

from our viewpoint...

## State will see cuts for couple of years

Kansas faces continuing budget cuts. That's reality for the next couple of years.

A wail and cry can be heard across the state as people realize that "their" state programs face the ax.

And every program benefits someone or some group. Yet the fact is, the state is broke, and has been for at least three years. In good times, the Legislature and governor spent everything that came in. They cut taxes. Pressured by the courts, they poured more than \$1 billion into schools without much thought. Social programs, roads, salaries, all soaked up whatever was left.

When the crunch came, the state had no reserves, no "savings account" or rainy-day fund to fall back on.

And so the last governor, though he liked to spend, started cutting. That continues today with Gov. Sam Brownback, and it remains a painful process. No one thinks it's much fun. It's just that the state isn't collecting even the reduced income it planned for this year.

And when the state is out of money, unlike the federal government, it has to stop spending.

Schools may be cut the most this year and next, because for most of the recession, schools were held above the fray. That lasted until the federal stimulus money being used to prop the state budget up went away. Now, the schools must face reality.

Some schools already support another lawsuit to force the state to spend more. The only way that can happen this year is with a tax increase, and we'd guess not even our liberal Supreme Court will want to bite off that much, ordering the Legislature to hike taxes.

Schools are the biggest target, but cuts to any program raise a howl. The governor tried to cut all money for the Kansas Arts Commission. Supporters raised a ruckus, and the state Senate voted to block the governor's reorganization order.

The arts situation is a good illustration of what happens. Its state budget is only about \$813,000 per year, just a drop in the bucket. The governor proposed that the agency continue as a private foundation under the state Historical Society, capable of raising money and taking federal grants, then sending the money out to communities. Rather than get behind that effort, however, supporters hope to preserve the agency as it is, protecting thousands in grants to local arts commissions.

Arts grants go to support programs that generally lack broad public support, or someone would be doing them. Backers usually come from the educated elite, people who could afford to support these events. Yet they insist the only way Kansas can have arts is to tax those who don't care – or may not be able to afford it.

And that's not right. Every program, from senior-citizen lunches to truck inspection, has its backers. The more employees a program has, of course, the more backers.

It's not that any of them is without value. Schools certainly are important. So are roads, colleges, technical schools, restaurant inspections, you name it.

But the state is still broke. It has less money than people want it to spend, far less. The Legislature and governor will have to make hard choices.

It's OK for everyone to advocate for "their" programs. But when the decisions are made, everyone should get behind them and remember that the state cannot, should not and must not spend money it doesn't have. — Steve Haynes



## We are voting yes to invest in the community

We are writing this letter to say we are in support of this bond issue.

Neither of us were born here or grew up here, we chose to move to Goodland over nine years ago and raise our family. In that time we have seen businesses open, we have seen some close and others grow. Families have moved in and others have left.

These types of things have always gone on and will continue to occur no matter what happens on April 5th.

However, by voting Yes to this bond issue we feel we are investing in this community and our children.

When our buildings were originally built they were designed for the needs of the time and they fulfilled those needs very well. Today things are much different and changes need to be made.

The new building incorporates safety fea-



your schools, community

• guest column

tures that are relevant today. Higher windows in the areas our kids are in the majority of the day, more windows and visibility around the front office, safer drop off and pick up points, outside doors that use key cards or fobs to get in to the building and safer entrances and exits in the classrooms.

There is no direct access to the classrooms from the outside and it will have a FEMA storm shelter.

It incorporates updated technology that allows the teachers more opportunities to introduce new ideas to their classrooms and new ways of presenting material each and

every day.

It seems as though everyone in the community knows and believes something has to be done to address the budget issues and our buildings, but no matter what is done there will be an expense we will all have to find a way to fit in to our budgets.

The firm hired to design the new building and do the renovations has designed approximately 80 different schools. They know what they are doing and how to make this happen so our children are as safe as they can be at school, teachers have the best environment to instruct each child and how to complete the project as cost effectively as possible.

To us, voting Yes on Tuesday, April 5th, is the best way to invest in our children, teachers and this community.

Joe and Mindy Greene  
Goodland

## Work clothes may be dull, but easy

I have a work outfit that I wear almost every day – a long-sleeved, high-necked stretch top, dark pants and comfortable shoes.

