

from our viewpoint...

Fed jobs program big disappointment

One of the biggest disappointments among many in the administration's response to the Great Recession has been the lack of a meaningful public works program, one designed to put lots of people to work and get things moving.

Oh, we got the Recovery Act, or "stimulus bill," with its "shovel-ready" projects. What a joke. The projects, few and far between as they were, were hardly ready. Most took a year or two to get going.

Compare that to the Works Progress Administration and the other "alphabet" agencies of the New Deal. For whatever you thought of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, he got things done. His agencies put people to work and they built practical things we use today.

Republicans, many of them, thought Mr. Roosevelt was the devil incarnate, of course. They sued to block his "socialist" programs at every turn. His first take on public works with the Civil Works Administration was no great success, but that didn't stop FDR.

He pressed on, creating the WPA in 1935 to build things (and in those days, everyone knew what the initials meant), the Civilian Conservation Corps to hire labor, and a dozen other agencies. Existing departments, including Interior and Commerce, geared up to finance new works.

Just in Goodland, today we have the barrel hangar at the airport and the original building of the high school, built in 1937.

Other area towns got swimming pools, county shops, city buildings, band shells, highways, schools, parks, lakes, you name it. WPA's genius was it reached into nearly every county in the country. It hired workers, built projects of lasting value, left a legacy we see and use nearly 80 years later.

Farther west, the Roosevelt-era agencies built trails and roads in national parks and national forests, including the world-renowned Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park. Again, Americans use these every day in the 21st century.

Goodland did better than most towns with Recover Act programs, receiving \$2 million in stimulus money for its water project, about \$750,000 for a project at the airport and about \$600,000 for repaving on K-27 north of Interstate 70.

Still, much of the area will see no broad and lasting legacy from the Recovery Act and its siblings. America will little note nor long remember most the few things built during this brief era.

Not to have emulated the broad reach and deep roots of the WPA seems a major missed opportunity, but for this administration, it's par for the course.

No one except perhaps the most rabid "birther" would mistake Mr. Obama for the devil, but 80 years hence, who will remember his public works programs? 'Tis a shame. — *Steve Haynes*

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>.

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e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

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nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(nt.betz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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We feel a need to respond

It is with much regret we feel the need to write this letter.

After reading Ken Klemm's character attack on us in his column, (Aug. 5, Page 4), we resigned ourselves at first to say nothing. It is our belief Mr. Klemm will have to answer to a higher power some day for his actions here on earth. After a day or two of watching the reaction of our children to Mr. Klemm's slanderous rant, we changed our mind and decided to set the record straight.

Mr. Klemm insinuated because there was a \$9,000 figure by our name, it meant we made a conscious decision to renege on our taxes and we don't carry our share. Nothing could be further from the truth. That \$9,000 figure is just part of our business taxes to Sherman County for the most current year. Our business pays more taxes in one year than the average Sherman County homeowner pays in 15 years. That figure represents the rest of the amount we had not yet paid for the most current tax year. Were we late in paying it? — Yes. Do we pay a penalty for that? — Yes. Is that a travesty of justice? — No. Did it warrant Mr. Klemm's outrageous behavior? — No.

After all whom among us is perfect?

We have owned our business for nine years and paid close to \$125,000 in county taxes alone. We pay more than our fair share of city, county and state taxes. Our corporation is in Kansas, our business in Goodland/Sherman County and we pay taxes to each accordingly.

The second issue we would like to set straight is that our business has NEVER ask for or been given and Economic Development

dollars, been given utility breaks or benefited from any government programs as Mr. Klemm suggested. To the leaders of Goodland/Sherman County — don't get us wrong — there is nothing wrong with these programs. We are glad they are in place to provide a needed service to many businesses.

The third issue we would like to add is we are very disappointed in the Star-News to allow a guest columnist to publish such slanderous remarks that have no basis in truth. In the past the Star-News has refused to publish letters to the editor stating people were listed by name and the content was said to be slanderous. We ask you then — why is Mr. Klemm's column any different? Opinions are great when they are not being disguised as a means to put other down. Our community does not need this kind of negative column.

Many well meaning folks have come to us with advice about things we could say to hurt Mr. Klemm and his family, but we will refrain from that kind of childish behavior.

There are many, many good things about Goodland and Sherman County. We should all use our energy and resources to help each other out rather than hunting for ways to put each other down, Goodland could be an even better place if we followed this practice.

