

## American businesses need to speak out on useless regulation

American businesses face yet another assault on their ability to communicate, one that could eliminate most uses of the fax machine.

The deadline is less than a month away, July 1. Many have not heard of the pending regulation, though a quiet struggle has been going on in Washington for nearly three years.

The Federal Communication Commission is set to require signed permission forms for any business faxes which could be considered advertising, and the definition of advertising is broad.

That means that if a customer asks your business for a price quote, you won't be able to reply unless you have a form on file. You can't fax the form to the customer. It has to be mailed or hand carried.

Forms have to list the specific fax number, though customers may have several, must be signed and are valid for only three years.

For a typical business with 200-300 customers, that means checking a computer database to see if you have permission to fax the rates. If you don't, a sales person (maybe the owner) will have to run one out. If the customer is a long way off, surface mail could take days.

It also means the typical small business will have to hire someone to build and run the database. The cost, including a computer program and labor, is estimated at \$8,000 per year. Fines start at \$500 per fax.

For most businesses, that means a third to half the time of one productive employee will be lost to this bureaucratic nightmare.

A coalition of business groups, including the National Newspaper Association, has been fighting this rule since it was handed down a couple of years ago under Chairman Michael Powell, better known for his decency campaign after the Janet Jackson incident.

Mr. Powell is gone now, and the commission has new members. It so far has not backed off its stand on this rule, however, because the "privacy" lobby is powerful in Washington.

Unsolicited "junk" faxes are illegal now. They have been illegal for years, but fly-by-night operators keep cranking them out because they work. This rule won't stop them.

It won't produce any benefit to business or society, but it will punish thousands of legitimate businesses across the country. "We're from the government; we're here to help you."

Our Rep. Jerry Moran has supported efforts to repeal this rule, as have Kansas senators. The bill passed both the House and Senate last year, but in different forms. It had to start over this year, and it's stalled behind judicial appointments in the Senate.

The commission has a request to stay the regulation, as it has the last two years, until Congress can act. It's holding off, waiting on the Senate.

The truth is, it's too late for the Senate to move. Too late for businesses to build a database.

What can we do?

Call, fax (yes, that's still OK) or e-mail your senators. Call, fax or e-mail the commission. Explain that businesses can't afford this kind of protection for a non-existent problem.

But do it now. Time is short.

— Steve Haynes

## WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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, 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

Incorporating the Norton County Champion  
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



## Clutter might be part of the problem

The other day I was browsing through children's books and came across one, which sparked old memories of my children.

I thought to myself what a great book to add to my collection.

Upon opening it I found the answer to some children's inability to focus.

Focus to me and to the Encarta Dictionary means "concentrated effort or attention on a particular thing."\*

This book was so "busy" I couldn't land on one thing; my eyes automatically sprang from one item to another with no logical sequence.

And then I thought back to a classroom I was in years ago in another state. The walls were so cluttered with "educational" objects it even confused the adult mind.

Along the same lines, I was watching an old movie last weekend.

As the plot thickened — sorry I couldn't resist the phrase — so did the music.

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



What is now filled with special effects of lights and camera angles and mechanical creatures was back then devoted to acting and music.

The music heightened; the grave look on the faces of the actors deepened and the story line unfolded.

My husband came home a couple of years ago totally disgusted.

His mission had been to locate a can of Drano. When he reached the shelf it contained not one type but 15 varieties of the sink unstopper.

New improved, mint, cinnamon, yes of

course I'm being a bit facetious but the truth is we are bombarded with choices in today's world.

We are over stimulated with "stuff" and so are our children.

I'm even annoyed about news stations.

One of the major news stations runs a line at the bottom of the screen, a special news item at the side, and they talk.

Am I the only one who has difficulty keeping the stories straight?

I'm not minimizing or trivializing problems such as Attention Deficit Disorder and other similar maladies and I am aware they are true medical conditions.

But for the ordinary person, I am saying we are not creating an environment conducive to staying on track, child or adult.

Perhaps our "clutter" is merely a reflection of the frenetic pace of our own lives.

\*[http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary/\\_/focus.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary/_/focus.html)

## Do all cars go to heaven too?

There was a movie "All Dogs Go to Heaven." Okay, I'll buy that but what about cars?

Every man probably has a car he wishes he could have kept for eternity. But this is a house of women so the hubby has had to make sure our girls appreciate the finer things of life — a well-tuned engine, for example.

This spring we got some sad news about two of our favorite rides. The Baretta, which took the older girls to college and Tricia through her last two years of high school met its demise in a rollover. Since the driver wasn't hurt, we are able to keep all our good memories of that little white car.

Still, every time I see a white Baretta, I look closely expecting to see one of my kids at the wheel.

Kate has had her dream car, a black Firebird, she got in Wichita. The dealer, near McConnell Air Force Base, said he kept the Firebirds and Camaros for the jet pilots (and college girls like Kate).

### Back Home Nancy Hagman



Then she moved to Illinois and the icy weather caused her to get a safer (grandma) car. She didn't like the trade-in the dealer gave her on the Firebird so we decided to sell it outright. Which we did, fairly quickly, for the price we wanted.

More than two years later Kate continues to suffer from an extreme case of seller's remorse.

"Everything started going downhill when I sold the Firebird," she laments.

The car went to Kirwin so we saw it often. Whenever Kate saw it she would sob, "My Baby." Then she would devise ways

to somehow, someday to get the car back.

A few weeks ago we were eating supper in Kirwin and sat near the guy who bought the Firebird.

He told us a sad tale.

On New Year's Eve he went to pick up his paycheck and when he came back out (only a matter of minutes) there was an electrical fire which ruined the wiring, the air bag and the instrument panel.

He wanted to fix the car but the insurance said no way.

"Wow," we said, "Kate will cry when she hears this."

"That's OK," the man assured us. "Tell her to go ahead and cry, I did, for about a week."

Then he bought a Camaro. His wife just rolled her eyes. Not a car person I surmised.

Kate was sad but it helped to know that the car was well-loved to the end of its days. As close a thing to heaven as there is for a car I imagine.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

### Tax increases not as harsh as editorial made them out to be

To the Editor:  
While I might disagree with you on the content of your May 24 editorial, I strongly object to your statement that "Taxes are little more than a legalized way of stealing." Then you go ahead and say that "stealing" is OK for schools, roads and colleges.

The consumer price index in the last 40 years has increased 203.1 percent.

Your statement about the Kansas budget is factually correct, yet you don't attribute it to anything other than spending for other than "vital public causes."

You fail to state that the state of Kan-

sas assumed the costs of the judicial system, the social welfare system and the primary education finance system from the counties (thus saving all 105 counties lots of property tax funds).

Your paintbrush was a tad bit broad in this editorial. The last 40 years have been

good for Kansas and not as onerous in tax increases as your editorial suggests.

<ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpiiai.txt>

Bill Muir  
Manhattan  
former Norton resident

### Cemetery crew did a great job

To the Editor:  
Just had to say... My husband and I attended the Memorial Day services at the cemetery. And I really want to commend the cemetery crew, especially Steve Cole.

I know he works very hard and takes such pride in making it look the way it does every Memorial Day!

Sincerely,  
Eve Wyatt, Norton