



Proposals float to solve our revenue problems

Many proposals have been floated on how to solve the state of Kansas's "revenue problem", some worth listening to.

First we should understand, the state has a revenue problem not because previous legislatures gave away the farm, as some say, though there is an element of truth to that.

No, Kansas is broke because we are broke. Kansas is hurting because we are hurting.

Income tax collections are down because people are out of work, others are not making as much as they once were and businesses are suffering in this, the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Sales tax collections suffer because we are not buying as much.

If there's no money out there to tax, the state will be poor. In fact, Kansas was doing fine despite the tax breaks passed over the last 10 years — as long as the economy was growing.

The state had so much money, it could — and did — spend more and more every year, with expenses growing far faster than the rate of inflation.

Over the years, the state eliminated sales taxes on farm machinery and manufacturing machinery. It gave breaks to the elderly and the poor. It spent even more on higher and higher school spending and more social programs, because the dough kept rolling in.

When the economy went south, of course, this all had to stop.

Then came the cry to eliminate all the "loopholes" in the tax structure. You know, the other guy's tax breaks.

For when it comes to tax policy, everybody benefits from some part of it. And no one wants to lose their personal tax break. That represents "sound fiscal policy."

That's why when the Legislature decided to try

closing some tax breaks, it started with one we all get: the exemption on home utility bills.

The idea apparently was that special interests, such as farmers and business groups, have more pull than everybody. So much for that idea.

There is something wrong with the state's tax system, however, when you realize that, according to a 2006 study, only 7 percent of Kansas property and 24 percent of Kansas sales actually are taxed.

Ed Flentje, a professor of political science at Wichita State University, proposed a "tax-break commission" similar to the base closing commissions which review military installations for closure. It would comb the state's tax structure and propose changes.

His colleague in the "Insight Kansas" column, Fort Hays State professor Chapman Rackaway, went him one further: he proposed just eliminating tax breaks and instituting a "flat tax" for the sales tax. Doing so, he estimated, would mean the rate could be reduced from 5.3 percent today to just 1.9 percent.

Applying the sales tax to services, which today are not taxed, would more than close the state's "revenue gap" expected next year.

Who could complain? Rackaway said free-market believers should be happy to see the state get out of the business of deciding which activities to favor. Everyone should benefit from the simplicity.

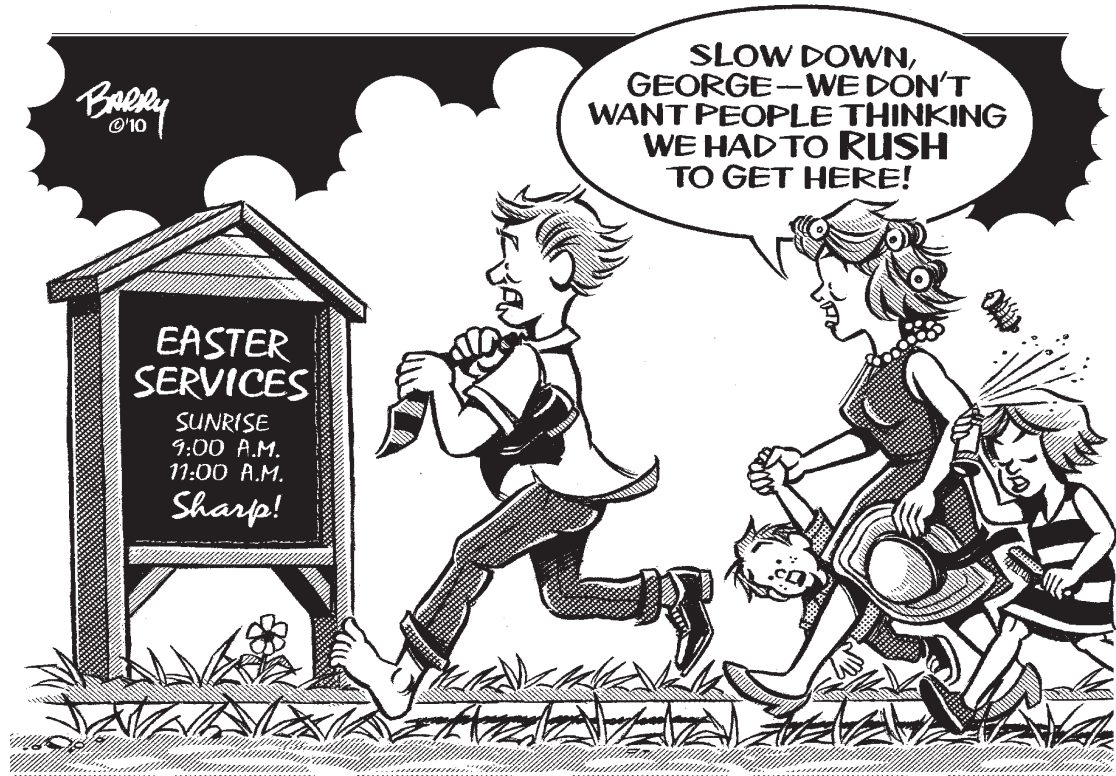
Of course, the same logic could apply to the income and property taxes. Just tax everyone and everything a little.

