



## Legislators to return to capitol

Letter to the Editor:

Citizens of Cheyenne County: As our state representatives are soon to return to the capitol halls from their spring recess, please keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

On their return, they have the unenviable task of balancing over a \$476 million shortfall while addressing the 2011 budget. They are waiting on economic data and revenue projections from our state's economy gurus.

I know Cheyenne County's sales tax dropped from \$22,000 in December, 2008 to \$17,000 in December, 2009, a trend that has been mirrored by the majority of state and county sales tax revenue in the nation. In my opinion, an annual governmental budget at any level indicates the priorities for that coming year.

Quite simply, state legislators need to put their money where their mouth is; don't promise money that the counties will budget for then take it away leaving them high and dry.

The rhetoric for this economic debate has already begun. Our 120 representatives and 40 senators have demonstrated their current allegiance.

They have swept funds in 2009. A sweep is a financial procedure where revenues collected for a specific purpose are transferred to the general funds to cover immediate expenses.

They propose additional sweeps this year. The funds for the replacement of the state motor vehicle (VIPS) program was swept once for the ORION appraisal software and is now being considered to be swept once again, to help balance the budget.

Does that mean counties have to pay for it three times over before they get what was promised the first time? Portions of the department of transportation funds have been swept and highway gasoline

### —Letters to the Editor—

taxes were swept. Medicaid was under funded by 10 percent and the list continues.

Now the state legislators are telling us they don't want us to use E911 taxes to replace radios for rural EMS, fire, law enforcement or hospitals. To those who travel county dirt roads daily, imagine those roads if 25 percent of the budget to maintain them is taken away to balance the state budget.

The state budget year begins June 1 and the county's Jan. 1. It's difficult to manage operations when revenue promised in June is taken away by January.

State leaders say it's time for local governments to step up to the plate. Local school, hospital and nursing home administrators have informed county residents how severe state funding cuts have already affected or will affect their operations in the future.

We have been told to find new local businesses to enhance our revenue. Don't they think most rural American towns are not trying to do that already?

They tell us to spend our reserves. It's taken local government entities many years to save for a rainy day and they want us to spend these funds for just one year of operation expenses!

Better yet, if we want to maintain local programs we fund them with local taxes. The majority of western Kansas cities and counties are just trying to survive. It takes a specific number of individuals to keep every service sustainable.

Today in western Kansas, the adage "every person makes a difference" is so true. To lose a teacher, nurse, long-term health-care worker or county employee equates to the possibility of losing a whole family, sometimes a family never to be replaced.

This affects not only our main street businesses, but the schools, hospitals, etc. Don't the eastern Kansas legislators comprehend our plight?

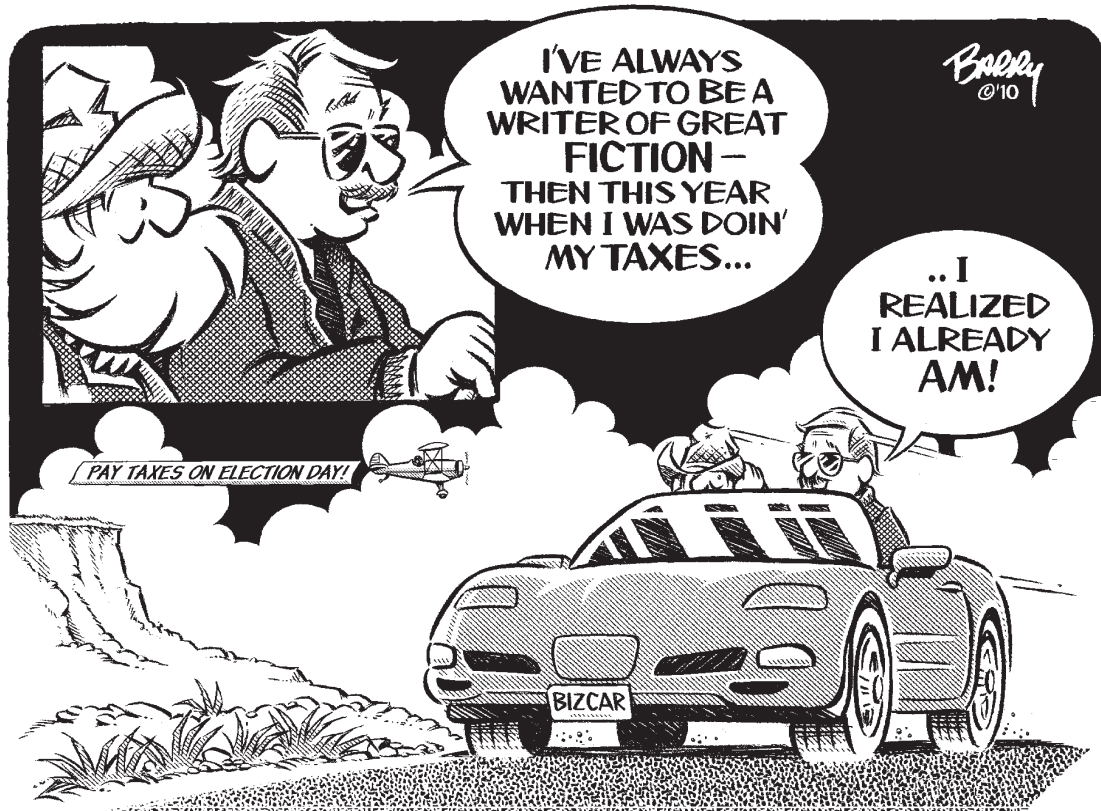
Agriculture is the leading industry in Kansas. Not only do we in western Kansas produce commodities for consumption by our urban neighbors and export to the world, but we also produce well educated children, who have moral and ethical values, with college and vocational degrees. These children leave their home towns seldom to return because of the lack of local employment opportunities.

