

## Informative reports from the legislature

News from your legislator  
**Ward Cassidy**



The reports that include up-to-date information and also inform about the overall legislative process seem to be the columns most enjoyed by readers.

The first report of the year could be called State Budget 101. The State of Kansas, in effect, has two budgets. The All Funds budget, controlled by the Governor and his staff, is twice the size of the General Fund budget. Last year, the All Funds budget was just shy of \$14 billion; and the General Fund budget was a little over \$6.1 billion.

The All Funds budget includes the General Fund budget plus many other dedicated funds; dedicated funds must be spent on pre-defined activities. All federal government grants to the State (representing about 17 percent of the All Funds budget revenue) flow into dedicated funds. The Legislature has no discretion over how federal grants must be used, but it can change the laws governing State revenues used to fund pre-defined activities (unless a federal grant stipulates state matching funds). For example, the State Highway Fund, the largest dedicated revenue fund at approximately \$1.4 billion, must be used to construct and maintain roadways. The State Highway Fund receives its money from motor fuel taxes, motor vehicle registration fees, a dedicated portion of the state sales tax and use taxes, and the federal government.

However, the Legislature (and Governor's staff) often sees fit to re-direct dedicated state sales tax money from the State Highway Fund to the State General Fund, in order to finance what a majority of legislators perceive as more urgent priorities. The same thing could happen with the motor fuels taxes.

The State General Fund generates the budget debates you read about in the news. As stated in the Governor's Budget Report: "The State General Fund receives the most attention in the budget because it is the largest source of the uncommitted revenue available to the state. It is also the fund to which most general tax receipts are credited. The Legislature may spend State General Fund dollars for any government purpose."

With that being said, I read in the Topeka Capital that this year's session will likely be historical. As I have said all along, KPERS, Medicaid, and school finance will dominate the session.

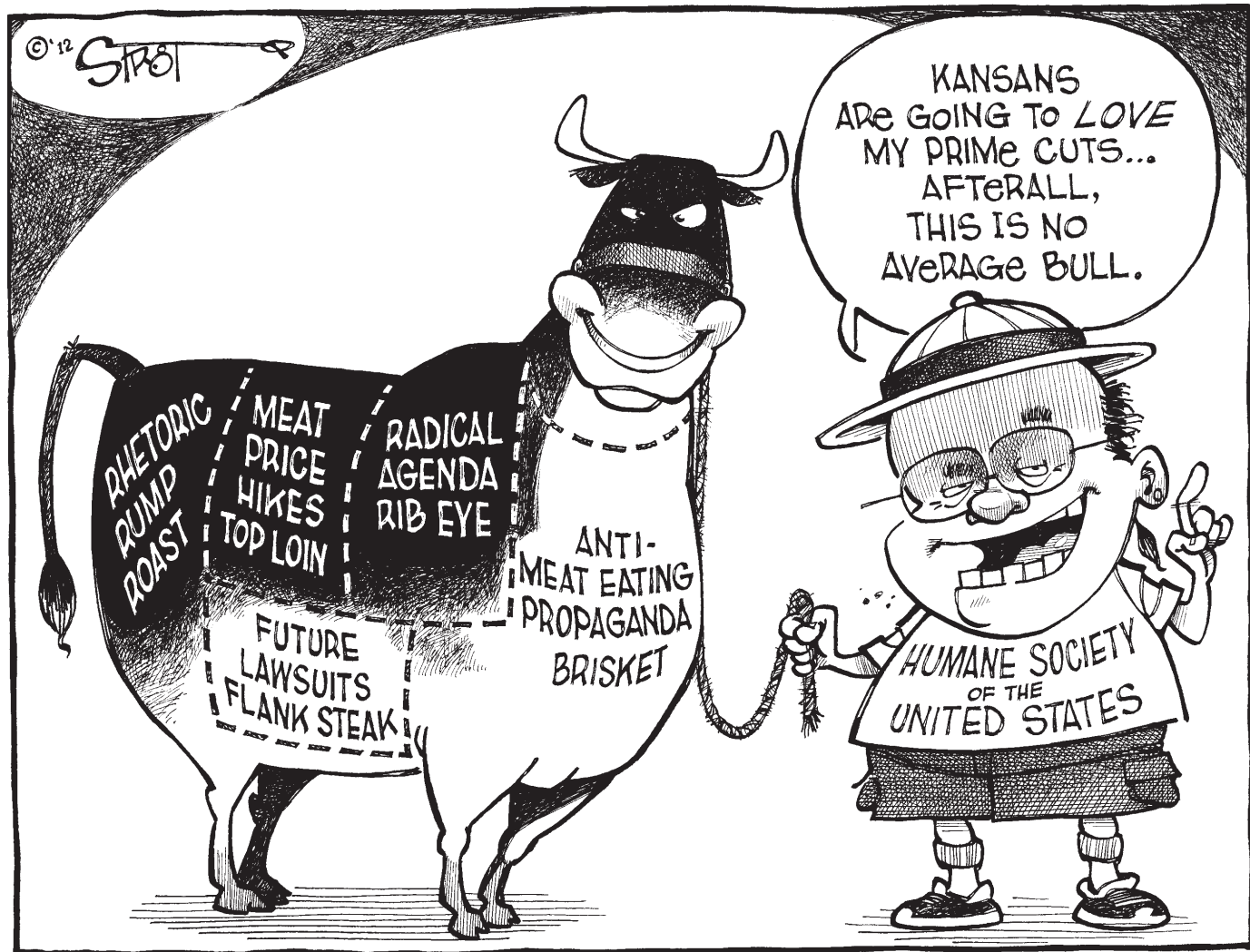
Wednesday night, the Governor gave his "State of the State" address. The pomp and circumstance associated with the evening was rather impressive. The Governor's new tax plan adds one more giant item to consider in this session. It is still too early to give you my opinion of how it will affect us.

