



Rural Kansans can take care of their problems

What can people in rural Kansas do to preserve our way of life from the depredations to eastern legislators bent on making government efficient, "just like Wal-Mart?"

How can the state encourage better and more efficient government far from Topeka without forcing consolidations that would gut our county-seat towns and leave kids and taxpayers on the road for much of their lives.

The simple answer is, let us take care of our own problem.

In this day of centralized solutions, that may seem odd, but why not?

In the last few years we've seen a movement among small school districts to either close when the time comes or merge with nearby districts to form a stronger unit. Sometimes this just sort of happens; other times, there's a plan and a public vote.

In tiny Greeley County (population 1,534), voters agreed to merge the county with the city of Tribune. They hope government will become more efficient and more affordable.

Closer to home, the Jennings School District just went put of business when its enrollment dropped. In Herndon, voters agreed to merge with the Atwood schools.

Other counties have talked about merging law enforcement and other functions with their dominant city, though not much has happened. One reason is that under Kansas laws, it's difficult to merge government functions.

It takes - really - an act of the Legislature, and that is hard to accomplish, as Sherman County reformers have learned. A few recalcitrant officials can thwart the will of the people and prevent an election on any kind of reform - often for years running.

Basically, legislators don't want to get involved if they sense there's a fight. It's not worth their trouble. And sometimes, public officials seem more concerned about their jobs than what the people want.

So what to do?

One bill advanced this year in Topeka had the right idea: just leave decisions up to local officials and local voters. As it has to some extent with school districts, the state should just step aside and let rural people decide how they should be governed.

The Legislature should let us decide how much we want to pay to keep our schools or to keep the courthouse open. We can look at the figures and decide.

As far as saving money goes, the state should stay out of it. If it's state "aid" money, just let them keep it. Let cities and counties and school districts raise their own. Then it won't be a state problem.

What we have today is a patchwork of government, brought on largely by state aid rules. Many counties share tax assessors, a move brought on by state requirements for high-end training. Others share emergency preparedness directors (a really bad idea, but increasingly popular) and still others extension districts.

While all of these could be seen as preliminary moves toward county consolidation, often the sharing goes several directions for a single county. Same with school districts. There's no plan or pattern.

Rural cities and counties and school districts could accomplish a lot with local plans for consolidation at the local level, avoiding 150-mile-wide megacounties and two-hour bus rides for school kids. But that's only going to happen if the Legislature makes it easy to merge and combine, then steps back (the hard part) and lets it happen.

Put our fate in our own hands, and we can deal with it. And given the chance, we must. It's the only way to avoid forced consolidations on the Wal-Mart model, where if your town is too small for a supercenter, it's too small to live.

- Steve Haynes



News From the Past

15 years ago - 1994

Dr. Melodie Armstrong will be coming to St. Francis. It is planned that she arrive by August 1.

St. Francis Boy Scouts recently cleaned the shooting range at the gun club. Helping were Dale Rose, Mike Dorsch, Matt Blanchard, Derek Fromholtz and Dustin Fromholtz, along with their sponsors, Jett Fromholtz and Bob Dorsch.

Don and Twila Kramer have sold Kramer Furniture to Scott and Nancy Schultz. Don went to work for Madeline Riddell in January 1960. Scott and Nancy Schultz have already taken over the business and will add their carpet and wall-covering business to the furniture merchandise, along with some gift items.

30 years ago - 1979

The Cemetery Board voted to replace old water pipes in part of the cemetery and install new pipes and hydrants.

The Reverend Dale and Mrs Wheeler will be leaving St. Francis and the Assembly of God Church here at the end of April for the pulpit of the Atchison Assembly of God Church

40 years ago - 1969

David Johnson of Bird City won the Cheyenne County Spelling Bee. Laurie Mills of St. Francis placed second. There were 65 students in fourth through eighth grade participating.

The much publicized "credit card revolution" will come to the county soon. The banks of Cheyenne County announced they have joined the Kansas Bank-Americard credit card

program and along with other banks throughout the state will offer them within the next few weeks.

Results of the election show Larry Carmichael, Robert Ailsup, Kenneth Roberson and William Fuller will be on the school board and Elmer Felzien, C.F. Hixon, Milton Lampe, Keith Bracelin and Raymond Raile will be on the city council.

50 years ago -1959

The new St. Francis civil defense siren will be tested Friday and Saturday mornings at 8 o'clock and city superintendent Lou Hinz urges people not to become concerned when they hear the siren at these times.

