

## The State saves money while costing businesses

The Kansas Department of Transportation has announced it will close the main exit at Abilene from Interstate 70 from one direction again this summer, despite a hue and cry from city officials and businesses around the interchange last year.

Oh, the department promises it'll limit the closing to 42 days and says it's built incentives into the contract to keep the road builders on schedule. That's great, but why close the exit at all? Major exits are kept open during most repaving jobs.

To save money, we suppose. So the merchants of Abilene will have to suffer for a month and a half during the busiest traffic season of the year. Many drivers, confronted with a closed exit, are not going to get off the Interstate a few miles east of Abilene and drive back to get gas or food. They'll go on to Chapman or Junction City.

Abilene merchants will lose a lot of money so the state can save some. Is that right?

We know the Transportation Department never has enough money for rebuilding roads. And every time the state is short for some other cause, the Legislature seems to rob the highway budget.

But look at it this way. If the state saves — just guessing here — \$4 million or \$5 million on a \$24 million project in Abilene and merchants in town lose \$9 million to \$11 million, as the city estimated after a similar closure last year, how does that add up?

What it amounts to is a huge, one-time tax on Abilene merchants. And that just is not fair.

The department ought to have to account for costs to traffic-dependent businesses when it calculates the cost of any detour. It should plan to keep businesses open as much as possible through any project, discussing the alternatives with the public well in advance.

In fact, it does just that many times. And often, the engineers change the way a job will be done to accommodate businesses. The outcry in Abilene apparently caught the engineers off guard, but it shouldn't have.

They designed a project to replace concrete pavement on one side of the freeway or the other without keeping that vital exit — the main one for a substantial town that depends on highway and tourist trade — open all summer.

And what does this have to do with us out here in western Kansas? That's easy. The highway department makes decisions like this all the time. It might be Norton businesses that'd be affected next — unless the department has to account for business losses along with its own costs.

Today, sometimes it does, other times — as in Abilene — it doesn't. The state could change that, and it should. What's happened in Abilene is a horrible way to treat a town.

— Steve Haynes



## A college degree doesn't guarantee a job

High school graduation is two months away. During the last two years of high school, parents and their teen give a great deal of thought about the future. What career will they choose? Where will they go to school, etc. Some know exactly what they want to do and are determined to keep on the path. My husband was one of those. After his first physics course, he knew he wanted to study physics.

When I was in high school, there were few community colleges and vocational schools and even the choices for four year colleges were more limited. Many students received training in high school which prepared them for future employment. Jack was hired by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, not because of his Master's Degree in physics, but rather his machine shop training in high school.

Today's focus seems to be college for every child and, although I think college is a wonderful experience, I do not believe it is right for everyone. For

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



many students, apprenticeships and vocational schools are very real and profitable alternatives.

There was a time when we thought if you had a college education, you would have a job. Unemployment is still higher among those with only a high school diploma, but there are other considerations. Thirty-four percent of youth (ages 22-27) who graduated from college in 2001, were employed in jobs which didn't require that level of education. By 2012, the rate had increased to 44%. The high cost of post secondary education factors into career decisions too. The average four

year degree has gone from over \$6,000 per year in 1981, to nearly \$16,000 in 2012. This is reflected in an average student loan debt, for the class of 2012, of \$29,000.

The overall belief is still that college pays off. That payoff is sometimes with a loved career. Sometimes the payoff is living in a desired location or, as statistics reflect, making more money. More money doesn't necessarily mean greater joy or a rewarding career. Forbes Magazine listed a website which can tell you if the school you are attending and the field of study you want to pursue will translate into a sound financial investment. CollegeRiskreport.com

We can't see into the future and the career choices young people make will have elements of good and bad, but then again so does life. What appears to some to be the best career move is not always the best life move, but then that's another column. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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## Sharing, posting and using internet ideas

Does anyone else miss Liza? The wonderful stories, the recipes, the expertise on all manner of things? There is always Pinterest! But I don't have an account, so I'm dependent on what other people share. Which is fine, there is still plenty to try.

So I don't lose track of good ideas I repost them on my timeline. Trouble is even then I can't find things when I want them. If I really want something it's best to make a hard copy. So much for a paperless society!

Another problem with reposting is it seems like you are endorsing something when it may not work or the recipe is really awful. Like the spaghetti squash casserole (along the lines of party potatoes). We like spaghetti squash, in fact prefer it to pasta with spaghetti sauce and meatballs. But the casserole turned out it to be a complete waste of sour cream!

I haven't tried using peroxide and baking soda to clean up my cookie sheets. But it seems feasible.

Then there is the furniture restorer--vinegar and something I think. The picture looks just like an old bed frame I had. HAD as in no longer have----but there is probably something around I could try it on.

I wonder about using WD-40 on my achy joints. It seems kind of gross, but cheaper than medical intervention!

A good hint was to use Tang on hard water stains. I knew Kool-Aid dissolved tea stains. That is why I gave up Kool-Aid; do I really want to ingest

### This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



something that acts as a solvent? The scientific explanation is both Tang and Kool-Aid contain Citric Acid.

I read about the Tang around the time our water softener quit working. And boy, do we have hard water! My dishes were a wreck! So I tried Tang in the section of the soap dispenser that empties first. It not only cleaned the dishes, the inside of my dishwasher sparkled. I now use it in every load.

Another thing I learned from the web: the correct way to peel a banana. Don't mess with the stem; pinch the bottom. That's how monkeys do it!

Pinterest stuff goes in waves. Right after Christmas all I had to do was look at Facebook and I'd gain 10 pounds. Not that I need any help in that area!

There was Crock-pot Apple pie. The claim: it is quick. I suppose it is if you are only thinking about how at the end of a long day a dessert is ready to serve. But it takes quite a while to get it ready in the morning. It was delicious! Ice cream is a must!

We weren't crazy about the caramel pretzel brownies. But the Italian Crème Cake using a cake mix was excellent!

### But the very, very best: CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER NO BAKE DESSERT

20 Oreo Cookies, divided  
2 Tablespoons butter, softened (I melted it)  
8 Oz Cream Cheese, softened  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
1 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, divided

16 ounces frozen whipped topping, thawed and divided  
15-20 miniature peanut butter cups, chopped

1 cup cold milk  
1 3.9 ounce package chocolate pudding

Directions: Crush 16 cookies, toss with butter. Press into an ungreased 9 inch square dish. In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, peanut butter and 1 cup confectioner sugar until smooth. Fold in half the whipped topping. Spread over crust.

Sprinkle with chopped peanut butter cups. In another large bowl beat the milk, pudding mix and remaining sugar on low for 2 minutes. Let stand 2 minutes or until soft set. Fold in remaining whipped topping. Spread over peanut butter cups.

Crush the remaining cookies. Sprinkle over the top.  
Cover and chill for at least 3 hours.

This travels well, so if you don't like it, let me know. I'll come collect it! I'm in the book!



### Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:

e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com  
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave.



Thumbs up to J.D. Daffer and Patterson family. Once again the All Sports Booster sign looked awesome for the state wrestlers. Thanks for this donation to our community. Brought in.