

Air Force taking another round of bids

The Air Force is taking another round of bids for 179 new tankers to replace aging Boeing 707s ordered under the Eisenhower administration.

Boeing has won the bid at least once, but the award was reversed when, among other things, officials alleged that an Air Force general who helped with the review had a promised job waiting for her with Boeing.

Subsequent wrangling over contracts and political games prompted by a job that could top \$100 billion have set the project back more than a decade.

There are only two bidders Boeing, the last maker of large transport aircraft in the U.S. after the departure of Lockheed-Martin and merger of McDonnell-Douglas, and EADS, the government-controlled European Aerospace Defense and Space Co., maker of the Airbus line.

Boeing wants to sell the government a modernized version of its 767 aircraft, first flown in 1982. Production would be in Seattle and Wichita, primarily, as with other Boeing models.

Airbus offers a military version of its A330, a 1992 model. The tanker version is already being built for the Australian Air Force, giving the A330 something of an edge. At least Airbus has a picture of its product in action. Production would be at a new plant in Mobile, Ala., and in Arizona.

However, Boeing claims its smaller tanker will save the Air Force as much as \$10 billion in fuel over the life of the planes. The Air Force will have to sort all that out again.

Bids have flown several times. At one point, it looked like Boeing would have its way with the departure of Airbus partner Northrup from the bid. However, the European concern has since decided to go it alone.

Senators and representatives from Alabama and Arizona have lined up behind Airbus while the Kansas and Washington delegations back Boeing. Money and jobs are everything in an election year.

Meantime, American pilots are stuck with tankers that are more than half a century old. They're old, slow, small and increasingly hard to maintain. How long can that go on, especially if it could take 20 to 30 years to replace all the old planes?

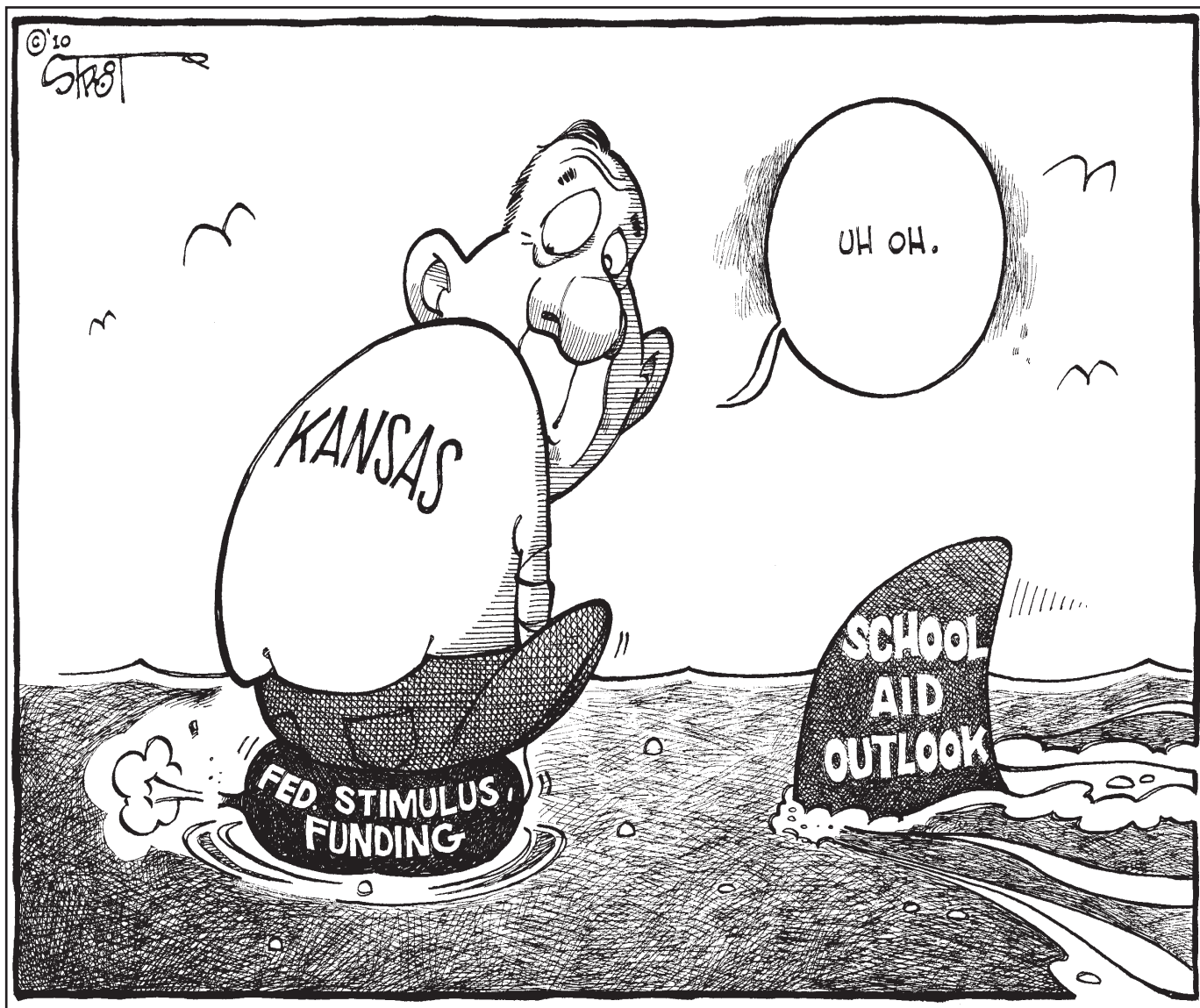
It'd be nice to see we should settle this on the basis of who has the best plane, but that question seems to be lost in the political and lobbying wrangle.