John Hancock was named president of the newly formed St. Francis Community Council on Tuesday night.

Moments With Mila

Public Health Week

Public Health is Prevention: Public health is the practice of preventing disease and promoting good health within groups of people, from small communities to entire countries.

Public health is Policy Development and Population Health Surveillance: Public health professionals rely on policy and research strategies to understand issues such as infant mortality and chronic disease in particular populations.

Public Health Saves Money and Improves Quality of Life: A healthy public gets sick less frequently and spends less money on health care; this means better economic productivity and an improved quality of life for everyone.

Improving Public Health Helps Children Thrive: Healthy children become healthy adults. Healthy kids attend school more often and perform better overall. Public health professionals strive to ensure that all kids grow up in a healthy environment with adequate resources, including health care.

Public Health Prevention Reduces Human Suffering: Public health prevention not only educates people about the effects of lifestyle choices on their health, it also reduces the impact of disasters by preparing people for the effects of catastrophes such as hurricanes, tornadoes and terrorist attack.

Who Does it?
Public Health as a Profession: Rather than being a single discipline, public health includes professionals from many fields with the common purpose of protecting the health of a population.

• Emergency Responders; Restaurant Inspectors; Health Educators; Public Policymakers; Scientists and Researchers.

• Public Health Physicians, Public Health Nurses; Occupational Health and Safety Professionals; Social workers.

• Sanitarians, Epidemiologists, Nutritionists; Community Planners.

Public Health in Policy and Practice. Examples of It
Vaccination programs for school-age children and adults to prevent the spread of disease. Regulations of prescriptions drugs for safety and effectiveness. Safety standards and practices to protect worker health and safety. Ensuring access to clean

water and air.

• Educational campaigns to reduce obesity among children. Measurement of the effect of air quality on emergency recovery workers. School nutrition programs to ensure kids have access to nutritious food.

Public Health wants to monitor, evaluate, restore, protect and/or improve the health of all persons within the county by providing health and educational services to help promote and maintain healthy lifestyles for community members and their families. This is a lifelong process that Public Health will act as a coordinator of health services for clients.

If you have not had the opportunity to work with Public Health give me a call at 332-2381.

By Mila Bandel



County Health Nurse

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



scmccormick@nwkansan.com

I love the beginning of a new baseball season. Something about the fresh start of another year of the "American pastime" reassures you that, no matter what else is wrong with our nation, we still have baseball!

I have a funny baseball story that is made better by living in an ag area.

Year's ago, during the off season, Yankee great Mickey Mantle and his teammate, Billy Martin, were going hunting. They showed up at a farm where Mantle had hunted before. The farmer said it would be okay but asked the baseball player to do a favor. Could he shoot an old horse for him?

Mantle agreed but thought he

would have a little fun at the volatile Martin's expense. As he walked back to the truck he cursed and grabbed his shotgun.

"That *!#!* farmer said we can't hunt his land," Mantle said, "I'll show him!"

So he walks up to the old horse and shoots.

However, to his surprise, Mar-

tin jumps out of the vehicle and begins running all over the farmyard shooting all the animals in sight.

There is something you got to love about ballplayers and their humor.

Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: George Baxter, Wheat Ridge, Colo.; St. Francis High School Library, St. Francis; Yost Farm Supply, St. Francis; Western State Bank, St. Francis; Keith Zweygardt, St. Francis; Laurie Wallace, Columbia, Mo.; Delores

Wiley, St. Francis; Gale Walz, St. Francis; Stanley Lamb, St. Francis; Beulah Stull, St. Francis; Roger Moore, St. Francis; Eddie Dankenbring, Logan; Deloy Rogers, St. Francis; Betty Meads, Indianapolis, Ind.

GOD SAYS

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Proverbs 18:14

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Praise the Lord

Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 11 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

First Baptist Church
2nd & Scott • 332-3921
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,
Wed. AWANA Club, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

United Methodist Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
512 S. Scott
Pastor Morita Truman
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.

St. Francis Community Church
332-3150
204 N. Quincy Street
www.sfccfamily.com
Pastor: David Butler
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Communion -
Every 2nd Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor Jerry Nowack
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

Solid Rock Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Ken Hart
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Eve. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Communion 1st Sunday of the month

First Christian Church
Pastor Jeff Landers
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster
Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m.
Church Service 10:15 a.m.

St. Francis Equity

St. Francis Herald

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