

Crops are looking better in 2005 than in 2004

We do not know what the wheat harvest will bring. But it is certain this summer's effort will far outdistance the efforts of the past few years.

An abundance of rain, later than hoped but welcomed just as well, is working in the crop's favor. The elevators will be buzzing more actively in 2005 than in 2004.

The latest report from the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service, said 100 percent of the wheat is headed, better than 60 percent is turning. The ag service said 6 percent of the crop is rated very poor, 17 percent poor, 40 fair, 32 percent good and 5 percent excellent. Whack out those first two figures and you come up with a 77 percent favorable result for this year's harvest.

Disease reports show 39 percent with no presence, 30 percent with light presence, 23 percent moderate and 8 percent severe. The ag service also said 72 percent of the crop is insect free.

The harvest is underway in southern Kansas. Early reports are encouraging. The experts are of the opinion that situation will prevail as the cutting moves north and west.

The wheat producers — here and elsewhere — agonized over the wheat situation for several years. Nothing seemed to be going their way. But they, for most part, stayed the course. Perhaps this will be the year that ushers in a new era for wheat producers in the Wheat State.

We are at work producing a special section that salutes the wheat producers in our immediate area. It will carry stories and photos and most importantly a show of support from many people, business and otherwise, in the form of advertising slots.

This is our first attempt at saying, "Hats Off To Our Wheat Producers," as they eagerly await their turn in the field. Harvest '05. Here's to you!

— Tom Dreiling

New legislation meant to help rural hospitals

In his continued efforts to improve health care in rural areas, Rep. Jerry Moran today introduced legislation to improve Medicare payments to small, rural hospitals.

H.R. 2350, the Rural Community Hospital Assistance Act, would improve Kansans' access to health care services by providing rural hospitals with the money needed to keep their doors open.

"Rural hospitals in Kansas and across the country provide essential inpatient and outpatient care to nearly 9 million Americans on Medicare," Moran said. "As it stands today, Medicare falls woefully short in reimbursing these hospitals for the true costs of their services."

Because of their small size — an average of 58 beds compared to the urban average of 186 — rural hospitals have fewer financial reserves. They also face unpredictable changes in patient volume. Rural facilities are also more likely to be dependent on Medicare for the majority of their money.

The act would allow critical access hospitals, those with 25 or fewer beds, to receive reimbursements based on the actual costs, not a percentage of the costs, for follow-up care after a patient leaves, such as skilled nursing and home health services. These hospitals would also receive payments for ambulance services that are

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



based on the actual costs.

Hospitals with 50 or fewer beds do not qualify as critical access hospitals, but they are still unable to absorb financial risks like larger hospitals. Moran's legislation would also allow these hospitals to receive reimbursements based on actual costs for inpatient, outpatient, home health and ambulance services.

"Inadequate Medicare funding has left our health care professionals and providers struggling to meet the needs of rural America," Moran said. "Neither our seniors, nor our younger families, will be able to remain in communities that lack adequate health care services. Hospitals and other health care providers are important for our quality of life in rural Kansas, and they are essential to the survival of our communities."

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/morank01/.

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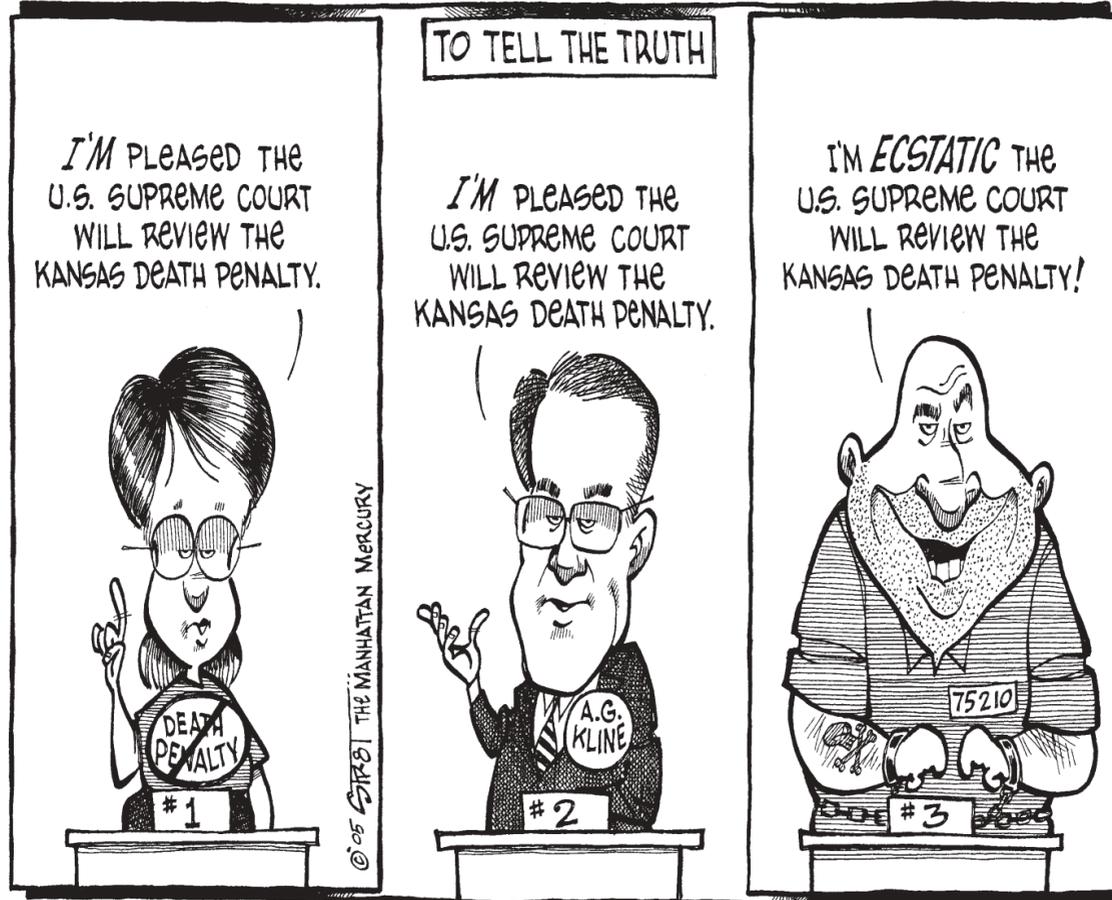
Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd

Publishers, 1970-2002

Incorporating the Norton County Champion

Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



People east of here have no clue

I know I promised to be more tolerant of fools, but a recent story in the *Salina Journal* even got the usually mild mannered husband going.

The Sunday, May 29, headline read "Demise denied. KU economists say rural Kansas far from gone".

The first problem was the cut line under the Associated Press file photo. "This is an aerial view of the northwest corner of Kansas in Rawlins County where the state borders Nebraska and Colorado."

Huh? Last time I checked that would be Cheyenne County.

It would be easy to blame the *Lawrence Journal-World*, which was responsible for the story for this mistake. There are a lot of great things about Lawrence and the University of Kansas but awareness of life in (and perhaps the geography of) western Kansas is not one of them.

They do make a small effort, though. Every year they send the chancellor on a flying trip to western Kansas to get in touch with the rural segment of the state.

A few years ago the chancellor (sorry I don't remember who it was) was quoted as saying something like, "You know you are in a whole different world when there is a sign in the motel in Beloit, asking guests not to clean pheasants in the rooms."

Like we are such rubes we check into the Super Eight to clean pheasants. News flash — those signs were not put there for

Back Home Nancy Hagman



the citizens of Beloit. They were put there for the sportsmen from, oh say, Douglas County who come out here to hunt.

Even if the mistake was the *Journal-World's*, I would think someone at the *Salina Journal* would be aware enough not to repeat it.

The writer, Scott Rothschild, quotes Peter Orazem, a Koch visiting professor of business economics, as saying, "A lot of rural areas are doing really well, and the ones that are doing the best are no longer rural areas."

Huh? We never find out where Orazem is visiting from. But he has a magnificent grasp of the obvious.

Georgeann Artz studies are also mentioned in the article. Artz is an extension program specialist at Iowa State University.

Are Iowa and Kansas really all that similar?

Iowa has about 52 people per square mile, Kansas about 33. Kansas has 30

counties smaller than the smallest county in Iowa.

Kansas is noted for having the most governmental units of any state in the U.S. But Iowa has almost as many counties as Kansas. Kansas, however, has half again as much land mass. Consolidation of counties (which is mentioned as an option in the article) in Iowa is not exactly the same thing as consolidating counties in Kansas.

The suggestion to consolidate counties is not attributed to Artz. But one has to wonder what studies done in Iowa have to do with Kansas.

You just can't get past the sheer number of miles we travel in western Kansas for services. To Orazem's credit he acknowledges that things are a little different out here. He suggests counties get together and decide on a regional town with manufacturing and services.

In whose world would this not spell demise for the surrounding counties?

Orazem can deny it all he wants but things don't look all that rosy. We already lost Cheyenne County on May 29.

Well, gotta go. I need to call my sister who used to live in Cheyenne County and see exactly what happened.

We probably aren't going to read about it in the *Salina Journal* or the *Lawrence Journal-World* but a few of us inquiring minds do want to know.

Teens aren't getting enough sleep

High Plains Mental Health Karen D. Beery

Dear Plain Sense: I seem to be in constant conflict with my high school-aged son in regards to him getting to school on time. He doesn't want to get up, nor go to bed at a reasonable time.

Answer: The age of adolescence is usually a challenge for both parents and children, and daily schedules and disagreement about time can be major conflicts.

In regards to rest and sleep, the physical changes that are a part of adolescent development do have an effect on their internal clock, and often contribute to difficulty in falling asleep when they go to bed in the evening.

This makes it even more difficult to want to get up on time for school or other events, especially for students who have to catch a bus or a ride by 7 or 7:30 a.m.

In addition, children and youth have a lot of stimulation such as late after-school

activities and part-time jobs, in addition to television, computers and electronic games in their bedrooms.

Behavioral researchers report that teens require an average of more than nine hours of sleep, yet many are getting only six-and-a-half hours or less.

Suggestions for encouraging their teens to get enough sleep:

- Establish a bedtime routine when children are young to help establish good sleep habits that will continue as they get older.
- Decrease evening stimulation such as television, video games, computers and stereos as well as foods that include caffeine.

• Limit the amount of time spent in after-school activities or part-time jobs.

• Use light as a cue by making the bedroom dark at night and bright in the morning.

• Allow your teen to sleep in on the weekends; but sleeping past noon is too late. Discourage naps in the afternoon, which make it difficult to fall asleep at night.

• Be a good role model by establishing and keeping a good bedtime routine and nighttime hours.

Karen D. Beery

High Plains Mental Health

These views are those of the writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, KS 67601 www.highplainsmentalhealth.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Mementos robbed from graves upsets family members

To the Editor, Recently mementos have been stolen from graves in the Long Island and Almema cemeteries.

Bereaved persons take comfort in placing special mementos on graves of loved ones. It makes us feel like we are still in

contact with them. It is a last way of showing love and affection for the deceased. It was not our intention for those to be taken to grace another place.

I think this is despicable and hurtful on the part of the perpetrators.

How would you feel if your loved ones

graves were robbed?

Why don't you return the items and no questions will be asked.

Twila Ingram

Almema