Last Tuesday, I was invited to the Governor's home, with several other legislators, to discuss his school finance plan. I would have to say, at this point, there would need to be a lot of changes before Western Kansas could support it.

Being put on the power committee (Appropriations) has added a lot more work to my daily schedule and a lot more people wanting to know my thoughts. My thoughts are always – "What is best for NW Kansas and the State of Kansas?"

I appreciate input from my district and will respond to the best of my ability.

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## Make a resolution to do one extra thing a day

Did you make any New Year's resolutions?

Have you kept them?

Online I read a list of ideas for resolutions that experts have determined would be beneficial. They included: quit smoking, exercise, get rid of stress. These online stories are always followed by a comment section.

The comments were hilarious: "Earth shattering news—who would have thought it's beneficial to quit smoking!" "The gym is impossible for the first two months of the year until all the people break their resolutions and clear out!"

My daughter says apparently in Norman no one made a resolution to get fit because her gym is very empty. Perhaps it is because the students aren't back.

I usually find a New Year slightly depressing. Once we take down the Christmas decorations the house seems cold and boring. For some reason this year is different. I'm actually longing for something new! For change!

I did not make any resolutions until about a week in to 2012. The Wellness Center where I was "working" closed so I don't have a "job" to get up for! But we were going to the Cotton Bowl so I was focused on that! Never mind the score, we had a blast!

Something I have worked on for years is enjoying the experience. It's a life resolution. One I'm not always successful at. Another one: Even if you fail, keep trying! I sometimes muck enjoying life for days, weeks, or even

This Too Shall Pass  
**Nancy Hagman**



months at a time, but I can always start over!

The second week of January and the holiday high is behind us. This is the time for resolve! And I hit on something that I hope will work for me: one extra thing.

You know how things build up? Like the junk drawer should be cleaned? The recycling should be taken to town? Important papers should be filed, etc?

