

Showing support for the other candidate

Dear Editor,
I read the July 11 Norton Telegram thought provoking editorial of support for Governor Brownback's re-election. I would like to give my reasons for supporting the Democrat, Paul Davis.

As I see the race it is between a Republican who wants to move government functions into private hands and a Democrat who believes the state should fund and operate these functions.

One example is KanCare which has moved state care for the disabled and mentally handicapped into private hands. The result has been long waiting lists, failures to pay providers and poorer service.

Americans for Prosperity - one of the Governor's key supporters has long proclaimed their support for private prisons. They believe that prisons can be run cheaper by private enterprise than by the state, and they are right! But cheaper does not mean better and inmates locked up 23 of 24 hours will not return to society ready to begin new lives.

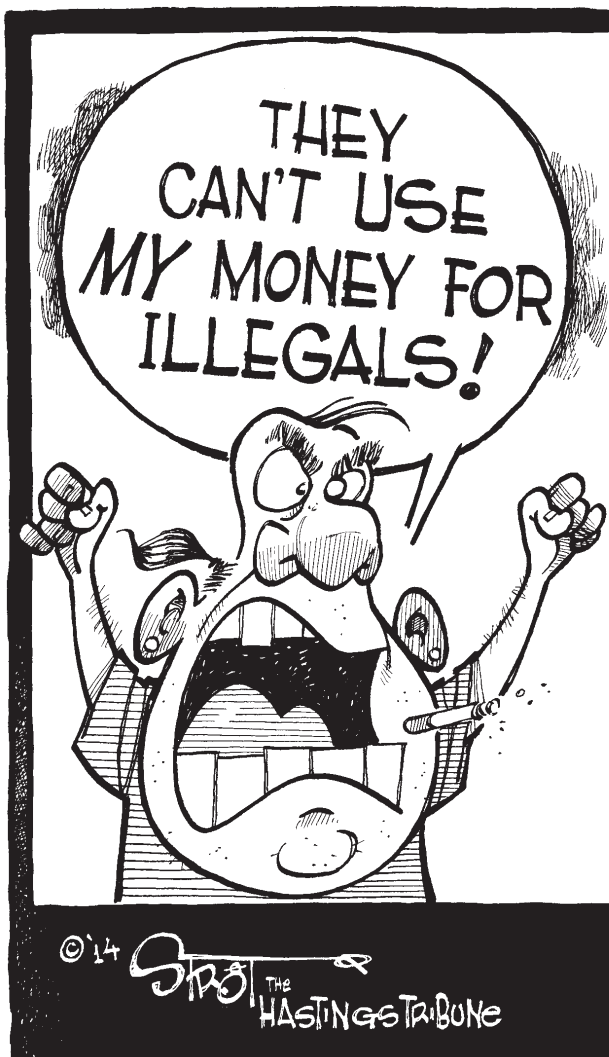
Now that Colo. has sold parts of highway 36 to private enterprise, we see another part of Americans for Prosperity's plan coming into being. If roads can be sold to private enterprise and turned into toll roads, wealthy taxpayers will no longer need to pay for them. Which roads will the Governor auction off to reduce the state tax burden?

The education bill passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor has started the process of privatizing more of our schools. By taking away the protection of due process from our teachers and giving teaching licenses to those untrained in teaching methods, the process of degrading our public schools is underway. By giving tax breaks to corporations that support private schools the process of creating an elite education for elite children of wealthy parents is coming to pass.

Governor Brownback has repeatedly taken credit for improvement in the states finances which resulted from Governor Parkinsons sales tax increase. Does he really expect people to blame Parkinson for the tax increase while he takes credit for the resulting revenues?

Paul Davis will work to restore balance to our states finances. Maybe some of the tax breaks for the wealthy will be canceled? Maybe the shift of tax burdens on to property taxes can be restrained. If elected Paul Davis will certainly face a full plate of problems, but his level headed, common sense approach is what we need.

Bob Strevey



Still learning, it's never too late

Whenever my husband asks, "Do you want to hear the good news?" I carefully consider my answer by wondering what the bad news might be.

This time, there was no bad news.

Jim's cell phone would no longer hold a charge and since his contract had expired, it was time to upgrade his phone. He was pretty excited to tell me his new phone only cost a penny, but I was more excited to hear we would save about \$40 a month on our plan.

