

### Typical government work a phony issue

Call it a phony issue with an expensive solution. Typical government work. Congress put \$350 million in the "stimulus" bill to pay for a national map of Internet availability, with the emphasis on where customers can and cannot get broadband, or high-speed, service.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration says it will spend \$100 million just to see what needs to be done to create a map. States, sensing blood in these pork-infested waters, have asked for \$107 million to map their own territories, plus \$26 million for "related" projects.

And when the state maps are done, of course, there'll be millions to spend on collating them into a national map.

All to learn that we've used up a whole lot of money to find out that most of the country, nearly everyone in towns big enough to have cable, already have access to broadband Internet. Farmers and others in rural areas sometimes do not, but wireless and satellite services are catching up with this need, too.

North Carolina officials, on the other hand, say it cost them only about \$275,000 per year to keep up a detailed map of Internet service in their state. One consultant calls \$350 million a "ridiculous" amount of money to spend on this project. He said his firm could do the job for about \$3.5 million. Another expert put the reasonable cost at under \$30 million.

Of course, the map won't be ready when the government starts giving out stimulus money this fall for broadband projects, or formulation of a national broadband policy by the Federal Communications Commission.

Officials estimate a good two-thirds of American homes have broadband service already, with high-speed service available to perhaps 90 percent of all U.S. homes. One survey showed most people who don't have broadband in those areas simply don't want to spend the money.

Politicians cry that the U.S. is falling behind the rest of the world in Internet access, but the existing patchwork of private enterprise and cooperative providers seems, in fact, to have done a pretty good job.

Most efforts by states to expand service have wound up spending tax money that could have been put to better use somewhere else. If Congress is really concerned about rural folks, it might want to put a few million into research on ways to get broadband to areas now beyond the reach of ordinary "DSL" lines used in towns and cities.

The Rural Utilities Service, part of the Department of Agriculture, might give priority to loans for people who will wire rural areas or install wireless systems to serve farm homes.

There are some needs out there. But \$350 million for a map? Come on.

The government has got better things to do.

— Steve Haynes



### Holidays will soon be upon us

With the holidays soon to be upon us, I find myself wondering if the newly discovered recession lifestyle will continue. As the mother of five and the grandmother of soon to be 11, I think I know something about entertaining children (actually I learned these things from my parents). My mother used to send tape, pipe cleaners, paper and glue to our children. It was a highlight for them all... tape knows no age limit. Perhaps with the high unemployment and accompanying realization that we truly can't have it all, children will benefit as well.

With Halloween coming at the end of this month, I wonder how many children will enjoy the wonder of their own creations from boxes, foil, paper towel tubes, etc. This is a holiday designed for imagination. Oh, I know there are those who feel the 'paganism' looming at every corner, but forget your ridiculous fears

#### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



the information garnered from the aging grandmother about the depression is relevant. Bringing food from the garden to the table is indeed a reason to celebrate and just possibly we can celebrate the interaction of different cultures and ethnicities.

Over the years we have watched as children demanded and parents felt obligated to buy the latest toy shown on Saturday morning cartoons for the Santa gift. I have long believed children have wonderful imaginations and we do great harm when we hand them off to TV, Gameboy, Playstation, X-box and the list goes on. It takes some adjusting for children who have grown accustomed to having the latest gadgets, but if parents aren't afraid to parent they will uncover wonderful gifts their children possess, not purchased ones, but God given ones.

and look upon it as a child's holiday. I don't even associate it with All Hallow's Eve and I'm Episcopalian, for God's sake. Get in the 'spirit' of things and acknowledge the witch within.

Thanksgiving isn't necessarily over the river and through the woods to get to Grandma's, but with increased gas prices and more families turning to one car shortcuts may reign.

But perhaps more importantly is the sharing of generations to be had from these family get-togethers. Suddenly

### Tradition brings football, soldiers together

There is a tradition at Kansas State University. Each fall at a football game the soldiers from Fort Riley are honored.

We sit in the North End Zone. Although we love it for whatever reason, tickets in that area are considered second rate. It might have something to do with the port-a-potties, gotta say I don't think much of that situation myself.

Anyways, a lot of tickets in the area don't get sold to season ticket holders so we get the ruffraff (Oops, I mean fans!) from the opposing teams, the bands on band day and the soldiers on Fort Riley Day.

On Fort Riley Day, you can't help but notice the contrast between the 18-22 year olds in and out of uniform. Something you would be able to see without the uniforms. The uniformed ones are disciplined adults. The others are kids.

I'm not faulting college kids. Game days are supposed to be fun; time to be a little (or a lot) silly. It's just an observation.

Some of my family and friends and I have a disagreement about soldiers. I look at them with pride and think that their military training will be invaluable to them later in life.

BUT (and it is a big one) it has been pointed out to me that some of these soldiers will not leave the military with their lives. Or they come back with physical and mental disabilities that seriously impact the quality of their lives. Often the reason for their enlistment was to get money so they could be college students

#### Back Home Nancy Hagman



conflicts and wars but we should never ever forget the sacrifice of those fighting. This year was Band Day AND Fort Riley Day; we were surrounded by bands. The soldiers seemed to be somewhere else, so this year I never spoke to any.

During pre-game Taps was played and the names of the Fort Riley soldiers who had lost their lives in the past year ran on the Jumbotron. I counted 40. After a moment of silence we heard Army helicopters approaching from the distance for a flyover, a very moving experience.

The half time show featured the Army Band along with the high school bands playing some rousing Patriotic music, a fine tribute, though probably not enough.

Later a group of soldiers did push-ups with Willie when the 'Cats scored. At that point if it hadn't been for the uniforms you would have thought they were college kids just having some fun on a Saturday afternoon.

Is this a great country or what? And a good one. Of course, we make mistakes and argue among ourselves. Our goodness and greatness is in that we can do so without fear of retribution.

I think we get Patriotism confused with arrogance. Pride in our country doesn't mean we think we are better than others. It means we realize we are fortunate. It means we are thankful.

At least that's what it means to me. What a wonderful thing it is to honor and thank our soldiers! We should do it more!

and be goofy at football games!

I accept that argument and appreciate the irony. Do we therefore pity soldiers? Scorn them because they couldn't figure out any other way to get to college? Or do we admire them for the risks they are willing to take? Are we grateful to them?

We listened to the pre-game show before the Sept 26 Fort Riley Day. A representative from Fort Riley was interviewed. He painted a pretty glowing picture of the Fort/University relations.

I was in college during Vietnam; need I say more? I'm glad things have improved and the two institutions are working together. How can we expect peace in the world if we don't even have it in Riley County among folks who are supposed to be on the same side?

The soldier interviewed also suggested fans at the game thank the soldiers they encountered. I've done this in the past. As I said we are usually surrounded by them so it's easy to do. In fact when I'm in Manhattan and discover the person helping me in a store or whatever is connected with the military, I always tell them to thank their family member. We can disagree all we want with the politics of our



To... the Norton Junior High School cheerleaders, for leading the cheers at our games. See you next home game. (called in)

(To render a salute, please email - nortontelegram@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361, fax 877-3732 or mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654. or drop by the office.)

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• Most reasons for thumbs up include recognition to someone for an act of kindness, a group for something special they have undertaken, Grandma's or Grandpa's birthday, wedding anniversaries, happy birthdays in general. And you can probably think of some other reasons not listed here.

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