Even Girl Scout cookies, churches and hospitals, rich and poor, corporations and small businesses.

The idea has merit. Rates would be low and fair. Only accountants and tax lawyers would be out anything, and they'd find ways to make money.

Too good to be true? Probably.

—Steve Haynes



Reader shares another view

—Letters to the Editor—

To the Editor:

Amendment 1 of the US Constitution gives all of us the right to express openly our opinions and views on the state of our Union and other topical subjects that affect our daily lives...

In that vein, I would like to offer another view of a previous readers opinion that the current Obama administration has launched a diabolical plan to enslave us all. Truth be told, this is the most radical and preposterous notion I have ever heard and it signals, sadly, the disintegration of our civil and public discourse on matters that affect each of us...

To begin with, your readers should understand and realize that the Glenn Becks, Hannitys and Russ Limbaughs of the world are highly paid entertainers...Even with a superficial fact check of some of their wild predictions are baseless in fact.

How anyone makes the gigantic leap from freedom to serfdom because some radical idiot on the left got tarp money to expand his free speech and freedom of expression doesn't create a diabolical plan to enslave the rest of us...

Everyone in this country is entitled to their free expression and opinions...they are not however, entitled to their own revisionist set of facts...and that includes Glenn Beck.

Just as a gentle reminder, where was the outrage about our fiscal mess when the Bush/Cheney administration added more than 3 Trillion Dollars to our current deficit for tax cuts for the wealthy, a prescription drug plan that was never paid for before the Obama administration even took office...where was the outrage when the Bush/Cheney administration lied to us about a war of choice in Iraq that has cost us more than 4,000 lives and Trillions of dollars that has never been paid for Bush's choice to go to war. Where was the outrage when thoughtful opposition to his lawbreaking and war mak-

ing was labeled "unpatriotic"...that folks was smear, destroy and run out of town tactics of the first magnitude. The fact is both democratic and republican administrations use every tactic at their disposal to pass legislation because out political process is not effectively working for the american people.

Another quick fact check...Acom no longer exists...sorry folks. I was raised in a education household with a teacher mom who spent more than 35 years in the Cheyenne County school system...To her knowledge and to the best of my knowledge...the local curriculum and the text books they choose for elementary, junior and high school are made by the local administration and School Board with some advisory suggestions coming from the Kansas Board of Education. The federal government has little or no

effect on our local textbooks...but just in case, you might give Rob Schiltz a call or a school board member to see how many socialist/communist books are in our current curriculum. Finally, folks a friendly suggestion to all my many friends on the republican side of politics...take a deep breath, calm down, you lost the last election...the sky is not falling and come November you can again use the ballot box to effect the change you think we need...In the meantime, what is going on is full fledged democracy...more progressive than you may like but least this administration is getting a few long overdue things done for the american people.

