

Congressman talks debt, regulations at town hall

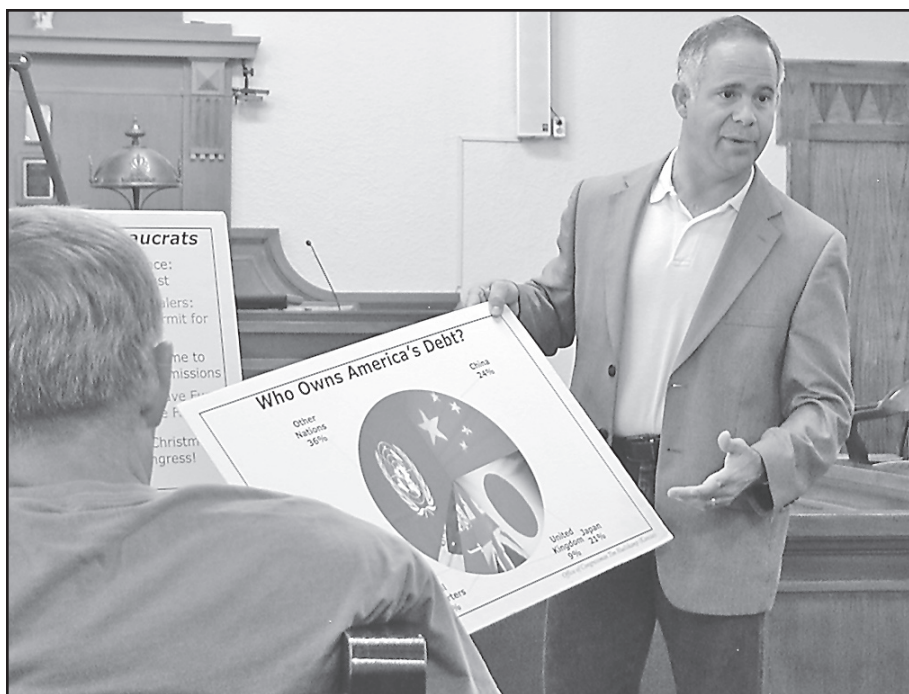
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country will need to run a surplus, and eventually have a balanced budget. He said he helped put together a budget plan in Congress that would balance the U.S. budget in five years. However, the one that passed the House balanced in 26 years. That budget has not passed the Senate, and the passage of any budget bill doesn't seem likely.

"Congress hasn't cut a budget since the year of Elvis' first album - 1955," he said. Huelskamp also spoke about regulations. Congress doesn't approve regulations, he said, however it can disapprove of them and try and get agencies like the EPA to rescind them. Congress recently got the administration to back off from a proposed regulation limiting how much minors can work on farms.

Huelskamp said he suspected that if the president is defeated in the election, the Administration will try to put many more regulations in place before the new president takes office. Repealing regulations once they are in place is difficult, he said, because it has to go through a long process during which anyone can file lawsuits to prevent a repeal.

The problem, he said, is that it often



Congressman Tim Huelskamp brought charts with him showing the national debt, growth in entitlement spending and the portion of the U.S. debt owned by foreign countries.

Photo by Kevin Bottrell/The Goodland Star-News

doesn't matter who is in the White House. Each new administration may bring in new

Branch departments stay entrenched.

Huelskamp is one of few people who are satisfied with the recent court decision on Kansas redistricting. His 1st District lost several counties in south-central Kansas, making it more compact, but gained Manhattan and Fort Riley.

"It makes sense to have a premier ag school in an ag district," he said.

While the additions were good, he said, the process was not. Huelskamp served in the redistricting committee 10 years ago, and said at that time the Legislature was able to get the job done without as much fighting.

Huelskamp said he already has three congressional offices scattered throughout the district, and he may consider adding another.

One citizen asked if there was anything Congress can do to reign in the Obama administration. Huelskamp said what was troubling was the administration's recent choices not to enforce some laws. He pointed to last week's announcement that the Justice Department would not undergo deportation procedures on some illegal immigrants, those who has been brought to the United States as children, had completed high school and had no criminal record.

Huelskamp referred to the decision as amnesty, and said that as a nation of laws, all of the laws should be enforced.

Along those lines, Huelskamp said he offered an amendment earlier this year to stipulate that no money be given to administration efforts to undermine the Defense of Marriage Act. The amendment passed, something he said is unusual for a freshman congressman, but it has not yet been voted on by the Senate.

He said Congress had been successful in defunding several "Czars" - appointees put in place by the president to oversee different areas of the executive branch, sometimes without congressional approval.

In addition, Huelskamp said there may soon be hearings into whether Attorney General Eric Holder lied to Congress on the "Fast and Furious" scheme. In that sting operation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms sold firearms to suspected gun-runners. The guns ended up being used in violent crimes by members of the Mexican drug cartels. Huelskamp said there is a mole inside the Justice Department who has told Congress that Holder had lied about some details of the operation when making a report to Congress.

