

Tax incentive to build here

On the
Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



The Neighborhood Revitalization tax-incentive plan being considered by other city, county and school officials is just too good an opportunity to pass up. Norton is already doing this.

Not only might it be just the push needed to get new projects off dead center, but it could open up a whole new realm of possibilities for development and growth in Oberlin and Decatur County.

The plan is as complex as it is simple. A property owner can get a rebate on taxes paid on new development over 10 years, based on the actual increase in the tax valuation before, after construction or renovation. Officials are talking about a \$10,000 minimum increase to qualify and have discussed setting a maximum.

Frankly, it makes no sense to put the minimum that high; any renovation of property, homes or businesses, that improves the town and will bring in more tax revenue would be a boost in our declining economy. Nor would it make sense to confine the rebates just to business property. We should encourage homeowners to fix up their property, too.

A cap on rebates would just limit the benefit the city and county might see from the program. Why do that?

The city, county, school district and other taxing agencies have little to lose. If something gets built, a new building for an existing business, all will share in the increased revenue as the rebates fade away.

Property owners and developers would have an incentive to spend more. Any increase in construction would create some jobs and help area suppliers. The rebate would be 100 percent of any tax increase the first year, but that goes down by 10 percent a year, so governments would benefit by the second year.

Someone will say, why give tax incentives when people might build a business or a house without one?

Just look around and see how many construction projects are underway in this county today. People might do a lot of things. But why not actually encourage them?

The program can be complicated. A property owner has to apply for the rebates before starting work, and the county could make the plan simple or too complicated to be much good. A simple application would be best, however; one that would encourage development.

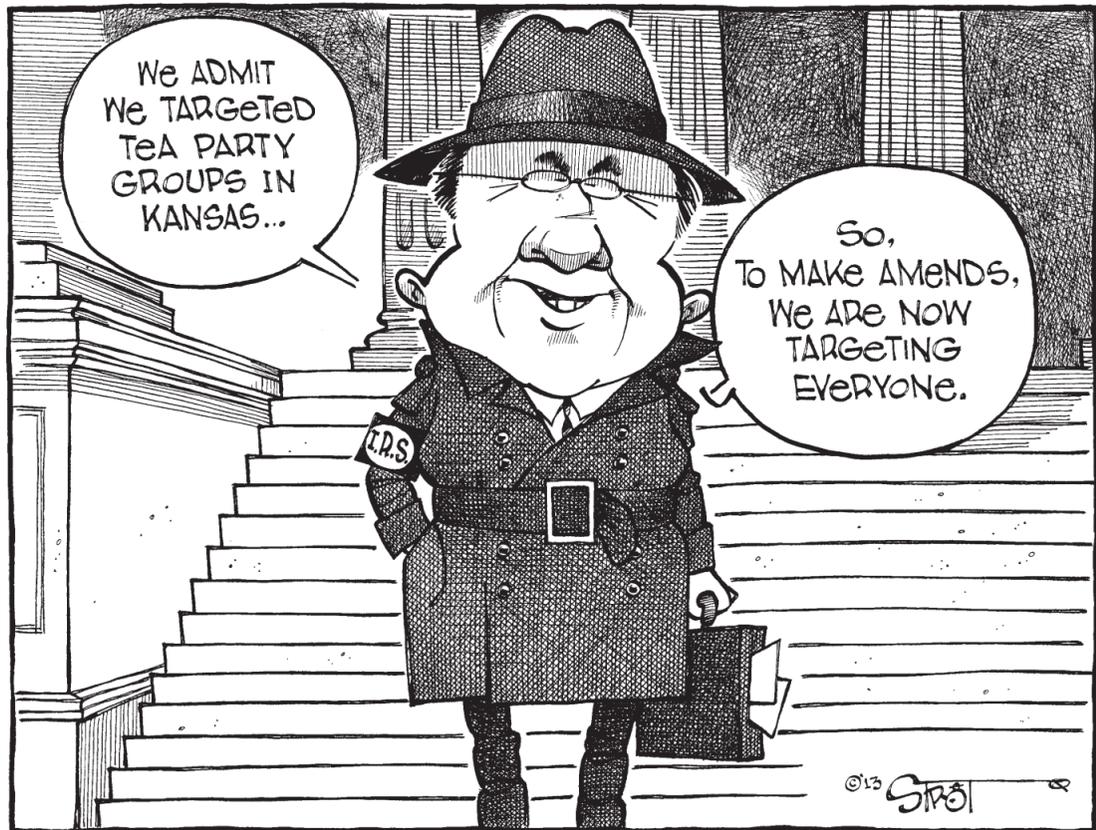
The community's attitude should be that any development would be better than none. Our economy isn't exactly booming, and we can give up some of the increased taxes over 10 years in return for having some growth and improvement.

This program already is working in Norton and Sherman counties and should soon be in effect in Colby. Other Kansas counties have had good experiences with it. In Norton, it gets credit for both commercial and housing development, things Oberlin and Decatur County could use.

The question isn't should we give tax incentives. To compete with our neighbors and to attract development, we must give tax incentives.

The question is whether we want our economy to continue to be stagnant and decline, or whether we want to push it the other way.

And that should not be a difficult decision. — Steve Haynes



Mother Nature's indisputable power

A good friend once told me that our government should only concern itself with protection. Any other support or programs, by her standards, were not the role of the government. People, themselves, should be responsible for any misfortune which might befall them.