We can only hope. Think about it.
Michael and Tia Brannick
Goodland

Editor's note: What Ken Klemm wrote is not slanderous nor is it libelous based on the U.S. Supreme Court definition of "reckless disregard for the truth." In fact the informa-

tion is printed from the delinquent property tax list published by the County Treasurer on an annual basis to encourage people to pay their property taxes on time. We agree it is not always possible to pay all the taxes on time, and understand being on the list comes with a penalty to help pay for the cost of the publication.

We agree the current business owners did not ask for any help with utilities, but there was a request made by the original owner and builder of the business. This is a part of business development and we agree it is good the city has created a policy to let businesses know what they can request and a procedure for making the request. At the time the business was built the whole incentive program was a big grey area.

We can guarantee the writer if we felt the column was libelous we would not have hesitated to tell Klemm we would not print it, but feel he has a right to comment as does the letter writer on things involving public policy and the property tax list.

We were pleased with the delinquent property tax list this year as it was shorter than in previous years. Last year the grand total was \$441,510. This year the total was \$379,296 for a reduction of \$62,214.

We appreciate getting comments from readers, and encourage others in the community who want to express their opinion to use this column. We feel free and open discussion gives both sides an opportunity to be part of informing the citizens and leads to better things for our community. — *Tom Betz*

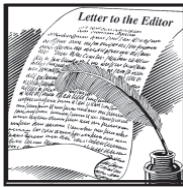
Getting rural America back to work

By President Barack Obama

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to get out of Washington, DC and travel to small towns and farm towns in the heartland of the country. I sat down with small business owners, farmers and ranchers in Iowa; I had lunch with veterans in Cannon Falls, Minn.; and I talked to plant workers at a seed distributor in Atkinson, Ill.

I made the trip because I think the rest of this country can learn something from Rural America. The heartland is central to the economic health and prosperity of our nation. Rural communities provide us with affordable agricultural products, competitive manufacturing capabilities and an independent, renewable energy supply. And you're stewards of America's great outdoors—an important source of jobs and an incredible treasure for all Americans.

Now we all know times are tough for many Americans — and Rural Americans in particular. Some of you may have been struggling for a long time. But we know what it's going to take to get America going again. And we know it's going to start with helping families



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in the heartland and across the country feel like they're moving forward.

That's why, over the last two years, we've been focused on improving infrastructure — building roads and bridges and providing broadband access to millions of rural Americans. We're expanding educational opportunities and helping more Americans get access to affordable health care. We've made historic investments in innovation and clean energy. And we established the first-ever White House Rural Council to promote economic growth in rural America — and to do it in a faster and more coordinated way.

But even with the progress we've made, it's clear the pace of our recovery is still not fast enough. We need to do more to create jobs.

That starts with getting your elected officials

in Washington to put their differences aside and take steps right now to help businesses get more customers and create more jobs for Americans. We can cut payroll taxes again, so families have an extra \$1,000 to spend. We can pass a road construction bill so construction crews — now sitting idle — can head back to the worksite. Let's connect the brave Americans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with businesses to use their skills. And let's pass trade deals to level the playing field for our businesses, because I want more products sold around the globe stamped with three words: Made in America.

These are commonsense ideas — ideas that have been supported by both Democrats and Republicans. The only thing holding them back is politics. The only thing preventing us from passing these bills is the refusal by some in Congress to put country ahead of party. That's the problem right now. That's what's holding this country back. That's what we have to change.

You deserve representatives who show the same kind of discipline and integrity and responsibility most Americans demonstrate in their lives every day — leaders who can put their differences aside to help grow the economy and put this nation back to work. Because, for all the knocks we've taken, despite all the challenges we face, this is still the greatest country on earth. We still have the best workers and farmers, entrepreneurs and businesses, students and scientists in the world.

Getting out of Washington and spending time with folks like you reminds me why I got into public service in the first place. Your work ethic; your creativity; your determination only makes me more hopeful about our future. And it makes me more confident if we come together, there is no stopping the United States of America.

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; E-mail address — <http://roberts.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=EmailPat>

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, Russell Senate Office Building, Courtyard 4, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; Fax (202) 228-6966. E-mail address — <http://moran.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-jerry>

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 1st Congressional District, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C., 20575-1601. (202-225-2715) E-mail address — <https://huel>

skamp.house.gov/contact-me/email-me

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking State Office Building Rm 724, Topeka, KS 66612. Phone (785) 296-7659, cell (785) 899-4770, home (785) 899-5824. E-mail rick.billinger@house.ks.gov.

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Rm. 225-E, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785-296-7399; e-mail address — ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Kansas Attorney General, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767