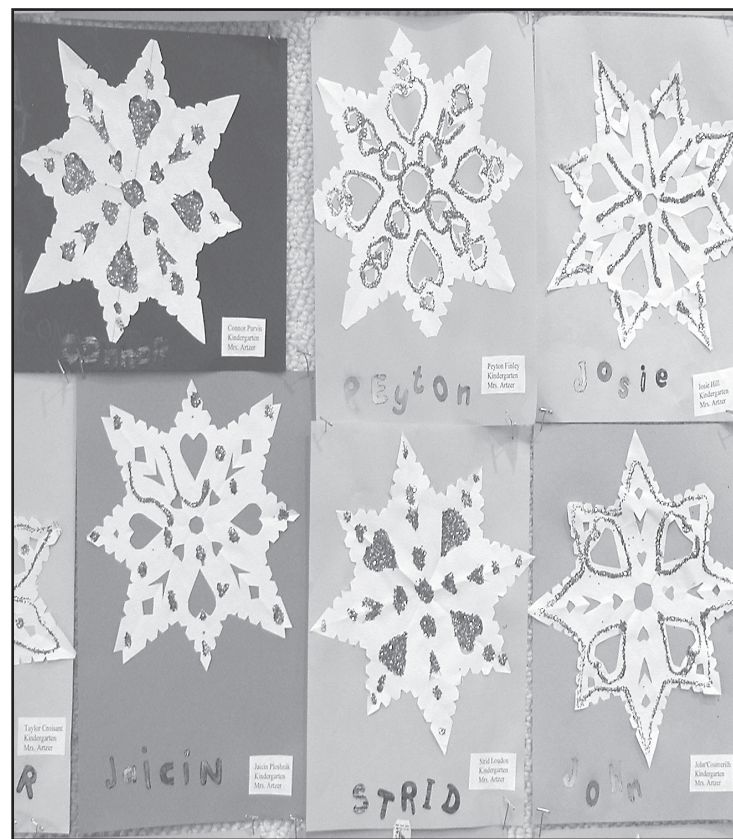


# Kids' art on display



Sunday was the opening for the annual Elementary Art Exhibit that will last until Monday, Feb. 28, at the Carnegie Art Center, 12th and Center. Students from Linda Lucas' music classes in the first and second grade were there to entertain a packed house. Among objects on display were snowflakes and valentines. Christina Mills (far left) shows Mary Mills some of the art work her daughter, Sada Miller, had done.  
Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

# Time to reflect on the history of our state, its role

This last week we celebrated the 150th anniversary of Kansas' statehood, and it serves as a time to reflect on the history of our state and to appreciate its role in the evolving state of our nation.



**rick billinger**  
state rep.

## Session, week three

As I've indicated in earlier updates, the main focus of this session will be addressing the \$550 million state budget deficit and repairing the Kansas economy. The first step in addressing the budget comes in the form of House Bill 2014 which freezes the state budget for the 2011 fiscal year. The bill, as presented by Governor Brownback, makes approximately \$120 million in cuts, orders several funding transfers and would create a \$35 million surplus in the State General Fund for this fiscal year. This week the House Appropriations Committee held hearings and began working on amendments to HB 2014. I anticipate the bill will make its way out of committee soon and will be ready for a full vote sometime next week.

Once introduced, a budget bill is sent to a committee for public hearings. After public hearings, the committee has the opportunity to

amend and vote on the bill. If passed with a majority vote, the bill goes to the House of Representatives for debate, additional amendments and final vote.

Simultaneously, the Senate is working on its own version of the budget bill through a similar process. Once the House and Senate pass their respective versions of the budget, three representatives from the House and three from the Senate will meet in a "conference committee" to negotiate differences and agree on the final budget bill. This product returns to the House and Senate for each chamber's vote of approval. If passed by both, the budget finally makes its way to the governor for his signature or veto.

I am hopeful HB 2014 is quickly approved by the legislature so we can freeze state spending and focus on the larger task of filling the \$550 million budget hole. Fixing

the budget involves a number of controversial measures, but I remain confident we will find a way to improve the Kansas economy and solve this budget crisis.

## Expanded Liquor Sales

This week legislation was introduced that would allow grocery and convenience stores to sell full-strength alcoholic beverages. Currently, gas stations, grocery stores and convenience stores are limited to selling 3.2 beer and wine coolers. The bill (Senate Bill 54) would allow liquor stores, who are currently limited to selling just alcoholic beverages, to sell food, gas and other items.

This is not the first time this legislation has been introduced. Like many issues, there are two sides to this story and both have valid viewpoints. I would appreciate your opinion on this bill and how it could affect you and your community. Your feedback always assists me in this regard.

SB 54 is currently under consideration in the Senate but could make

its way to the House later on in the session.

## Arts Commission Funding

Many constituents have contacted me to express their concern over the restructuring of the Kansas Arts Commission. There is no question the non-profit arts and cultural sector is a growing market in Kansas. However, as we continue to face astounding revenue declines we must find a way to restructure government while focusing on providing essential services. We must ultimately determine whether programs under consideration preserve a "core function" of government.

