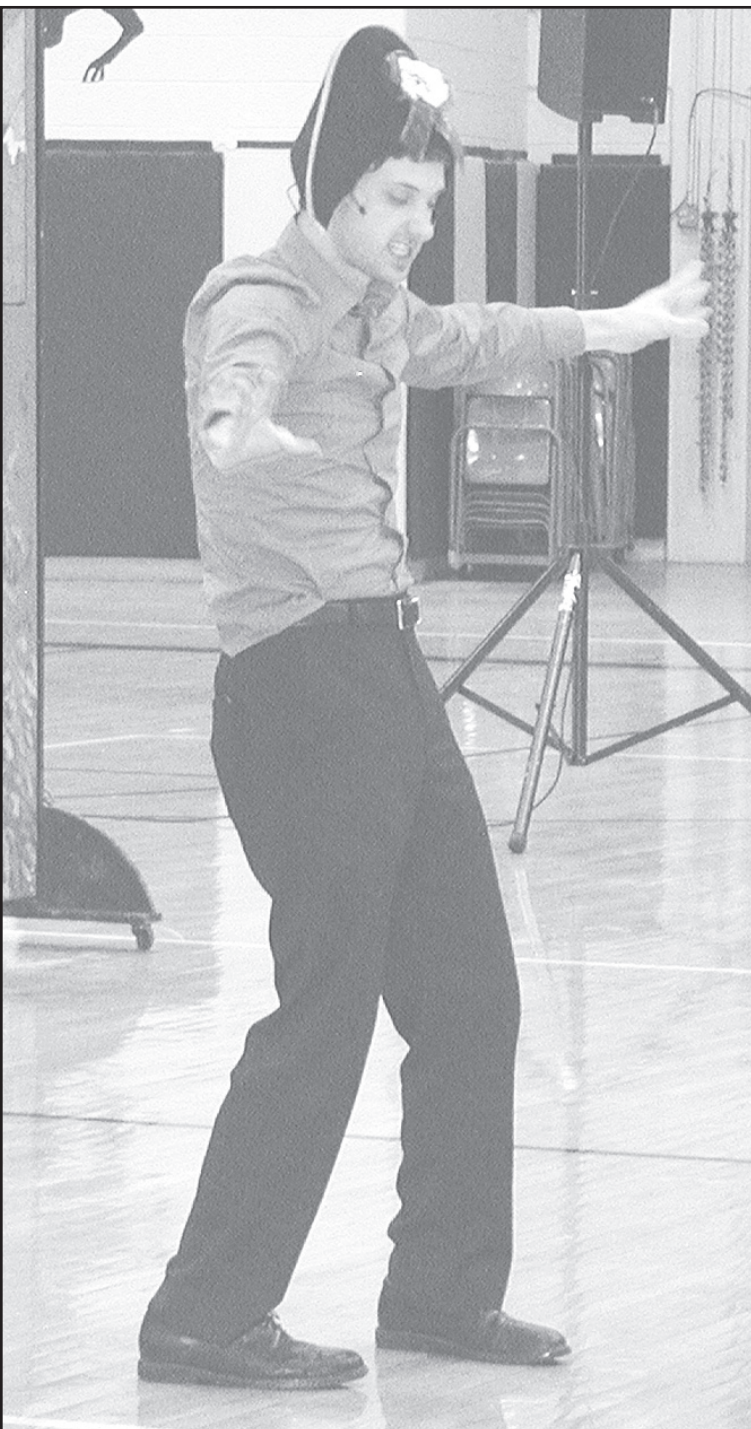


Celebrating Kansas' 150th



Four of the members Wichita Children's Theatre put on the show "Kansas Can" on Friday afternoon for Central Elementary School students at Max Jones Fieldhouse. The program celebrated Kansas' sesquicentennial or 150 years. A song performed says that if

you need something done Kansans can (above left). History and famous sons and daughters of Kansas were highlighted. One of the historical people portrayed was Napoleon Bonaparte (above left) and his selling of the territories that included Kansas in the Louisiana

Purchase to the U.S. The program was part of Western Plains Arts Association's events. The show was also given at Atwood, Colby and Brewster schools.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Legislature tasked to help with budget issues

With the second week in legislator behind us work continued as committees meet regularly to address issues and legislation. In the next week or two, bills will start to make their way out of committee and head to the House floor for debate and final vote. I will try to keep you updated.

The main focus of this session is, and will continue to be, addressing the \$550 million budget deficit and repairing the Kansas economy. Again this week, the focus of most topics ultimately revolved around the bottom line. The first step in dealing with the budget came with introduction of House Bill 2014, which includes Governor Brownback's proposal to freeze the state budget for the 2011 fiscal year. The measure makes approximately \$120 million in cuts and orders several funding transfers. If passed in its current form, the bill would create a \$35 million surplus for the State General Fund in FY 2011.

Reforming State Government

This week Governor Brownback and Lt. Governor Colyer with House and Senate leaders announced plans to address the financial problems facing Kansas by implementing

structural reform to state government. Issues specifically targeted for restructuring are Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, Medicaid and a definition of suitability concerning education.