It's not a smart phone, but it's still smarter than we are. We don't want to send or receive e-mail or surf the web on our phones. We want to text, talk and take pictures. That's it. His new phone will do all that and as soon as he figures it out, I know he will like it.

Right now, not so much. So, I will apologize for him, in advance. If you get an accidental text or call from him,

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



cut him some slack. He's still learning.

I hope he figures it out soon, because my contract is up in another month or two and I'll need him to coach me, when I get my new phone.

-ob-

I may be following in my mother's footsteps in more ways than one. My fingers are becoming arthritic, but two ibuprofen every morning seem to take the edge off. As she aged, Mom's fingers became bent and gnarled. But she

could type faster (and more accurately) on an old manual typewriter, than I can ever hope to on a computer keyboard. I think the secret is to keep using them.

-ob-

We knew it was too good to last. The unseasonably cool weather last week was like a little slice of heaven on earth. But Sunday when the heat and humidity returned with a vengeance, it was more like, well....you know.

Speaking of....you know....we heard an exceptional sermon Sunday delivered by a young man who is going to make a fine preacher. That was the crux of his message. Life is a battle. Satan on one side trying to swing you over to his domain; Christ on the other, wanting you to choose him. The end result is heaven or well....you know.

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The 'big data' deal, great advance in ag

Some believe "big data" may be the next renaissance in agriculture. Others call it the greatest advance in agriculture since the Green Revolution during the 1940s, '50s and '60s when one of the biggest waves of research and technology spurred the growth of agricultural production around the world. Some compare big data with the bio-tech revolution.

High praise, but still so many questions remain about big data. Pressing questions facing farmers now are who owns this big data?

Who controls it and how will it be used?

And if you don't know what big data is join the crowd, there are countless people who don't know or have multiple and diverse answers.

Not to alarm anyone, but less than a year ago, few people had heard this buzz word that means gathering and analyzing the vast amount of digital information produced by farmers.

Drones flying above farm land recording high resolution images, and field sensors providing immediate information concerning crop conditions including moisture, nutrients, pests, etc., may become commonplace during the big ag-data era.

No matter what beatitudes are bestowed on big data, most believe and hope it will improve farmers' yields and productivity. Some say it will help feed the growing population expected to hit 9 billion in 2050. Agri-business companies are banking on its future.

Successful farmers and ranchers have always kept data. While it may have begun when the first cave man dug a hole in the soil and planted the

Insight

John Schlageck



first seed and progressed to a pocket-sized notebook and pencil, keeping and gathering information has always been beneficial to profitable agriculture.

About the mid-1990s, gathering data rocketed forward as computer technology fueled the concept of precision agriculture. This only intensified with the application and interest driven by the ever-growing data infrastructure. Greater affordability of this technology coupled with more computer processing power has also fanned the usage flames.

Prescriptive planting or relating soil, climate and seed data with a farmer's production records seems to be some of the potential of big data in agriculture. The potential for an increase in grain yields is another potential.

During the last couple years, the Guettermans in Johnson County and Miami counties have used big data equipment provided by John Deere on their family farm. Nick Guetterman believes the more information he has at his disposal, the more likely he is to figure a better way to do things.

What he's most interested in during this initial phase of using these new data collecting tools is to become even more efficient, farm as productively as possible and increase the return on his investment.

"Farmers collect data on almost every pass over the field planting data, tillage data, spraying records and machine performance," Nick says. "We're trying to help use this data in real time - right now to make decisions that potentially make us better, more profitable farmers. Before we always looked at this data and analyzed it after the fact."

But who gets that information, the farmer or the provider? Will they be prescribing what best suits their interests or those of the farmer?

Guetterman believes because he's paid for the equipment, the data should belong to him and not be shared with anyone without his knowledge and permission. He'd also like to know where and what companies collecting big ag data are doing with this information.

The Johnson/Miami County farmer says he's been told the data is not being used individually but in an aggregate format. Guetterman also believes companies selling ag-data services acknowledge farmers' concerns in their policy and marketing statements, but their contracts don't make that explicit. "A farmer makes decisions based on his own experience and expertise, supplemented with his own data," Guetterman says "That's how I produce value as a manager."

Some producers also worry the proliferation of ag data will erode the advantages producers have developed throughout several generations. Farmers like Guetterman also harbor real concerns about data privacy. That's the world today's farmers live in.

Stay tuned.

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Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
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