

Tax cuts may hurt schools

In response to the legislative decision to cut income tax, Norton Superintendent Greg Mann reported recently that the future of public education may be in jeopardy because of the cuts.

"Although not related directly to school funding, the unprecedented cut in income taxes could mean more bad news for public schools in the next few years," Mann said. "Individual income taxes were reduced while many types of corporate and small business income taxes were eliminated. From my professional point of view, I dread the potential consequences of this tax cut for Kansas' social services and especially for our public schools."

An October 2012 analysis from the Kansas Economic Progress Council, a group that opposed the tax cut legislation, reports that the state cuts are slated to take affect in fiscal year 2013. The legislation collapses tax brackets and reduces taxes for personal income tax returns and for business income and totally exempts certain non-wage

business income. Additionally, some tax credits are repealed for individual tax returns.

Specifically, the superintendent explained, he is concerned about how the tax decrease will affect the overall state budget in the next few years. Mann cited a legislative study that projects a budget shortfall of about \$2.5 billion by 2018.

Another study, Mann said, estimates that each of the estimated 23,000 new jobs created from income tax cuts will need to generate more than \$100,000 in sales and income taxes to offset the loss of revenue to keep state revenue at current levels.

"If the research is correct, the state would be forced to either increase taxes or cut deeper into funding for public schools, social services and other programs," the superintendent said. "Given Kansas' traditional reluctance to increase taxes, cutting budgets would seem to be the most likely option pursued."

Mann did say that amid the concern, there is some good news. The legislature approved

a small funding increase in the amount of about one-seventh of the funding cuts that have been made to Kansas schools over the past four years.

"School districts had hoped the state's revenue surplus of several hundred million dollars would lead to restoring more of the lost funding, but that was not to be," Mann said. "It appears that surplus will be needed to balance next year's state budget as the tax cuts will be making their impact felt."

Overall, the superintendent said, he is concerned about the future of education because of decisions made at the state level.

"In my opinion, the new tax cut law will lead to large budget deficits in the near future," he said. "If I am correct, the state is only a few years away from a self-imposed fiscal nightmare and public schools will likely bear the brunt. In my 35 years of service in Kansas public education, I have not feared for the future of Kansas public schools as I do now."

You are feeling very sleepy



The Norton County Arts Council hosted Master Hypnotist Mark Newton Saturday night at the East Campus Auditorium. He performed before a crowd of approximately 100 people. Newton tailors each show to be original, dynamic, and where those in the audience become the stars of the show. Newton filled-in for comedy hypnotist Rick Bultez who was unable to perform due to illness.

-Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

Drug take-back program was a success again this year

Kansans turned in more than 2.5 tons of unused medications during the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day last month, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Local law enforcement officials collected 5,334 pounds of drugs at 70 locations throughout the state on September 29. The semi-annual event was sponsored nationwide by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, which collects and safely destroys the medications. This was the second-highest amount collected during a take-back day. More than 12 tons of medications have been collected in Kansas since the program began in 2010.

Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse

and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are increasing, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that traditional methods for disposing of unused medicines - flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash - pose potential safety and health hazards and should be avoided.

Unused prescriptions can be turned in year-round at many local law enforcement locations. Kansans should contact their local sheriff's office or police department for more information.

Asking for input on pipeline project

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on the proposed Pony Express Pipeline Conversion project.

According to information from the commission, the staff will prepare an environmental assessment that will discuss the environmental impacts of the project involving the conversion of facilities from natural gas to oil and construction and operation of new facilities in various counties in Wyoming, Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska.

The commission is gathering public input about the proposed project to determine if it is in the public's best interest. Counties in Kansas that would be affected include Lincoln, Rawlins, Osborne and Ottawa.

Concerned citizens are asked to express their concerns, support and/or input to www.ferc.gov under "Documents and Filings." Paper copies can also be sent to Kimberly Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington DC, 20426.

For a full copy of the proposed project outline, visit www.ferc.gov.esubscribenow.htm.

