

## Dredging proposed for an old reservoir

John Redmond Reservoir has become the poster child for the reservoir sedimentation issue in Kansas. Since it was constructed, the reservoir has lost more than 40 percent of its capacity to sedimentation.

### Insight

John Schlageck



Located in Coffey County, John Redmond was built in 1964 to control flooding in the Neosho River Basin. The reservoir also provides water storage for municipal and industrial customers who contract with the state of Kansas.

Susan Metzger, policy and planning director at the Kansas Water Office (KWO) says sedimentation happens in all lakes, but at John Redmond it happens to be filling in quicker than anticipated.

Three years of drought have exacerbated the dwindling water supply in the reservoir. The primary concern remains the loss of storage for the downstream municipalities and industrial customers.

"We need to identify ways to improve storage conditions to meet the customers' needs, especially if this drought were to extend over time," Metzger told nearly 100 people attending a public information meeting in Burlington on Feb. 5.

In an effort to slow down the amount of sedimentation into John Redmond, watershed and stream bank stabilization initiatives have taken place upstream. The Kansas Water Office is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to reallocate a portion of the flood storage to water supply storage.

KWO is also asking for a two-foot permanent pool rise from 1,039 to 1,041 feet that may help meet water users' demands for another 20-30 years. Even with these efforts, KWO understands John Redmond needs additional help to restore water storage capacity and meet water customers' demands.

"We believe our most efficient and most practical alternative is to remove sediment through dredging at John Redmond," Metzger said.

To supply future water demands, KWO projects 600,000 cubic yards of sediment will need to be removed annually. Doing so could create approximately 400-acre feet of water storage per year.

"Estimates project it will cost \$6-15 per cubic yard for removal," Metzger said. "This would amount to \$6-8 million a year to remove sediment."

The cost for the project will be paid for entirely by non-federal funds, she said.

The water office has funds to accomplish the preliminary planning phase, the development of the environmental impact statement and some preliminary design and engineering for disposal facilities.

"We've made the argument for this project," Metzger said. "Now we'll see what these proposals will show us about the realities of this dredging project."

During the public comments, Glenn Fisher, Oswego mayor, expressed the sentiment of most people who live downstream from John Redmond and rely on the reservoir for drinking water and the operation of their municipalities.

"Whatever we need to do, dredging or raising the water level, do it," Fisher said. "I want to emphasize the importance to us, because without the water we aren't going to be able to maintain our communities. To me, this is more important than somebody fishing."

Landowners and farmers expressed their concern that eminent domain will not be used to acquire land for sediment deposit. KWO promised such land will either be acquired through voluntary contribution of the property or through negotiated agreements between the landowner and the state including compensation for temporary use of the property.

"If you own land near the reservoir and are interested in learning more about the possibility of using your property for temporary sediment disposal, please contact KWO," Metzger said.



## Taking pride in our community

A recent letter to the editor troubled me. The writer took offense with Rose Garrison for her account of a tour conducted with a news reporter from Nebraska. Rose observed the need to improve the visual image of our community. Before I go further, I need to state I do not know Ms. Teresa Shearer Poage, but I do know Rose Garrison. Anyone with much knowledge of Norton knows her. She has, if you will, put her money where her mouth is. She has long been active in the community, and even those years she was not physically residing here, her heart remained. She has been a silent, most of the time, voice behind many achievements in Norton.

Sometimes we need to step back and look at our surroundings with new eyes, in this case Rose's eyes. Should we be embarrassed by the mice harboring recliner on the porch or the rusting cars in the yard? The City of Norton has very reliable trash pickup and yet, we

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



all have seen garbage stashed next to a house. These aren't just visual assaults on our neighbors or passersby, they are health hazards. Dangerous situations for children and for pets. Hazards, that if left unaddressed, can become a subject for city and health officials.

We are a visual species. We choose things because they are appealing. They look good or perform well. When someone compliments us on how we look, or saw something we accomplished and take note of it, we feel pride. This pride helps to promote a feeling of well being within each of us and, subsequently, within our

community.

Norton has done much in the last decade to create a more inviting atmosphere. Whether it is the signs as you enter town, a new motel, tearing down of an old building to make a new one, all have helped to create a vision of opportunities and dreams. As individual homeowners however, some of us have fallen short, even though we know a welcoming community attracts others and lifts the spirit of its own residents.

Rather than being offended and taking the observations personally, let's look at our part and see what each of us can do. Our focus should always be a better Norton. One thing is for sure, we have chosen to make Norton our home, and we have or we wouldn't be here, so let's work to make it truly "where the best begins." Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

## The truth about the middle class condition

One of the things that disturbed me during the Presidential campaign was pandering to the "Middle Class". Both parties made much of their suffering.

Since the election President Obama has stated numerous times the best way to prosperity is a strong middle class. That may be, but do we assist them while ignoring the poor?

At times I feel like a socialist. I believe basic human needs should be met.

I have this idea we ought to make certain everyone has the basics: housing; health care; education through grade 12; simple, nutritious food and clothing.

We hear a lot about fairness these days. That would be fair. People get the things; not money. Because some people make poor decisions and do not use money for the purpose it was intended.

Everyone would get the aforementioned things: rich or poor! Anyone wanting more works. If you want TV, you work. If you want a car, you work. Nike shoes, 32 ounce Cokes, lottery tickets? Work! I like to think most would work, that people take pride in making it on their own.

Is there a problem with my idea? Well it's Oscar month on TMC and I just watched Dr. Zhivago. The Russian Revolution didn't work out well, though they didn't include the part

### This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



about extras if you work.

I'm frankly embarrassed every time some politician vows to ride in on a white horse and save the middle class. Do we need saving? Middle class people have comfortable homes and cars and pickups (boy, do we have pickups!). We have a PC, a cell phone, warm coats and STUFF! We take vacations; have the safety net of health insurance and life insurance. We eat out, travel and seek entertainment. We have five televisions and three bathrooms in a house where two people live! Is that fair? What more do we need?

Then I look around and I can't figure out who (no matter what the income is) makes do with less; although we do own property. I mentioned this last week. Do we have the right to ownership? Or should everything be used for good of the collective? Rightly or wrongly, I think this is a discussion we are near to having in this country.

In all our lives, there are good times and bad. We miss that when we merely compare the top and bottom income

earners. Most studies of income fail to trace movement. Do some of the poorest move up? Do some of the richest move down? Of course.

Politicians love taking a snapshot and using it as proof: this is the way things are. It's only the way things were when the picture was taken. Things change.

It is the interesting that the leaders of class warfare tend to be Democrats. A list of the top ten wealthiest U.S. presidents includes only one Republican: Herbert Hoover. Franklin Roosevelt, Kennedy and Clinton all made the list. Obama is not on the list yet but his wealth has increased appreciatively since he became President.

Why don't Democrats, who feel so strongly about income redistribution, set an example and give their money away? Why do we give them a pass on the issue of their personal wealth?

Every time I write a check for groceries I cringe. The middle class will regress if they can't keep pace with inflation, which is supposedly not a problem at all! Where do those analysts shop????

Still I buy groceries, I don't cut back. I'm in no danger of being hungry or living on the street.

If things are bad financially, you don't need a politician to tell you it's bad.

If you are middle class, it is good. No matter what anyone tells you.



Thumbs up to Rose Garrison and Mary Jane Wahlmeier on both their letters. It doesn't cost to have a picked up yard, it just takes a little effort. Emailed in.

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