After awhile it's overwhelming. So we decide, I'll do all that the next time there is a work holiday or dedicate one of my vacation days to it. Except when the holiday comes we decide to take a day trip. And who wants to spend their vacations sorting through receipts?

What happens is the night before the mother-in-law comes we go on an exhaustive cleaning spree which ends with words with our beloved spouse or our children. And we don't even have the energy to be nice to the mother-in-law (whom we usually love and deeply appreciate!)

Or the appointment with the tax preparer becomes a major stress point because we never posted anything. Most of the paper work is in no particular order in a shoe box under the bed (where we stuffed it when the

mother-in-law came).

I have lots of time on my hands (no job) so it's easy for me to do one extra thing. But it doesn't have to be a big thing. There is never a week so busy you don't have time to wash a window. Especially with the easy to wash windows we have these days: five minutes. So instead of postponing window washing until we have to do them all taking all day; do one window after loading the dishwasher one time a week.

Clean the junk drawer and stop, then go put your feet up. Next week, investigate what is underneath the sink.

I'm trying to do one extra thing every day. I got a guest room done up one day. I cleaned under a couple of sinks another. In fairness that was a got to--- new faucets!!!

One extra thing is not just about work. Rock a baby, say a kind word, help someone, take a bubble bath. My default one extra thing is sew or quilt. Even if I do nothing else! Fabric ages absurd, but my stash is bordering on absurd!

One extra thing falls right into line with de-stressing, which we were advised to do via the internet! The distressing thing about de-stressing is figuring out how to do it.

So maybe it's time to be impulsive: get up! Go do one thing that will make life more pleasant now or in the future!

I'm optimistic, I think it's going to work!

## How work ethics have changed in today's society

Recently a news correspondent asked a farmer, not in Kansas, why the crop he grew tasted like wood.

His response, "I'm paid for the crop, not for flavor."

All too often anymore, this attitude prevails. I'm paid for the product, not for craftsmanship; I'm paid for the product, not for freshness; and on and on.

My dad used to say the demise of this country would come because of greed and I fear we are witnessing this in all too many venues. From farming to manufacturing, from education to healthcare, the almighty dollar is the driving force. Even churches are run as big business rather than spiritual lighthouses.

This attitude contradicts the strong work ethic the U.S. was once known for. Many veterans of WWII had rarely left their homes before being called to war. They served their country with no thought of what they would get in return, but they did in fact receive something, the GI bill. I have always believed people need help when they are down or help to improve their skills. I am

Phase II  
**Mary Kay Woodyard**



proud our country sought to initiate the GI bill. Five years after WWII ended, "twice as many Americans graduated from college." Because of the education achieved, we became a leader in the world. I still support anything, worker programs, Pell grants and educational loans that allow people to better their skills, increase their educational level and become contributing members of society. These workers will also pay more in taxes and we will regain what we spent...a good investment.

When Jack taught night classes he always marveled at the single moms who were working two jobs and going to school in an endeavor to better themselves. They were not willing to be on government assistance as a long term answer, but rather using it

as a short term solution to become independent, productive members of our communities.

Unfortunately there are some who are satisfied with government assistance as a lifestyle and producing products with little "flavor"; but there are also many who will find the help needed to make them contributing citizens; people whose skills will come together to make America a better place to live. These are the people we must be willing to help. The WWII veterans were the ones who propelled us into modern America.

Work ethic is what differentiates those making a career of government assistance or producing something inferior and the WWII veterans and the single moms working two jobs and going to school. Pride in workmanship and a job well done was the profile of the American worker in the 20th century. How we regain this reputation depends on what and in whom we are willing to invest. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



Thumbs up to David Will and the NCHS Pep Band! Their music adds so much energy to the night and it wouldn't be a home basketball game without them!! They sound fantastic and this family of fans appreciates what they do!!! Emailed in.

Call Dana for your next ad. 877-3361!

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