I've found this outfit will work for almost all of my work situations, whether I am attending a county commissioners' meeting, taking pictures at the grade school or filling a prescription at the local drug store.

It's comfortable, covering and convenient.

I even go so far as to lay out my week's worth of clothes on Sunday after I fold the laundry.

On the top of the dresser, I put out five different colored shirts, topped by five pairs of underwear, five bras and five pairs of socks. Clean dark pants go on Monday and Wednesday or Thursday.

I'm set for the week. When I get up, I grab a bundle of clothes and off I go to the bathroom to shower, brush my teeth and dress.

It's but workable, if dull, routine, and in the morning, I need dull – or at something that



cynthia haynes

• open season

doesn't take much imagination.

So why did I decide to wear my light-colored pants last week?

I haven't a clue.

I think maybe it was the feeling of spring in the air.

The light was coming in my window when I got up. When I got the morning paper off the steps, the birds were singing.

I got carried away and put on my tan cargo pants on Tuesday.

Not a good idea. Tuesday I had to deliver papers to the newsstands around town.

Even with soy ink, I was covered with black

by the time I finished, and my tan pants were done for.

I'll note here that, even if I had worn dark pants, they would have had to go into the laundry but they wouldn't have shown the smudges so much.

On Wednesday, I hadn't learned my lesson. I put on another pair of khaki pants.

All was well until Steve and I took an afternoon walk at Sappa Park with Annie, our Brittany spaniel.

Annie loves water. Annie got in the creek and ran past me at full speed. Not once or twice, but a couple of dozen times. Spraying water, mud and trail dust each time.

I returned home with polka-dotted pants.

Thursday was not a problem.

I was out of light colored pants and back in uniform. Back to dull.

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May 4, 2007, will be a day many Kansans always remember. On that fateful day the town of Greensburg, in Kiowa County, was all but wiped off the face of the earth.

The tornado that hit the small Kansas community of 1,500 killed 11 people and injured dozens more. Ninety percent of the town was destroyed including 961 homes and businesses. Another 216 received major damage. Wind speeds of more than 200 miles per hour accompanied this storm.

Other killer tornadoes occurred that day with a death in Pratt County and another in Stafford County. Some of these monster twisters were nearly two miles wide. Eleven tornadoes occurred May 4.

The next day another 36 tornadoes were reported in Kansas, falling just short of the all time record of 39 tornadoes in one day set in June 1992.

Fourteen tornado-related fatalities were reported last year, including 82 injuries, according to the National Weather Service in Topeka. Thirteen of these fatalities occurred during the May 4-5 outbreak.

In stark contrast to this tornado onslaught of 2007, Kansas recorded the longest tornado drought in 24 years during 2009. Not until April 22, 2010 did the first tornado touch down in the Sunflower State. Prior to this tornado, the last twister reported in Kansas was back on Aug. 2, 2009. This resulted in 262 days without a reported tornado in Kansas.



Insight this week

• john schlageck

There were 88 tornadoes in Kansas last year, making it the 15th most active year in state history. Most of the tornadoes were weak, however. Only one, in Kingman County on May 10, earned as much as an EF2 rating.

Fortunately, no deaths and no injuries were blamed on tornadoes in Kansas last year.

Tornadoes touched down on 21 days, including 15 tornadoes on May 10. You may remember that day for the swarm of national media attention focused on Kansas because forecasters had predicted a significant outbreak. It never quite materialized – at least with the intensity anticipated.

The first tornado of 2010 came on April 24 in Kearny County, the last on Sept. 25 in Comanche County.

When it comes to safety concerning tornadoes, the bottom line remains the same: tune in, stay informed and keep an eye on the sky.

Remember pay attention when you hear a tornado watch because this means severe thunderstorms and tornadoes are possible over a wide area. Tornado warnings are issued when Doppler radar indicates tornadoes are forming or a trained weather spotter has sighted a twister. This warning will tell the location, and

if possible, movement, estimated speed and the towns in the tornado path.

Think ahead during this upcoming severe weather season. Listen to forecasts daily, key into local weather conditions in your area. Know where your nearest shelter is and remember when a tornado threatens, immediate action may save you and your loved ones' lives.

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.

### Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters and letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: [star.news@nwkansas.com](mailto:star.news@nwkansas.com).