The Governor's plan to restructure the commission as a non-profit is a viable option. The State of Vermont has successfully adopted a non-profit structure for their arts commission and several other states are contemplating similar proposals. The National Endowment for the Arts, which provides federal funding for the Kansas Arts Commission, has threatened federal money may not be available as a result of this action. However, the enabling legislation for the National Endowment for the Arts has been

thoroughly reviewed and no requirement for state funding to match federal funding has been found.

While this will continue to be an issue of concern, please rest assured I am committed to ensuring the arts do not suffer. After carefully reviewing the situation, I am confident the restructuring of the state arts commission will allow the commission to remain whole.

## Commerce and Economic Development

This week we heard testimony on HB2088. The bill deal's with fire sprinkler systems in residential homes. The bill will make it the choice of home owners whether they want to install sprinklers in their homes. This is part of the 2009 IRC code book; it was moved from the appendix section to this code. It will go to the house floor sometime next week. We have been working on HB2054 which will abolish Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation. These services will be assumed by Department of Commerce and the Board of Regents.

## Education

We have been working on several bills in the Education Committee.

HB2016 is an act concerning school districts relating to the problem of weighting. HB2017 relating to enrollment of pupils eligible for free meals under the National School Lunch Act. HB2018 relates to school finance; it has to do with High Density At-Risk Pupil weighting. HB2020 deals with recent schools affording educational institutions the option to utilize the housing suspense fund.

As always, if possible, take the time to visit Topeka this session. If you would like an individual meeting, I'd be happy to arrange one. In the meantime, I'm always anxious to hear your thoughts on how the issues discussed in Topeka affect you. Reliable feedback is very important in making sure I'm accurately representing my friends and neighbors here in the district.

Please feel free to call me at (785) 296-7659/(785) 899-4700 or email me at: Rick.Billinger@house.ks.gov and I'd be happy to discuss any topic you are interested in.

## death notice

### Donald Bigge

Donald L. Bigge, 77, Lamar, Colo., former vice president at Goodland State Bank at Goodland, died Saturday, Feb. 5, 2011.

## 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.

## matters of record

### District Traffic

The following fines have been paid in the Sherman County District Court.

**November 28:** Dustin M. Pritchard, no seat belt, \$5.00.

Charles C Porter, speeding, \$168.50.

Charles W. Peterson, motor carrier safety rules and regulations, \$208.50.

Mary Lou S. King, speeding, \$168.50.

**December 1:** Federico C. Luna, unlawful registration, \$60; no child

seat belt, \$153.50; speeding, \$150.

**December 2:** Brandon D. Ruley, improper driving on laned road, \$153.50.

Ernest E. Sheltry, Jr., motor carrier safety rules and regulations, \$208.50.

**December 4:** Gary D. Newton, speeding, \$174.50.

Stuart N. Sharpe, speeding, \$168.50.

**December 5:** Leo C. Altamirano, no child safety belt, \$153.50.

Braulio Alvarez, no valid license, \$153.50.

Spencer D. Haltom, unlawful parking, \$174.50.

**December 6:** Wade G. Dawkins, over weight limits on wheels and axles, \$153.50.

**December 7:** Peggy J. Halverson, speeding, \$216.50.

**December 8:** Jason Burris, no seat belt, \$5.00.

Dale Schaffer, no seat belt, \$5.00.

Mark Gould, no seat belt, \$5.00.

Kelby A. Sanchez, no seat belt, \$5.00.

Lacy Sanchez, no seat belt, \$5.00.

Antonio G. Ledesma, no seat belt, \$5.00; no valid license, \$150.50.

Christina Ledesma, no seat belt, \$5.00.

**December 9:** Terry R. Bahe, speeding, \$252.50.

Steven R. Edmonds, unlawful registration, \$153.50.

David Michel Evans, over weight limits on wheels and axles, \$218.50.

## NOTICE OF OWNERS OF TAXABLE PERSONAL PROPERTY

All owners of taxable personal property (including boats, jet skis, mobile homes, campers, snowmobiles, golf carts, mopeds, dirt bikes, trucks, non-highway vehicles, trailers, airplanes, business equipment and fixtures) MUST come to the appraiser's office to report ownership of such property. ALL Personal Property MUST be listed by March 15. Any questions concerning personal property items call 890-4825 Sherman County Appraiser's Office.

**WE NOW PRORATE WATERCRAFT.**  
Owner of record is to notify the County Appraiser within 30 days of the acquisition or sale.

**REAL ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS OR STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO BUILDINGS MUST ALSO BE REPORTED.**

## Kindergarten Round-Up

**Kindergarten Round-Up for next year's Kindergarten class**

**February 15 & 16, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
**Catholic Church (307 W. 13th)**

For children entering Kindergarten in Fall 2011. For appointment, contact Judy Herl at West Elementary. (785) 890-6163.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Bring to screening: certified copy of birth certificate, immunization records and copy of social security card!

# 10 MILLION AMERICANS FACE THIS

AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration) is a chronic eye disease that causes loss of the straight-ahead vision crucial for activities like driving and reading. AMD is the leading cause of blindness in adults over 60 years of age. Our office provides comprehensive eye health examinations necessary to detect AMD.

785-899-3654  
www.eyeclinic.com

**Vision Source!** Danielle McAtee, O.D. Mark Wahlmeier, O.D.

**SATURDAY MORNING APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE EACH MONTH**  
CALL EARLY TO SCHEDULE!