What needs to happen is to settle the issue once and for all so new tankers are built and delivered. The Air Force is long since past the point where it needed them.

For Kansans, the answer to the question of who should be is obvious, but whichever firm wins, let's get these planes flying.

No airline can afford to fly 707s today, and neither can our air force.

—Steve Haynes



Future of our state is at stake

Dear Editor: Well, time is running out, and we now know the size and scope of our state's budget problem. In the next few weeks the Kansas Legislature must decide how to address budget shortfalls for the next fiscal year, which begins in less than 70 days.

The future of our state, and especially western Kansas, is at stake.

Fort Hays State University and the Kansas Board of Regents system have done all we can to cooperate with the Legislature because we understood the difficult choices that had to be made during the national economic collapse. Over the past year, the state's higher education system has absorbed cuts in state funding of about 13 percent. As a result, we did a lot more than tighten our belts. Employees have been laid off, positions have been left unfilled, services have been eliminated, programs have been reduced and class sections have been cut.

But higher education is not alone. School districts are scheduled to be closed.

Prisoners are being released. Senior citizens' homes and services are being limited. Veteran services are being reduced. And National Guard armories



are being closed.

Most of these budget-driven negative decisions are impacting rural and western Kansas. Our quality of life, as we know it, is at stake. The next set of budget decisions will define what future life will be like in western Kansas.

The citizens of northwest Kansas are fortunate to have legislators who are committed to protecting their quality of life. I commend Sen. Janis Lee, Kensington; Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, Grinnell; Rep. Don Hineman, Dighton; Rep. Dan Johnson, Hays; Rep. Eber Phelps, Hays; and Rep. Bill Wolf, Great Bend. These are leaders who are ready to make tough choices, which might include steps to generate new revenue. They are not part of the crowd that shouts "no" to every solution. They are not saying no to our

western Kansas way of life.

When funds grow short, western Kansas is more vulnerable than the rest of the state. The Governor's solution of budget cuts and revenue enhancements is a fair and reasonable solution. Others may surface in the next few weeks of the session. Thank goodness we have legislators willing to say yes to protect our way of life.

Further cuts in essential social services, education and our correction system may seem like a short-term solution, but they are actually a prescription for disaster. We must educate ourselves out of this recession. Our citizens must receive the education necessary to reach their full potential and find creative answers for the future. We need a trained workforce. We need retraining for employees who want to pursue new opportunities.

In short, we must seek alternatives to further budget cuts that reduce services to western Kansas and to the state as a whole. We are fortunate to have these senators and representatives from western Kansas who understand exactly what is at stake.