The Senate was charged with addressing the state public employee retirement system. Currently, the retirement system has an unfunded liability of \$8 billion dollars. In terms of actuarial solvency, recent studies have shown Kansas to have the second worst state pension system in the United States, falling only behind Illinois. Pension programs nationwide have been hit hard by the faltering economy.

Governor Brownback assigned the Kansas House of Representatives with defining the term 'suitable education.' Existing school finance law lacks clarity in this regard, and the Governor is asking us to determine what this term will define. It's a decision that will have considerable impact on educational funding issues, and I anticipate it will be one of the most challenging issues we face this session. The Legislature has done its best to provide schools with equitable funding in a down economy and most of us in



rick billinger
• state rep.

the legislature believe the taxpayers of Kansas want their tax dollars heading to the classroom and not the courtroom. I look forward to participating in this conversation, and I'm confident we'll find a reasonable solution.

Lt. Governor Colyer has been tasked with the restructuring of the state's Medicaid program. A doctor himself, Colyer will be working with a sub-cabinet to review and recommend reform proposals to improve the quality of care for Kansans on Medicaid, control the costs of Medicaid, and make long-term improvements on the quality of health and wellness of Kansans.

House Bill 2035

I am proud to co-sponsor House Bill 2035 which was authored by Representative Lance Kinzer. The bill aims to restrict late term abortion procedures, expand parental consent requirements for minors

seeking abortions and strengthens the state's partial birth abortion law to where it better aligns with tighter federal law. This particular measure is a combination of legislation passed during prior sessions that was vetoed by democratic governors Sebelius and Parkinson.

Key provisions of HB 2035:

- Requires a specific medical diagnosis for a late-term abortion to occur
 - Requires women seeking abortions to be provided with information that states they procedure will terminate the life of a human being
 - Allows for civil lawsuits against doctors who violate late-term abortion law
 - Mandates additional reporting of sex abuse evidence on minors wanting an abortion
 - Requires both parents of a minor to consent to an abortion if the minor comes from a stable home that shows no evidence of abuse
 - Clarifies when courts can bypass parental consent requirements
- House Bill 2039 - Smoking Ban Introduced on Wednesday, HB

2039 removes the gaming floor exemption found in the current statewide smoking ban. The current statewide smoking ban allows smoking on the gaming floor of racetrack and gaming facilities. HB 2039 has been referred to the House Health and Humans Services Committee for consideration.

Voter Identification Legislation

This week the Safe and Fair Elections Act was introduced. The measure would require new Kansas voters to show a birth certificate, passport, or other proof of citizenship when registering to vote. First time voters would still be required to show a government issued photo ID when casting their ballot. The bill would allow low-income Kansans to get a free ID or birth certificate if they reside in a household with an annual income of 150 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$33,000 for a family of four). For residents over the age of 65, an expired driver's license or photo ID can be used in lieu of a current form of photo ID.

Education

We had the pleasure of hosting and honoring eight teachers from across Kansas as outstanding teach-

ers in Kansas. It was a real treat to hear the passion these teachers have to teach our children. I know we could go to any of our schools in Kansas and find teachers with this kind of passion and desire to teach our young people.

In Governor Brownback's proposed budget, the money in the base state aid per pupil would decline by \$75 this fiscal year and \$157 in the next budget year.

Commerce and Economic Development

Governor Brownback wants to help the 40 counties which have had double digit population losses. The advantage to this, program would be, new residence moving into one of these counties from another state would not have to pay Kansas income tax for several years. This program would not cost the state any funds.

Insurance

Secretary of Insurance, Sandy Praeger was at our committee meeting to discuss implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act.

You may contact me at: rick.billinger@house.ks.gov or call me at 785 899-4700. My office phone is 785 296 7659 Room 754b in the Docking Building.

matters of record

Municipal Court

- These are cases decided by the Goodland Municipal Court:
- Nov. 30: Thomas L. Hellerud, speeding in school zone 11 mph over limit, fined \$162.
 - Dec. 1: Clifford Richard Leonhardt, speeding 10 mph over limit, fined \$105.
 - Dec. 7: Andrew J. Brown, expired drivers license or no drivers license, fined \$160.
 - Dec. 8: Harley C. Bennett, minor consuming alcohol, fined \$360.
 - Rebecca L. O'Neal, disabled vehicle, fine suspended.

Dec. 9: Anabel Cano, no parking zone, fined \$178.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

Beautiful Environment

My husband and I had a lovely house in Eco Acres. After I lost my leg, I was needing a little more care than what my husband could provide. I moved into Fairview Estates, and I'm lucky to have a beautiful apartment with a great view of flowers outside my window. I am truly thankful I had such a place to go.

Phyllis Elliott

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You're Invited To Join the FUN!!

- Saturday, Feb. 5th: 8 p.m.**
Karaoke Night
- Sunday, Feb. 6th: NFL Championship Game:**
Kickoff 3 p.m.: Snacks, Buffet, Prizes
- Saturday, Feb. 12th: Valentines Couples**
Dinner & Dance. 6 p.m.-Call for reservations.
\$47/couple-Surf & Turf

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