Pig Skin

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postmarked by 5 p.m. Friday and received in the mail no later than Monday or you may bring them to the Telegram office before 5 p.m. on Friday.

See the Pick-Em page advertisement in today's Telegram for this week's college games only since high school games will be played on Thursday.

The fan who picks the most winners during the 12-week

contest will receive \$50 in scrip money plus an engraved trophy.

Scores of last week's games were: Beloit 56, Norton 9; Phillipsburg 56, Minneapolis 7; Trego 66, Hill City 14; Thunder Ridge 60, Northern Valley 14; Natoma 47, Logan 34; Nebraska 29, Northwestern 28; Oklahoma 52, Kansas 7; Florida 44, South Carolina 11; Kansas State 55, West Virginia 14; Texas Tech 56, TCU 53 O.T.

Forum

(Continued From Page 1)

Report of Trade Pull Factors and Trade Area Captures by the Kansas Department of Revenue. A plus pull factor in a community means that more people come from outside the city to shop than leave the city to shop.

Many questions were asked by those in the audience and answered by McElyea and Ensz as well as Lawson.

The question of whether or not to build a new pool has been a topic before the city council for about three years. After taking four bids, the city hired Aquatic Design Consultants, Inc. to conduct the design study.

The total projected cost of the new pool with everything included is \$4,535,000. To finance it, a Nov. 6 election ballot will ask voters to approve a .75 percent sales tax increase. The proposed sales tax is for 20 years.

The state sales tax rate is slated to decrease by .60 percent next year. If this decrease is not changed by the Kansas Legislature, the net increase of the sales tax in Norton would be .15 percent or 15 cents on a \$100 purchase.

For more information about the design of the proposed swimming pool, visit www.nortonpool.com.

A PROPOSITION to amend section 1 of article 11 of the constitution of the state of Kansas, relating to classification and taxation of watercraft, to be submitted to the electors of the state at the general election to be held on November 6, 2012.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 5017

§ 1. System of taxation; classification; exemption. (a) The provisions of this subsection shall govern the assessment and taxation of property on and after January 1, 2013, and each year thereafter. Except as otherwise hereinafter specifically provided, the legislature shall provide for a uniform and equal basis of valuation and rate of taxation of all property subject to taxation. The legislature may provide for the classification and the taxation uniformly as to class of recreational vehicles and watercraft, as defined by the legislature, or may exempt such class from property taxation and impose taxes upon another basis in lieu thereof. The provisions of this subsection shall not be applicable to the taxation of motor vehicles, except as otherwise hereinafter specifically provided, mineral products, money, mortgages, notes and other evidence of debt and grain. Property shall be classified into the following classes for the purpose of assessment and assessed at the percentage of value prescribed therefor:

Class 1 shall consist of real property. Real property shall be further classified into seven subclasses. Such property shall be defined by law for the purpose of subclassification and assessed uniformly as to subclass at the following percentages of value:

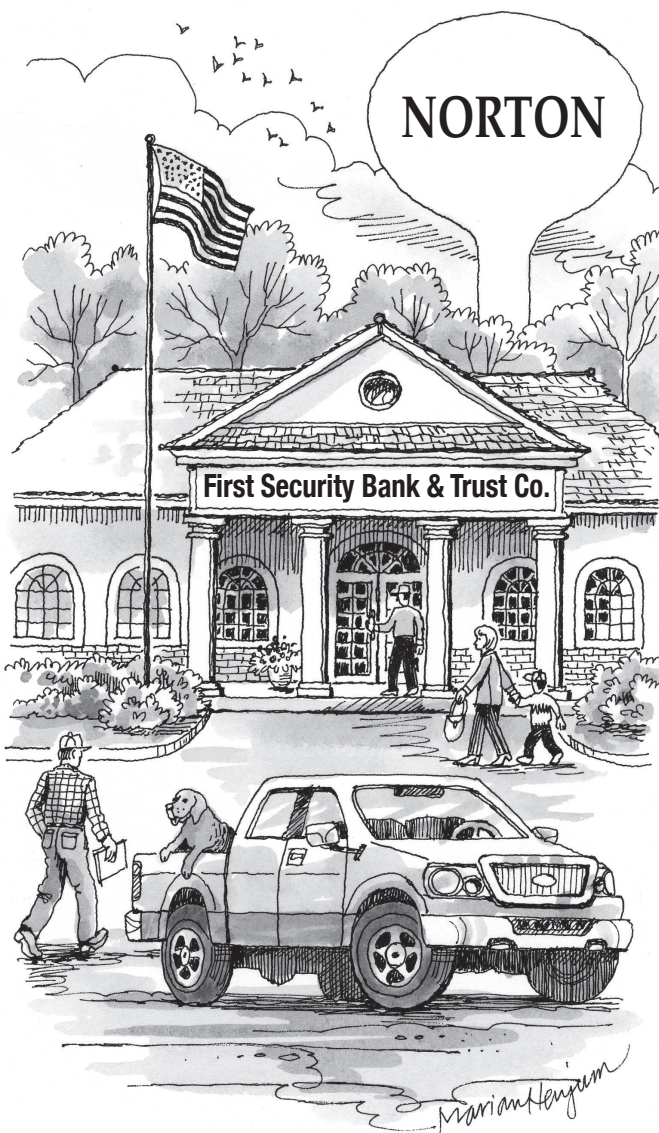
- (1) Real property used for residential purposes including multifamily residential real property and real property necessary to accommodate a residential community of mobile or manufactured homes including the real property upon which such homes are located.....11 1/2%
- (2) Land devoted to agricultural use which shall be valued upon the basis of its agricultural income or agricultural productivity pursuant to section 12 of article 11 of the constitution.....30%
- (3) Vacant lots.....12%
- (4) Real property which is owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization not subject to federal income taxation pursuant to section 501 of the federal internal revenue code, and which is included in this subclass by law.....12%
- (5) Public utility real property, except railroad real property which shall be assessed at the average rate that all other commercial and industrial property is assessed.....33%
- (6) Real property used for commercial and industrial purposes and buildings and other improvements located upon land devoted to agricultural use.....25%
- (7) All other urban and rural real property not otherwise specifically subclassified.....30%

Class 2 shall consist of tangible personal property. Such tangible personal property shall be further classified into six subclasses, shall be defined by law for the purpose of subclassification and assessed uniformly as to subclass at the following percentages of value:

- (1) Mobile homes used for residential purposes.....11 1/2%
- (2) Mineral leasehold interests except oil leasehold interests the average daily production from which is five barrels or less, and natural gas leasehold interests the average daily production from which is 100 mcf or less, which shall be assessed at 25%.....30%
- (3) Public utility tangible personal property including inventories thereof, except railroad personal property including inventories thereof, which shall be assessed at the average rate all other commercial and industrial property is assessed.....33%
- (4) All categories of motor vehicles not defined and specifically valued and taxed pursuant to law enacted prior to January 1, 1985.....30%
- (5) Commercial and industrial machinery and equipment which, if its economic life is seven years or more, shall be valued at its retail cost when new less seven-year straight-line depreciation, or which, if its economic life is less than seven years, shall be valued at its retail cost when new less straight-line depreciation over its economic life, except that, the value so obtained for such property, notwithstanding its economic life and as long as such property is being used, shall not be less than 20% of the retail cost when new of such property.....25%
- (6) All other tangible personal property not otherwise specifically classified.....30%

(b) All property used exclusively for state, county, municipal, literary, educational, scientific, religious, benevolent and charitable purposes, farm machinery and equipment, merchants' and manufacturers' inventories, other than public utility inventories included in subclass (3) of class 2, livestock, and all household goods and personal effects not used for the production of income, shall be exempted from property taxation.

Explanatory statement. This amendment would allow the legislature to classify and tax watercraft upon a basis different from other property. A vote for this proposition would permit the legislature to provide for separate classification and taxation of watercraft or to exempt such property from property taxation and impose taxes in lieu thereof. A vote against this proposition would continue the taxation of watercraft in the same manner as all other property.



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