right. And that is a hard race to call.

Both are true conservatives, judging by their voting records and their campaign statements, but there are differences.

Mr. Moran is conservative in the old-fashioned sense. He's an independent thinker like Barry Goldwater, perhaps the most revered conservative Republican of the 20th Century.

Mr. Moran has voted against big spending programs for years, both those proposed by the Democrats, such as the Obamacare bill, and those put forward by Republicans, like President Bush's No Child Left Behind law. He says he voted against every bailout bill.

He's always voted against big government and he's been a consistent voice against big spending, regardless of what the Republican leadership told him to do.

Rep. Tiahrt is a different sort of conservative,



steve  
haynes

• along the sappa

a religious or social conservative in the mold of Sen. Sam Brownback, who's leaving the Senate seat to be the state's next governor. Like Mr. Brownback, he has become the darling of Kansans for Right to Life and other social-conservative groups.

It's not that Mr. Moran is for abortion, but he apparently has not worshiped at that shrine often enough to win the group's endorsement. While Sen. Brownback has not made an endorsement in the race, he went out of his way early in the campaign to make joint appearances with the Goddard congressman.

In some ways, the contest may have been about "wings" of the party; Sen. Brownback is clearly the leader of the far-right conservative wing. While he's not exactly a moderate, Rep. Moran is too independent to fit nicely in the right wing. He's never held himself out to be a follower of the House leadership, either.

Burdett Loomis, a University of Kansas political science professor who's been following

the campaign, pegs Mr. Moran as something of a maverick. He notes that the Hays congressman has been an independent thinker who often as not bucked the leadership.

Mr. Tiahrt has been more orthodox, and that shows in his endorsements from Speaker Dennis Hastert and other party regulars. He has good relationships with the leadership, even the liberal Democrat chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

Mr. Loomis figures Mr. Moran for a more independent senator, Mr. Tiahrt for the organization guy. He points out that Mr. Tiahrt and his family now live in Washington, while Mr. Moran comes home each weekend to Hays. That puts Mr. Tiahrt squarely in the old Washington tradition, he notes.

Oddly enough, the Tiahrt campaign attacked Mr. Moran for leaving his wife Robba "alone" to raise their two daughters. Mr. Moran not only comes home every weekend, he's visited all 69 counties of his huge district every year.

What kind of senator will we get? Conservative, for sure. Independent, in contact with the voters, or distant, living in Washington? The voters got to decide.

What was your choice?

## Where we live



Insight  
this week

• john schlageck

Reflection is a good thing. It allows you to see where you've been and hopefully chart a better course on where you're going. While on vacation recently I had a chance to think about the small community where I grew up.

Located in northwestern Kansas, Seguin was a small farm/ranch community of approximately 50 hearty souls. It was located in Sheridan County, three miles south of Highway 24 and the Union Pacific railroad used to run through this small town.

Seguin was a community where families were raised and values — good and sometimes bad — were instilled. Looking back, those fortunate enough to grow up there like I did in the '50s and '60s were surrounded by people with core values that helped guide us throughout our lives.

At the top of this list of virtues my community provided was spiritual in nature. A spiritual quality like, seek ye first this kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things shall be given unto you.

We all grew up with Monsignor Mulvihill and the Sisters of St. Joseph, went to mass six days a week and learned to abide by the golden rule.

Next, came the courtesy level of our town. This was measured by the ordinary civilities a total stranger could expect. Residents of Seguin and the outlying community always welcomed family and friends back for special events — many centered around our church and its congregation.

Transient laborers, especially during wheat, milo and corn harvest, were treated well because of their valuable contributions during these critical periods.

Rootedness or a sense of commitment on the part of a town's people was another cornerstone in our little community. Dependent on the fertile, sandy loam soil of the High Plains, Seguin's families lived by the unspoken agreement that this was a place to stay, put down roots and build a family, a farm, a business and a future.

This quality is closely related to a sense of place, which now grows more rare with each passing day.

Diversity — not necessarily in the form of many nationalities — but rather in the form of

creative disagreement was another building block in our community. This meant our little town enjoyed a certain confidence that all of its inhabitants didn't have to echo one another in order to make progress.

On the contrary, a community, like a country, can profit by its differences. Believe me, nearly everyone I ever knew in Seguin spoke up, voiced their opinions and let their ideas be heard.

Loyalty was the fifth attribute our community was blessed with. Loyalty is often confused with conformity, though the two are really opposites.

It is precisely loyalty to the community, to posterity and to principle that moves a citizen not to conform. A dissenter may never be so loyal as when refusing to go along quietly.

Loyalty is a virtue, but not a simple one. Certainly it is not as simple as those who use it as a club to enforce their will on an individual or a community.

Generosity was the sixth attribute and not just with material support but a generosity of spirit akin to humility. This broader, deeper attribute sets aside not only personal interests for the sake of community, but personal grudges, slights and obsessions.

One might call this trait charity, but charity in our society has acquired an unfortunate connotation of being optional — not obligatory. Some believe charity is what you do with what you have left over. Those who believe they owe a debt to their community and embrace the opportunity to repay it practice charity, the real thing.

Pride in our little burg was readily apparent. Self respect may be a better word for this civic virtue. It has to do with much more than clean streets, green lawns and painted buildings. It explains good schools, honest law enforcement and other amenities that make for a proud, self respecting community.

Openness was the final attribute in our small

northwestern Kansas community. Without openness all of these other virtues would only be a façade.

Our community was an open book. Everyone knew everyone else and everything that was going on. Candor, candidness, frankness, sincerity and plain dealing were the only way of doing business and conducting each day of your life.

Everyone who lived in Seguin was a member of the community and part of our town. Didn't matter who you were, where you lived, how old you were or whatever else. Our community was a place of human and humane values.

Sometimes in the rush of every day life we forget to live by such values. Know your neighbors, coworkers and the members of your community. And, yes it's all right to argue with them and disagree with them about what is best for the community.

What is important is to care about your community. Think of its best interests and don't let your mind be diverted by lesser concerns or scattered holdings.

Just like the little community I grew up in and the family and neighbors who helped shape who I am today, each of us live in communities that have values and fine traditions to uphold. Be part of yours.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

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