Edward H. Hammond
President, Fort Hays State University

Jalapenos caught eye

A recipe for stuffed jalapenos caught my eye. It sounded easy and I tried it. Since then, I have had to make them about twice a week and Jim and James both practically stand by the oven til the little gems are done.

I told Jim I wanted to take them to the church potluck and he said, "You and I will be the only ones eating them. No one else will like them." Well, I have the empty pan to prove he was wrong. In fact one of our friends said, "Anytime you want to drop off a pan of those at our house, you are welcome to."

So here goes. I hope your family loves them as much as mine. They are not spicy hot.

Soften 8 ounces of cream cheese and blend in about 4 tablespoons of shredded cheddar cheese.

Cut a dozen jalapenos in half, lengthwise. Remove the seeds and veins (I use a melon baller). Fill the pepper with the cheese mixture and wrap half a piece of bacon around the pepper, securing with a toothpick.

Now, here is the secret ingredient. Mix 1/4 teaspoon chili powder with about a half cup of brown sugar. Roll the jalapenos in the sugar and place on a cake pan or a cookie sheet with sides. Bake 30 to 45 minutes at 350 degrees or until the bacon is done. Beware! If you start, your family will want them all the time and you won't be able to stop.

-ob-

It's time for the baby's next feeding, and I'll have to put on my chore boots to

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



do it. Our first baby calf arrived over the weekend, and she is a cutie. Coal black, shiny hair, big brown eyes and a ravenous appetite. She took to the bottle immediately and is ready to graduate to larger feedings. Our rancher friend David called to see if we were ready for calves. One of his cows had a set of twins and after feeding them once she would only claim one. Now, it's our turn.

If Dave comes up with another one we'll take it too. If not, we'll probably pick one up at the sale barn. I think they do better with at least one penmate.

-ob-

My 45th class reunion is fast approaching and my girl friend, Galene, whom I have not seen in more than 20 years, is coming to stay with me for a few days.

I told Jim the tile project for our bathroom and utility room floors was the one thing I wanted done before she came, and he promised to do it. He has gone above and beyond, though, and promised to finish a few other odd projects before her arrival. Nothing like expecting houseguests to get us motivated.

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, 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.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail:
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Dana Paxton.....general manager
advertising director
Dick Boyd.....Blue Jay sports
Erica Bradley.....managing editor
Harriett Gill.....society editor
Sherry Hickman.....bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson.....computer production



Every story has two sides

Insight

John Schlageck

on the issue of food production.

"At the end of the day, consumers across Kansas and this country should have piece of mind regarding the food they eat each day," Baccus says. "We have a food processing industry in the United States that has given us the safest, most affordable food in the entire world."

The farmer's creed has always been to nurture the land, improving it while coaxing forth a bountiful harvest of food for all of us. Farmers hold enduring respect for the land that sustains them.

Because of the farmer's ingenuity and stewardship ethic, the United States and Kansas lead the world in food quality, variety and affordability. Advances in crop production enhance the farmer's natural commitment to stewardship. These innovations allow farmers to harvest larger yields from fewer acres, in harmony with their environment.

At the same time, farmers and ranchers adhere to sound principles of animal husbandry and provide the best care for their livestock. They look after their animals first thing in the morning and the last thing in the evening.

Today's animal husbandry is no accident. Farmers and ranchers go beyond their role of humane guardians and show devoted concern for their animals' health and safety.

They work hard, long hours to care for and nurture their livestock. Farmers and ranchers are neither cruel nor naive.

They want to produce healthy animals that will one day feed others. In fact, they feed their own families from the livestock and crops they produce.

Today, many consumers are unaware of a farmer and rancher's relationship with the crops they grow and the animals they care for. They don't know how meat, milk, eggs, wheat, vegetables and other food products wind up on their dinner table. Few know all that goes into caring, feeding and nurturing of livestock and crops that goes on across Kansas.

Farmers and ranchers continue to adapt and change to meet the needs of consumers today. Crop and livestock producers, including Baccus, will tell you consumers drive this whole food picture today.

"On my farm, I change what I plant based on what consumers want," he says. "It's all about giving the people what they want. Our entire food industry has changed to meet consumer demand."

That said, today's consumers should continue to regard the profession of farming and ranching highly, and embrace a quality, abundant food source they value second to none.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.