

from our viewpoint...

Complaints begin as budget cuts start

The wailing and gnashing of teeth has begun. Supporters of state programs about to feel Gov. Sam Brownback's budget ax have begun whining, and the wail will reach epic proportions before the spending bills are done.

Every program has its supporters, of course. Usually, they're organized by the people who work for the programs. Thus, a couple of years ago when Republicans proposed changes (not cuts) in spending for federal lunch programs for senior citizens, cards were passed out and speeches made at senior lunches. Congress dropped the change like a hot potato.

On the block in Kansas, where the state faces a \$570 million revenue "shortfall" next year, are the budgets for the state arts commission and public broadcasting. Supporters already are howling. However, it's hard to make a case for a real need here.

Performing arts and broadcasting are not in short supply. Mass-appeal providers saturate the markets with material, some of it pretty good, a lot of it pretty awful. People pay to see both kinds.

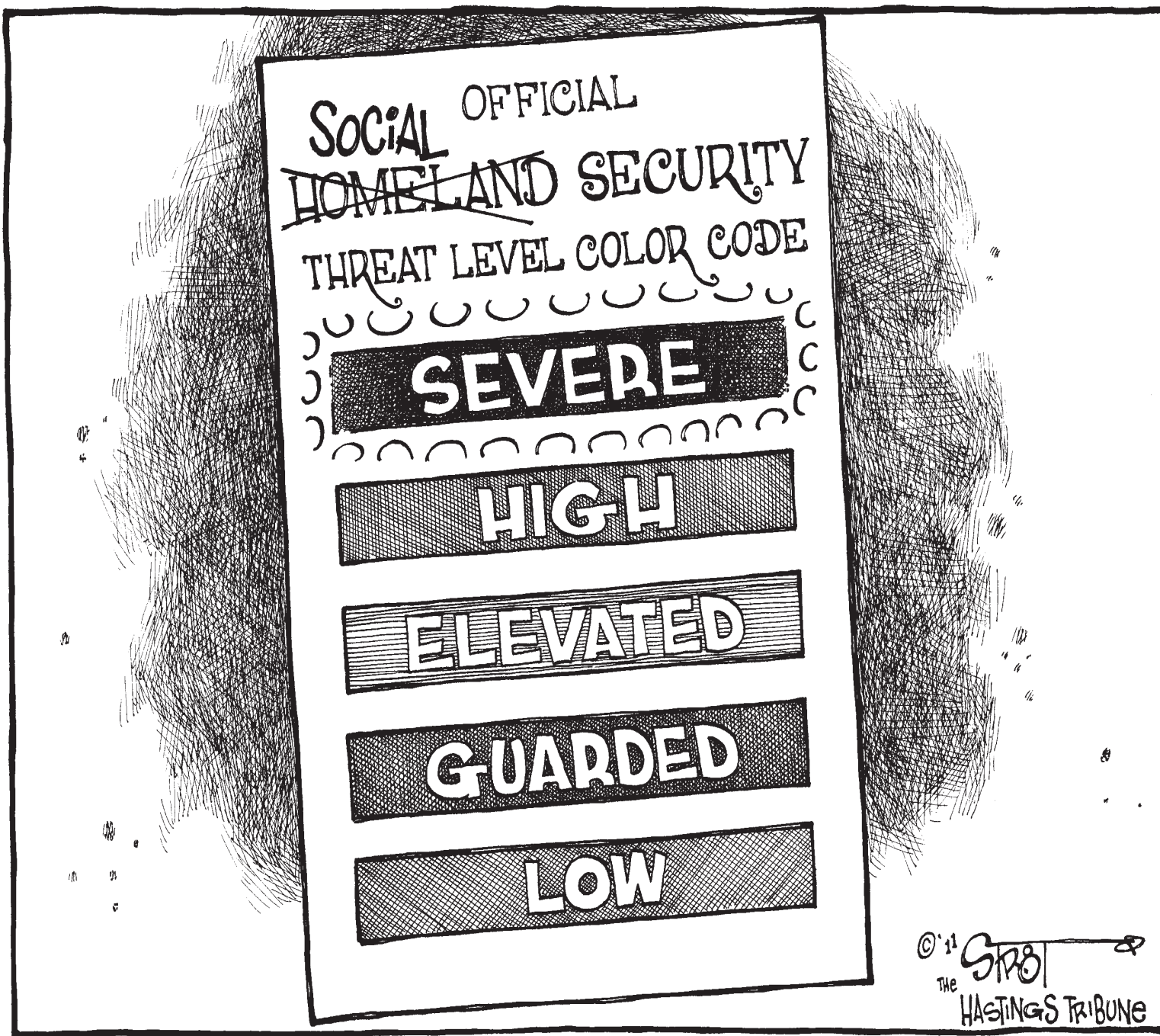
Public support for the arts and broadcasting tends to buy the type of show people won't pay for. We sympathize with people who might miss some of these programs, but it's hard to make a case for spending tax money on programs, live or broadcast, that few people want to see.

Tax money, after all, is not freely given. It is taken from people by force of law, and if necessary, by force of arms. If you do not believe that, try not paying your taxes.

That means government has a special responsibility to see that tax money is spent on things most of us agree on. For state government, roads, public safety, schools and colleges, health, welfare and a few others meet that definition.

It's hard for us to put performance, live or broadcast, into the same category. These programs tend to appeal to a minority, most of whom could afford to buy their own tickets. The morality of taxing poor people to finance programs for such an elite minority is questionable, to say the least. Especially when the state has no money.