Unfortunately, it isn't that cut and dried. For instance, in the Oklahoma tornado devastation, what should the government do? How do we define protection? Should we fund research to promote designing better structures, more resilient to powerful storms? Do we support weather research to learn to break apart a tornado before it has a chance to form and do damage? Or do we merely, in the aftermath, go in with skip loaders and take part in costly structure removal, leaving any rebuilding efforts to local taxpayers to replace schools, health care facilities etc.

Sometimes people, including politicians, see the situation in their particular district as more dire, their

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



area more needy or their people more entitled. One such politician is Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.). He has called Hurricane Sandy and the Oklahoma tornados as "totally different situations." The Senator voted no on aid for Hurricane Sandy victims because, according to him, there were unnecessary provisions in the bill. These provisions, however, were not as dramatic as he described and even when removed he continued to vote no.

Inhofe went on to explain, "Everybody was getting in and exploiting the tragedy that took place. That won't happen in Oklahoma." Sadly, one thing we do know is there

are people everywhere who will succeed in taking advantage of those less fortunate, whether in the heartland or the east coast. Oklahoma's other senator, Tom Coburn, (R) represents the devastated district. Just like his counterpart, he also voted against the Hurricane Sandy relief bill, but has reassured his Oklahoma constituents they will receive assistance, "without delay." Thirty-six senators voted against Hurricane Sandy aid. Many of those have personally sought government funds for their own states' disasters.

There is nothing that can, or at least should, remind us of our unbelievable insignificance and Mother Nature's indisputable power. It is only through God's all encompassing grace that events such as those in Oklahoma this past week or super storm Sandy last fall are survivable. Politics aside, protection for our fellow human being should be defined as compassion. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Dear Editor,
Again I feel obligated to respond to articles in the Telegram.

I too cherish the rights (freedom of speech, religion and press) that are paramount to Mrs. Woodyard. However the entire constitution and all of the amendments are paramount to me!

I served my country in Korea to preserve these rights. I will continue to fight any infringement of those rights. Mrs. Woodyard stated that she is standing in line for her background check. I pray that she is standing in line alone and everyone else is fighting any infringement to those rights.

As to her statement wishing for someone to enlighten her as to why anyone would hesitate to take a background in order to purchase a legal gun -- I quote from a well respected Doctor, "It is very difficult to impart knowledge".

I am also concerned with the report of the five to one vote of the city council to support the second amendment. Unnecessary or not, that should have been a unanimous, resounding YES.

Allen E. Braun



Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkans.com

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF
Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director/Managing Editor
email: dpaxton@nwkans.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkans.com
Michael Stephens..... Reporter
Society Editor/Area Sports
mstephens@nwkans.com
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager

Kansas Press Association



I'm keeping my gun, you do what you want

The hubby spent some time in a gun/pawn shop recently. He wasn't there to buy a gun. He was there for another deal. It took more time than it should have, so he got to observe the gun culture in Kansas.

He reported a fellow was buying a shotgun to keep by his bed for defense. The guy also had a concealed carry permit and displayed that weapon to those in the shop.

The hubby was alarmed at the fellow's paranoia. Is paranoia a mental illness? Are background checks part of the concealed carry process?

The hubby said, "If I lived somewhere I thought I was in that much danger, I'd move."

I told him, people project their belief systems on those surrounding them. If you are a person who would be willing to kill another, in a gruesome fashion, you probably think everyone would do that. Thus you need to be armed to the hilt.

If you are a person who has a gun to hunt with and dispatch the occasional rapid skunk, you think every other gun owner is equally sensible. Thus you don't understand why your government, which guaranteed you the right to keep and bear arms, would infringe on that right in any way.

I grew up watching TV westerns. Every night there was a different one. We had cap guns, holsters, white hats, Indian headdresses.

We played Cowboys and Indians at recess. The boys captured the girls and

This Too
Shall Pass
Nancy
Hagman



took them to their hideouts (lilac bushes at either end of the playground).

As an adult I am not interested in guns but I learned to target shoot with a rifle via the NRA as a teen.

Somehow I survived that sexist, racist, violent childhood, with what I like to think is some sense of normalcy, thus I think everyone ought to be able to.

I peacefully coexist with guns. I have a visceral reaction to the idea that the guns currently in our household should be registered.

As a law abiding citizen, I am troubled that someday we may have to decide if we want to register our guns or face what? Being felons for retaining ownership of a gun passed down from a father to a son?

I was surprised to read Mary Kay Woodyard's comment May 3, 2013: "As for having a background check on the media, I'm getting in line right now." Wouldn't that be censorship?

In her next column, May 10, she tells freedom of speech and the press are two of the rights she holds most dear. Well, a girl can change her mind, I guess!

However ranking Constitutional

Rights or suggesting it might be time to modify them to keep up with changing times seems equivalent to editing The Ten Commandments.

Keep the Sabbath? Do not covet thy neighbor's wife or flock or house? Envy is the best marketing tool ever. People must spend to keep the economy going! And what about parents who abandon their children or abuse them? Honor them????? Passé. Out of touch.

The second amendment reads: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Many people interpret this to mean the founders were saying the militia needed weapons. If so would it not read "the right of the militia to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." It says "people".

Some people have no need for guns, some should not have them. But the recently defeated law on background checks would not have done anything to prevent the latest rash of highly publicized shootings. I believe that is why it failed. Not because of pressure from the NRA or because some people do not like President Obama.

Yes, this country has a high rate of homicides compared to other countries. But it is falling. In 1999 there were 9.8 homicides per 100,000 people, in 2010: 4.8.

I'll take that but I'm keeping my gun!



Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up: e-mail dpaxton@nwkans.com or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kansas 67654