Walking through history: seeing the 'Death Railway' in Thailand

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the bridge is blown up by commandoes.

When we were at the bridge we discovered there were lots of factual errors in the bridge story. When the Thai-Burma railroad was built the river was the Maeklaung, and north of there the river was known as the Maenam Khwae Noi or "small river."

At Tha Makham where the small river joined the Maeklaung two bridges were built by the prisoners, one being a wooden bridge used during construction and a more permanent steel and concrete bridge that exists and is used today. The wooden bridge was rebuilt after the British and American bombers had hit and destroyed several spans of the steel bridge. The bombers damaged the wooden bridge, but it was repaired in quick order to keep the railway operating.

The 1957 movie became a huge hit, and people kept traveling to Thailand to see the "Bridge on the River Kwai." Thai officials did the only thing possible and renamed the river - where the last prisoner bridge existed - the River Kwai. Now they had two rivers with the same name the one where the bridge crosses is the River Kwai Yai (large) and north the river is the River Kwai Noi (small).

Many of the British, Australian, Dutch and American prisoners

who worked on what has become the "Death Railroad," were upset by the 1957 film saying it did not portray the true story of the suffering and death the prisoners had to endure while building the more than 250 mile stretch of railway to link Thailand and Burma.

We visited the bridge, the nearby Kanchanaburi War Cemetery and Death Railway Museum on May 12. The cemetery has English, Australian and other prisoners who died in the struggle, but all the Americans, (132), who died were brought back to the United States for burial. The American prisoners were mostly activated National Guardsmen from the 2nd Battalion from Texas and sailors from the USS Houston, sunk off Java in February 1942.

I was reading books about the death railway and going through the hundreds of photos Barbara Henigin of LaGrange, Ga., my sister-in-law Veronica Taylor of LaGrange and I had taken of the bridge, cemetery and the train ride we took on Sunday, May 13, on the operating railroad between Goamahamngkol and Thakilen.

Flipping around the television channels during the Memorial Day weekend I came across a film about the Death Railroad starring Robert Carlyle and Keifer Sutherland. I had missed the opening, but at the end I found out it was "To End All Wars," and was released in 2001. The movie was being shown on the

Christian Broadcasting Network with Pat Boone as the opening and closing narrator.

The film is based on a book by Ernest Gordon, a Captain in the Scottish Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who became a prisoner of war working on the railroad in Thailand. The story is about how he was able to start a Jungle University among the prisoners and convinced a Japanese camp commander allowing the prisoners to learn would help their morale and make them work better on the railroad. There was a Japanese officer who had been educated in the U.S., and helped Gordon convince the camp commander it was a good idea to allow the learning.

Carlyle played Gordon in the movie and Sutherland plays the only American prisoner in the camp, who was from the USS Houston.

At the end of the movie Gordon and a Japanese officer are shown placing a wreath at the bottom of the cross in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery and sitting at a table talking about their experiences and the years after the war. Gordon was a librarian at Princeton University for 26 years and the Japanese officer became a Buddhist monk.

We discovered quite a list of books written about the Death Railway including "Last Man Out" written by H. Robert Charles a U.S. Marine prisoner from the USS Houston who honored a Dutch



A Thai woman took care of a section of the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery where about 1,900 British, Australian and Dutch prisoners are a solemn reminder of the many lives lost in 1942-1945 building and maintaining the Thailand-Burma railroad the Japanese built using the prisoners of war and thousands of Malay, Burmese and Chinese conscripts.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Doctor Henri Hekking, who used his skill and knowledge of tropical diseases to save the lives of many of the American prisoners of war.

As with other war veterans it has taken many years for these men to tell their stories. Looking at the pho-

tos we took of the bridge, cemetery and railway I have a new appreciation for the terrible conditions and abuse by the Japanese captors the prisoners of war labored under to build the railway.

After the war neither Burma or

Thailand wanted the rail connection so approximately 100 kilometers from each border were torn up. Today the trains travel from north of Kuchanaburi to Bangkok in the morning and return in the afternoon.

K-State Beef Conference set for Aug. 9

Kansas State University's 2012 Beef Conference - Thriving in the New Beef Economy, will be held Aug. 9 in Frick Auditorium of K-State's College of Veterinary Medicine in Manhattan.

"We've had an interesting year in the beef industry and we have an equally exciting lineup of topics and speakers for this year's conference," said Larry Hollis, veterinarian with K-State Research and Extension.

For the convenience of those who are not able to travel to Manhattan in person, the conference will be broadcast remotely to several sites around Kansas.

More information about K-State's 2012 Beef Conference will be available in coming weeks at www.asi.ksu.edu/beefconference and on the K-State Research and Extension website at www.ksre.ksu.edu.

20% of all proceeds from now until August 31, 2012 will be donated to Relay for Life.

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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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