These programs have produced some good work, but it's time for Kansas to let them go. It's also the right thing to do. — Steve Haynes



Make a difference!

To the Editor:

Our family moved here three years ago. We moved here for what Goodland had to offer, a fantastic school system with many opportunities for our children and us. We knew Goodland had quality people and it would be a great community to raise our children.

Most everyone in western Kansas, especially those who follow sports, knows of "The Max." What a great asset it has been to this community and our students. Almost every morning when it's cold or windy you can find people walking inside. Many outside organizations depend upon it yearly. We weren't here when the decisions were being made to build this awesome venue but we assume the planning, time and discussions were plentiful as is the upcoming decisions about our current bond issue. We can only assume even back then not everyone thought it was a good idea or the right time to build. We don't think we would be stretching the truth to say the decision to build such a beautiful building along with the additions have only enhanced this community pride!

We believe updating facilities is not only a



your schools, community

• guest column

need, but can breed enthusiasm among students and staff. Administration was willing to improve some of the facilities and equipment that was much needed at the time we moved here. Although this was very minor in cost and every district at some point does the same thing, it meant a lot to our student athletes, teachers and coaches. We truly believe the commitment to our programs has made a difference. Our programs have improved over the last three years.

Our leaders in this endeavor have done an exceptional job. They have led us to a great opportunity for our school district to improve on facilities, and to help manage finances for the future. It is a known fact we have aging buildings, less students attending our schools, less money to operate buildings and staff. It is inevitable jobs will be lost, programs cut and buildings shut down no matter what path is

taken. Our leaders have put us in a fantastic position to take advantage of various funding opportunities that may not be available if we do not pass this bond issue. They have many hours into this project, they have the knowledge, and we need to follow their lead. This is the best option we have towards moving forward with facilities and future finances at this time.

If we want the community of Goodland to be competitive as we draw in new teachers, administrators and to impress new families moving into the area we need this bond issue. Going to two schools seems very logical for our future needs and finances. It may very well help us keep programs for our children to choose from and staff who will continue to educate them. We have no doubt this bond issue will be of great value to our students, parents, district employees and community members.

We encourage you to ask questions, get the facts and make a difference. Vote YES. Residents of Sherman County can make a difference.

Kent and Dixie Teeter
Goodland

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THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

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1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

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Need to save Grant Junior High

To the Editor:

I'm writing about the article in the Jan. 18 edition of *The Goodland Star-News* regarding the recent school board meeting.

I agree if the population is down, it makes sense to combine students, but they have to be out of their minds to consider the demolition of one of the oldest historical landmarks in Goodland. Grant School has stood longer and has been the foundation of learning for more students than any other school in the city.

I hear for a while during WW II, a number of troops even called it home.

Over the years I've watched Goodland all but disappear. You've brought in a Wal-Mart and managed to get rid of all the stores that brought travelers downtown.

You've refused industry that would actually add jobs and bring families to the city.

If you're not careful Goodland's not going to exist at all.

A number of people think Grant School is a candidate for the National Historical Register. I've spoken to a number of people who have made a point of stopping by the school when traveling through. They've talked about walking the grounds admiring the architecture.

This building has served Goodland well for as long as any of us "real Goodlanders" can



from our readers

• to the editor

remember. I think it's outrageous we're going to let a group of people, most who either don't know or don't care about the history of our fair city, determine the fate of this building that has seen most of us through a good portion of our formative years.

Let's reconsider.
David Kimbrell

To the Editor:

This past year \$10,000 was spent through an Elks National Foundation Impact Grant awarded to the Goodland Elks Lodge to help feed the hungry families within our community through Genesis.

Statistics from the final report just completed are show 858 total families (representing 2440 total people) were assisted in the year.

The problem addressed (when the grant was requested) was "hunger" in our midst. The percentage of unemployed and low-income families within our community was higher in

where to write

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2010 than in 2009 — thus the continued need for funds to help purchase food for Genesis.

Goodland Elks, through, this grant, supplemented food donations made by individuals/organizations within our community to Genesis food pantry by purchasing more staples such as powdered milk, soup, saltines, tuna, peanut butter, pancake mix, syrup, instant potatoes, spaghetti noodles and sauce, etc.

With this grant, however, and the availability of a refrigerator and freezer, the Goodland Elks was able to purchase more "luxury" perishable items for the food boxes such as: hamburger, eggs, bread, tortillas, sliced cheese, margarine, bologna and even \$10 gift certificates so families could purchase milk, fruit, etc. as needed.

Goodland Elks supplemented the USDA's The Emergency Food Assistance Program every other month when Genesis/Elk workers distribute these "commodities" to needy families/seniors in our community. Elks distributes 100 doz. eggs and 100 loaves of bread to each family receiving these commodities

The largest one project is the Christmas Food Baskets given in December. Elks members assisted with purchase of these food items and assisted with the filling of the baskets and distributing them on Dec. 18th to the needy families.

The Goodland Elks No. 1528 has helped Genesis for two years with their Impact Grant — \$10,000 in 2009 and \$10,000 in 2010. By Elks purchasing a lot of the food needed throughout these years, Genesis was able to help families with utilities, rent, prescriptions, thrift store clothing and misc. (diabetic supplies, diapers, etc.)

The Elks grants have ended, and it will be necessary for individuals, organizations and churches to step up and give donations to Genesis (both in food and cash) to keep the program going this year.

Zona Price
Elks Trustee