

Sen. Moran faces questions about cuts, programs

By Tom Betz

nt.betz@nwkansas.com
Once his opening remarks were completed, Sen. Jerry Moran opened the town hall meeting on Thursday to more than 50 people who were at Western State Bank for his 43rd town hall visit, and the first to Goodland since his election to the U.S. Senate.

The first question from Bud Perry was, "When is the budget going to get balanced?"
Moran talked about a letter he had written to President Obama saying he has not seen any evidence the President is willing to reduce spending. He said in the last message the President said he wanted to cut \$4 billion dollars. Moran said that is a lot of money, but it is less than what is added to the deficit each week.

"It is going to take a lot more than that," he said.
He said he wants to pass a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget. He said he has not seen any evidence Congress or any administration have the discipline to say NO. We need to put in place restrictions that require reductions and we need a constitutional amendment.

"My point to President Obama, in the absence of the constitutional restrictions," he said, "you can count that I will vote against extending the national debt ceiling. I think until we start saying NO it just keeps going and there is always an excuse. This is the moment in which I see — more than the continuing resolution and whether the government gets shut down — those of us who believe we have to control spending want a significant reduction or we are not going to raise our debt ceiling and this is the time to get the books back in balance.

"Not with my vote are we raising the debt ceiling unless there is significant spending reductions and a framework for constitutional and statutory changes to keep us from getting back in this position again.

"I didn't answer your question. At least we both know that. I know I didn't answer your question."

The crowd laughed and Perry rephrased his question to "What is going to happen if we don't balance the budget."
"In my view we will have a lower standard of living for every American," Moran said. "We will have higher interest rates and have inflation return, and then those who lend us money will decide we are not credit worthy, and they will not be willing to loan us money and will raise the interest rates.

"The third largest component of our budget is the interest we pay on the national debt, and that is at a time when the interest rates are at all time lows, next to nothing. If interest rates were where they have been historically, our interest payments would be five times what they are today, creating more problem.

"At some point in time, China or others are going to say we do not trust you to pay us back, and as the interest rates go up they are not going

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live their lives in a special way, and that needs to be preserved and carried on for another generation of Kansans.

"It is a chamber of commerce point of view," he said. "We should have a little prosperity and it should be carried on for our future. Agriculture is important to our people."

Moran said he had visited with Goodland Regional Medical Center representatives about dialysis, and said many of those in Washington do not understand the rural experience, and that the town may be small enough to be worried if there is not a grocery store or a hardware store in town.

He said education is an area where he has tried to keep down the rules, and said the No Child Left Behind was a program he voted against because he feels it created a problem.

"Those are the issues I am about," he said. "There are broad national issues that have to be addressed, and our focus has to be about jobs and business expansion and getting our financial house in order.

"I have said in the last 42 stops that we have sometimes rewarded elected officials who got things done for their people. I think that is not true any longer and we have to tell people we cannot do these even if they are good ideas.

"I worry that what we see in Washington is a constant battle. We have become immune to the balance the budget argument. There are real consequences if we do not balance the budget for everyone in the country.

"There is a positive aspect: to put people to work and grow the economy. It means some changes on the regulations, like from the Environmental Protection Agency, and on the tax code.

"We brag about reaching agreement on the Bush tax cuts, but it is really only for two years and we have not solved the problem. This creates uncertainty about what to do in the future, and from my view we have to get a handle on the spending and it has to be reduced. We are operating on a continuing resolution that was extended until April 18, but this is the smallest spending piece."

He said the last Congress failed to pass a bud-

get, and the continuing resolution is holding the spending at the same level as last year.

"This is a terrible way to budget and does not move you anywhere," he said. "We have to get to the long term on what we do with the budget in the next several years."

He said Congress has to deal with Medicare, Social Security and entitlement spending.

"We have lots of things we have done to get into this shape," he said. "We have to solve it, and we have to make sure Social Security is solvent."

He said to solve the budget it will take both parties and the president.

"I am sorry to hear we cannot do anything because it is an election year," he said. "Washington has an election every two years so when are we going to get anything done.