Thanks for listening.
Ron Ewing
St. Francis
A proud Progressive

Failed 'American Israeli/Palestinian foreign policy

Letter to the Editor:

After many years of failures in the above referenced U.S. foreign policy since the Oslo accords, it seems that the "Washington dolts and whippersnappers" never learn from their failures! Recently, Obama's lackeys (Biden, Clinton, Mitchell) added to the failures.

Subsequently, Obama goofed by treating the Israeli prime minister in a shoddy manner.

Who could blame Mr. Netanyahu if he declared Obama and his lackeys as "personas non grata" in Israel???

Terry Rueb
St. Francis

Hangin' With Marge

Wal-Mart Parking

By Margaret Bucholtz



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If you have ever owned a camper someone will give you this advice "Save some money and park in a Walmart parking lot."

The first time Keri, my daughter, told me this I was shocked. However, I had seen many trucks and campers there. She told me that Walmart loves it as you always go in and buy something and with people in the parking lot, in the middle of the night, it was safer for the workers at the store.

Last summer when we went to Lake Wilson as a group, three of us spent the night in a Walmart parking lot and it was fine.

A couple of weeks ago, Kurt and I had an appointment in Dodge City to have the camper worked on. I told him that we could just sleep in the camper the night before as we had to be there by 9 a.m.

We headed out and of course

neither of us had any idea how long it would take us to get there but as we traveled along we decided we could make it all the way. We got there about 9:30 at night and started looking for a Walmart. We pulled in and went to the store and bought us some made-up sub sandwiches, cole slaw and bottled water. Then we got out all the blankets and got ready for bed.

For some reason Kurt was a little nervous about being the only people sleeping in the parking lot. Before long he looked out the window and you could just see the relaxed look on his face as he saw two trucks and another camper. He could finally go to bed.

Kurt was already sick with a cold and he went through a box of Kleenex on the way down. I was feeling fine. About one in the morning I woke up with this acid reflex thing and I couldn't get my breath. I did everything I could! I

looked for baking soda (not really good for you, but it will clear up the acid) but there was none in the camper. I spent about 15 minutes choking, gagging and burning and finally Kurt got up and said, "What is wrong?" I tried to talk but all I could get out was, "Can't breathe." To which he said, "Oh honey, are you getting my cold?"

I managed the words "baking soda" so he slowly started looking for some. Meanwhile I was seeing my entire life going through my mind. Finally I pointed to Walmart and, bless his heart, he put on his clothes and went out in the wind and cold mist to buy me a box of baking soda.

It worked! I will tell you it will be awhile before I eat Skittles candy for four hours on the road trip and then top it off with cole slaw and a sandwich and then just jump into bed!

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



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Last Friday I took our youngest son to the Cheyenne County Wildlife Banquet. This has become a tradition ever since we moved here.

I've seen him grow along with the organization.

Used to be he wouldn't eat much of the big slab of steak that is served and he came home with something off the kids table. This year he ate almost as good as Dad. He even experienced the old Au jus on the table cloth when his plastic knife cut through his styrofoam plate.

Joe didn't walk away with any-

thing from the children's table, but that's okay with him. With age his tastes have gravitated to the fire arms and real hunter's gear.

Over the years he has spent more and more time enjoying the outdoors. He is always ready to go fishing with a pal. When his older brothers are home, he loves to go hunting with the guys he looks up to. Joe couldn't wait to get his Hunter's Safety certification.

I owe a debt of gratitude to this local organization. They have helped to instill an attraction and respect for the abundant wildlife that surrounds us here.

And don't be mistaken, hunters

care as much as anyone in preserving these gifts for years to come.

By seeing the large showing of youth at this year's banquet, it warmed my heart to know that another generation will develop this love also.

On a side note, Lezlie and I enjoyed the beautiful Spring weather on Sunday to visit the River Walk outside of Sainty. We were treated to several bright-red Cardinals who played in the branches above us. It's getting to be a great time to get out!

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