

Rural communities will be affected by postal closures

Dear Mr. Pivovar,

In light of the recent closure of several rural post offices in my district, citizens in these small towns are very concerned. It has been widely reported that the U.S. Postal Service is under financial strain, and as a result, is having to cut services. There is no doubt that changes must occur to offset the monetary losses that have occurred, but I hope the potential impact on these communities, in the event they lose their post office, is being adequately analyzed. Many of these communities work hard to attract both young families as well as retirees to take advantage of the quiet and safe small town atmosphere they offer. Many young people are opting to move back home to a rural community and work from home as opposed to raising their kids in the city. Many of the elderly who retire in these small towns are not able to drive a distance to purchase postage or get their mail. In addition, if elderly people do not utilize a computer, they do not have the ability to purchase postage online. Most importantly, if there are viable businesses and schools in any of the towns risking post office closure, I ask that this be reconsidered.

I am aware that changes are inevitable. My concern is whether the closing of rural post offices will provide enough recovery to the pending crisis. If maintaining rural post offices is a mere fraction of the entire postal service budget, then will the hardship caused in these small towns really help the overall problem? We ask before any more post offices are closed, that you closely analyze whether or not it will really make a difference to the U.S. Postal Service. I can assure you that closing rural post offices has a negative effect on these communities.

Sincerely,

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, Kansas 40th District

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



Clarification of Kansas codes

Editor's Note: The following is a clarification/addition to Pat Ambrosier's Letter to the Editor that ran in the Tuesday, Sept. 20 edition of the Norton Telegram.

According to Kansas State Code 22-2908, there are 10 factors the County Attorney should have taken into consideration prior to making this agreement with Zwegardt:

- 1-The nature of the crime charged and the circumstances surrounding it
 - 2-Any special characteristics or circumstances of the defendant
 - 3-Whether the defendant is a first-time offender
 - 4-Whether there is a probability the defendant will cooperate with and benefit from diversion
 - 5-Whether the available diversion program is appropriate to the needs of the defendant
 - 6-The impact of the diversion of the defendant upon the community
 - 7-Recommendations, if any, of the involved law enforcement agency
 - 8-Recommendations, if any, of the victim (s)
 - 9-Provisions for restitution
 - 10-Any mitigating circumstances
- 1-The nature of this crime seems to be one in which a diversion is the last thing a prosecutor should be offering.
- 2-Special characteristics of the defendant? At the time of these offenses, Zwegardt was a police officer! Why is that working in his favor in this situation?

3-Is Zwegardt a first time offender? Who knows. Just because someone has no prior charges or convictions doesn't mean he hasn't offended before. This is especially true in sex offenses. We do know he was charged with two counts of rape on two separate occasions in Norton County, so there was a first time, a second time...

4-I'm sure Zwegardt will cooperate and benefit from diversion. Anyone in his shoes would be thanking their lucky stars they got out of this one, and that he did it in Norton County.

5-Is this diversion appropriate to the needs of the defendant? It depends on what those needs are. If he needs to get out of two rape charges, then yes. If he needs to be held accountable for his behavior and have some sort of documentation of what he is capable of, then absolutely not!

6-It's pretty obvious what the impact is on the community.

7-What does our law enforcement think about this agreement?

8-What were the recommendations of the two victims?

9-I don't recall any mention of restitution for the victims. Will Zwegardt have to pay their medical bills or for any long-term counseling they may need?

10-If there are/were any mitigating circumstances that could be applied to the two counts of rape on two separate occasions, please, Mr. Sebelius, and Mr. Walter, explain to the people of this community what they were.



Another perspective on a recent criminal case

The U.S. Justice system is not without its problems but it is a system which definitely believes the person charged with a crime is "innocent until proven guilty". As a victim that may seem unfair, but if you have been wrongly accused then it seems only right. In recent weeks we have seen strong emotions presented in a local case.

I, too, had hoped to see what I believed to be justice served against a young man accused of rape and other charges. From my limited information on the case, it seemed he had committed a crime(s) and needed to be convicted of these. The information I had about him was gained through media reports and hearsay. I have to remember there is much information I do not have access to and therefore my interpretation of this case might

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



With the diversion, he has certain restrictions on his activities.

There are many things to be considered in any case and this is no exception. Although it may seem the ex-cop got "off", he didn't. He will be enduring a scrutiny in many ways much worse than prison. The diversion also requires a lifetime ban on employment in any law enforcement position. This would not have been the case with an acquittal. In addition, he will undergo treatment during this diversion time.

This is definitely a no win situation. The victims will forever carry the scars. We can only hope the attorneys in this case have interpreted the circumstances correctly. And the accused...well, we pray for him. mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

not be valid. I was disappointed in the diversion agreement, but...

I also have faith in our County Attorney. It has to be a convictable case. What would happen when the case was brought before a jury of peers? Bringing a case to trial is not the challenge. The challenge is to bring a case to trial and win. Without a conviction the accused can be set free with no limits on his activities, future employment or required treatment.

Having a smart phone doesn't make you smart

The Hagmans don't have a smart phone. In fact we only have one cell phone. And it's a relic. No camera, no keyboard, it's basic!

We're so tech impaired only one of us (I'm not saying who) understands how to get messages off the thing. If you call our cell and no one answers you hear this message: "Do not leave a message on this phone. To leave a message please call----(our land line)."

You may think we're dumb because we can't retrieve messages. But you'd be surprised how many people can't even follow simple instructions. Despite the warning they leave a message; then get upset because their call was not returned. How smart is that???

The Hagmans don't text. We do not have a texting feature on our plan so we would get charged if we did. Still sometimes our phone informs us we have a text. We don't know how to read texts but we did find out who was sending them. Our service provider!

You would think our service provider would know we don't text. But since there are ads and communications about our account we don't get charged for them.

Once I had a problem with a bill and called the provider. For some reason

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



we discussed texting. I explained we do not text and have no plans to. The customer service rep seemed to understand. He promised the issue I called about would be resolved. I asked if we would receive confirmation.

"Oh yes. You will receive a text as soon as we hang up!" I am not a patient person, but I did manage to explain again, "WE DO NOT TEXT!"

This pretty much sent his world spinning out of control, but he did finally agree to send an e-mail instead.

The hubby and I think of phones as tools for our convenience. We own the phone, the phone doesn't own us. If we are out and about we want to enjoy what we are doing.

Smart phones can come in handy though. Sometimes you need to know something: like just how big is Rhode Island? Of course, just at that moment the stars misalign and that app is unavailable. (It happened to me!)

Those who have fancy phones, cause me to feel insecure about my place in

their lives. When someone's phone is constantly buzzing and beeping with calls and texts, it makes me feel insignificant, even if they don't answer. It's even worse when they try to clandestinely reply!

The Hagmans have finally opened a Facebook account. One thing I found surprising was how quickly people responded to my request to be friends. Gee, you like me!!!! Although some of it worries me: aren't you at work???

Someone explained it does not mean the whole world is gazing at Facebook rather than paying attention to their important jobs like air traffic controller. Their I-Phone probably alerts them when someone posts on their wall. How reassuring, brain surgeons actually put down the scalpel before running to check the phone!

I am enjoying Facebook and I already made some money off a posting I did on extra football tickets! It didn't even take 24 hours!

I know a lot of people really like texting. I think I might like a camera phone. But the whole realm of choices makes it overwhelming.

What we all need to realize is having a smart phone doesn't make you smart. Neither does Smart Water, I tried that and it didn't help at all!

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Thumbs up to Mr. Will and his staff and the Norton High School Band who performed at Kansas State University this weekend. What a fine group! Emailed in

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