"I feel we have to get something done and have the agreement of the Democrats, Republicans and the President."

Moran then opened the meeting to questions from the audience.

to loan us any more money and the consequences to us are real. This is not just some academic philosophical discussion going on in Washington. Everybody in this room, their children and grandchildren are going to pay the price of what I think is a very selfish and wrong kind of attitude about how we spend money in this country."

Ben Duell said he supports Moran, and wondered if he sends \$100 to the Tea Party, do they share any of that with the good guys like Moran and Representative Tim Huelksamp.

Moran said he does not feel the Tea Party shares their money, and he does not know anything about their fundraising or what they use the money for.

"The thing about the Tea Party," he said, "is it is so grass roots there is not an organization among those groups, so I do now know what they would do with your \$100."

One lady suggested she was stepping on some toes, but said she feels there needs to be less lawyers in government and more business men and business women who understand assets and liabilities, and not be lawyers.

Moran said she was stepping on his toes, "but it does not bother me," he said. "I practiced law in a small town and understands what it takes. I actually chose to go to law school because it was an opportunity to live back home. It is a profession in which I can find work and not have to go off to the city."

He said he is often supportive of candidates — who he wants to vote for — someone who is outside politics who hasn't run for office before, never held office or who has run a business. He said Sen. Ron Johnson, who is the new senator from Wisconsin, was a manufacturer, and he brings a great perspective to Washington about how to create jobs and what it takes for a business person to

make a decision on expanding.
"The most common conversation I have with business owners in Kansas today," he said, "as I walk through their plant is they feel their government is against them. It is not that government is neutral, it is what do they do to make it more difficult for the owners to stay in business. It is the message about how we create jobs we desperately need."

Another person said he was disappointed in the government plan to cut 100 percent of the funding for public broadcasting. He said the Smoky Hills Public Broadcasting operation helps bring good programs and educational programs to the people of northwest Kansas. He said he could see some cuts, but not 100 percent.

Moran said there are no extravagant thrills at Bunker Hill, the headquarters for Smoky Hills Public Television.

Another question was about cutting agriculture programs, and the person said he was all for cutting the fat, but not the meat. He said the good programs under the farm bill ought to be preserved.

Moran said he was unable to be a member of the Senate Ag Committee because Sen. Pat Roberts is the ranking Republican on that committee. Moran said he did land on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Ag Appropriations sub committee, where he will have some decisions about the farm bill, and will be working on environmental regulatory hurdles put in front of farmers and business people.

He said the actual farm bill is down to about 12 percent of Ag Department spending. When they are talking about cutting it, the 12 percent affects farmers, and not the 82 percent that is food stamps and other programs.

Greg Nemecheck, from Western Prairie RC&D, said they have lost the money, and had a message from

the USDA that the coordinator has been given a two week notice.

He said rural development is what RC&D does. He asked what they could do about losing that program.

"You don't have to convince me," Moran said, "but everything is on the table. Zeroing out a program that works is wrong."

Moran said he likes the flexibility of the RC&D program. He said he supports what the House passed and wants to get back to 2008 spending. He said it is that small slice of spending, but said it does not mean eliminating this type of program.

"I am sure in the House," he said, "to a lot of people rural development doesn't mean much."

Moran was asked about an airport being planned in Rooks County. The lady said she was told it was \$12 million, and wondered if that was wasteful spending.

"Why did you put an airport up there for 5,000 people when they are cutting education by \$6 million," she said.

Moran said it was combining into one airport to serve Stockton and Plainville. He said the money is generally federal, but the money is from the Federal Aviation Administration and is based on an airport plan. He said not every airport qualifies.

"It had nothing to do with the home town of a Senator," he said.

He said the Rooks County commissioners had applied for a grant and got it approved. He said there

was an amendment on the floor to not fund smaller airports. He said the amendment was not to cut the money, but to shift it to larger airports. He said he did not think that was a very good idea.

"The FAA taxes themselves," said Ken Klemm, who founded the local Tea Party, "and that money goes into a separate pool that goes to airports. It is a different pool of money.

"I support you 100 percent in what you did and know you are get-

ting heat about not raising the debt ceiling, and that is one reason we are here to support you to show that you are right.

"We are going to have to have some cuts. Government needs to get out of the farming business, the car business and broadcasting business. There has to be some changes."

"I am a believer the federal government ought not to be involved in things better left to the states," Moran said. "I am a believer that the government closest to the people is the better. What happens in Rooks County...it is better for Rooks County to make their own decisions about what they want.

The 10th Amendment is the one about separating the powers, and for some reason our courts have not strictly interpreted that."

Moran asked the audience what they felt about the American involvement in Libya. He said he was not sure what we are doing there, and asked if the people felt America ought to be there.

One lady said America needs to get out of civil wars.

Another person asked if we got the check from them before we sent the weapons in.

Moran said he was concerned the President went to the United Nations to get permission, and not to Congress. He said he has voted to withdraw from the UN several times because he feels the UN has become something totally different.

He said he felt it was better to have the Arab League behind the actions.




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VEHICLES: TRAILERS: 1992 Lincoln Towncar, loaded, leather, showing 69,000 miles; 1992 Ford pickup, 4sp W/overdrive; 1972 Chevy C50 truck, 16' box & hoist, 366 motor; 1988 Ford Fiesta ; 1974 Ford F350 dually, 4sp, W/boom (John's service truck); 1960's Ford F750 cabover truck, box, hoist, does not run; Ford Superior school bus converted to portable work shop; Small Ford car, does not run; 16' steel flat bed trailer; 20' trailer W/front dolly wheels; Small 3 wheeler trailer; 40' storage van, excellent condition; 10 x 42' 1 bedroom mobile home (to be moved). **WELDERS, TOOLS, TORCHES, MILLING MACHINE:** (Note: When John went to buy new tools or supplies he bought 1 or 2 extra "just in case" We will have several TRAILERS FULL of high quality tools and supplies. Way to many to list.) Bridgeport milling machine, set up for 220; Miller; Bobcat 225 amp portable welder, less than 5 years old; Powermax 900 plasma cutter; 3 Ridgid cutoff saws, 1 new; Ridgid 12' miter saw; Makita elect. jack hammer; Bosch hammer drill; Makita cutoff saw; Ramset Loadmaster cement gun; New Cummins 9500 lb winch; 4- New 12V 2000lb winches; 3-New 12V - 3000lb winches; 1-New 12V 9500lb winch; Ridgid portable air compressor; 10-15 hand grinders of all sizes; Star pop rivet gun & fasteners; Several cordless drills, Makita, Dewalt; Hein-Werner port-a-power; 4 Bench grinders; 2 Porpane cutting torches; 10" Table Saw; Large 5hp air compressor; 12V air compressor; Sand blaster; Elect post hole digger; Chain Saw; 3/4", 1/2", 3/8" & 1/4" socket sets; Truck load of hand tools; Cabinet full of welding rod; Lots & Lots of welding supplies; New cutting torch gauges; New air hoses; New jacket stands; New Cummins tool box currently full of tools; Set of metal drawers on rollers; Motor Stand; Several welding benches; Box full of hole saws; All sizes of drill bits; Large tap & die set; Several Extension ladders; Battery charger on cart; 110 gal pu fuel tank; 650 & 500 gal propane tanks; Alum. cross box tool box; Paint shaker; Yard drag; New cases of oil, lubricants; 3 - 4' x 6' tempered glass pieces; Several large hyd cylinders; 10hp gas motor; 3 valve greasing valve; Tarps; Hobart meat grinder; Ant. Cement mixer; New Mr Heater portable propane heaters. **HOUSEHOLD SPECIAL:** Consew leather sewing machine, only 2 years old; Matching Whirlpool washer & dryer, 3 yrs old; GE refrigerator W/ice maker; Chest deep freezer; Sanyo portable TV; Several storage cabinets ; Several boxes of 78 records; Metal porch swing

**Many more misc. items. For more information contact Terry Richardson, Homestead Realty & Auction, 1023 Main, Goodland, KS. 785-899-2328, 899-3093 or cell 899-8094
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