Many of these fine young individuals will become productive taxpayers in some urban center. I can only theorize that our eastern Kansas legislators assume someone will always be out here to mind the store. But, if rural America keeps shrinking, who will be left for that duty?

Our founding fathers established a government for the people, by the people. I've been told by many state and federal representatives that "you just don't really know how it works here." I know one thing for sure, we the people elect our government servants to represent our desires and wishes, not for them tell us what the federal, state or local governments will do, because we are too ignorant or don't understand how the system works.

I urge you to contact Rep. John Faber and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer to tell them how you feel about what is going on. Not just right now, but in the future. Be proactive in your concerns, make suggestions. Adjustments in the 2011 and future budgets will affect every one of us.

Dale Patton  
St. Francis



## News From the Past

### 25 years ago - 1985

A train accident occurred on Jan. 10 north of St. Francis. A two-engine Burlington Northern freight train pulling three freight cars plowed into a chain of 17 loaded grain cars sitting east of Bartlett Company and Grain. The two engines were considered a total loss.

Martin Hilt, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Hilt, St. Francis, was honored with the rank of Eagle Scout by the Boy Scouts of America. He received his rank during an Eagle Scout Court of Honor held at the Peace Lutheran Church in St. Francis. Hilt began scouting in Cub Scout Pack 120 in September 1973.

The Quickie Chickie is officially closed as of Dec. 31. Greg Walz is the new owner

of Walz Welding. He purchased the business from Elmer Walz, who had owned and operated the business for 35 years. Greg has worked at the business for the last 10 years.

Shawna Stevens is the new Honored Queen of Bethel 52 of Job's Daughters. Sherri Brace-Lin is Senior Princess and Kari Milliken is Junior Princess.

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



[smccormick@nwkansas.com](mailto:smccormick@nwkansas.com)  
This week I celebrated my first 50 years spent roaming and stopping on this earth. The occasion was shared with my twin-brother in Colorado.

The funny thing is that I sure didn't feel that old. I actually felt more like a boy doing what I loved back in my youth.

Growing up, our next-door neighbor would take his sons, me and my brothers to Denver Bear's baseball games.

Last Saturday I went to Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Mo.

with my wife, our oldest son and his fiancée.

As a boy, my neighbor talked about his favorite team, the Boston Red Sox, and with time, they became the squad I related to.

Sure enough, the club that came to play the Royals was none other than the Red Sox!

Watching David "Big Papi" Ortiz, Kevin Youkilis, Dustin Pedroia and Josh Beckett was too good to be true. Behind the plate was Jason Varitek, who highlighted the evening with two home runs.

You know the old saying, "You're

only as old as you feel?" Well, I was a 12-year-old all over again that night. I sat there grinning and took in the unique sights and sounds of a major league ball park.

But the kids brought me back to reality when the scoreboard flashed "Happy 50th Birthday Casey McCormick."

It was a special evening and spending it with 37,501 other baseball fans, and three loved ones, made it that much better.

## Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz



[margeb@cityofstfrancis.net](mailto:margeb@cityofstfrancis.net)  
A few years ago, Kurt and I gathered some brick and built a patio. It was great and I loved it, however I wanted it bigger so we could put our picnic table and grill on it. We gathered more bricks and then I waited.

Kurt told me we would get it built that fall. Now Kurt and I have been married for almost 25 years and, in that time, I knew that "this fall" means "some fall." I also know that just because I can

lay the bricks I can't do all the prep work, so I have to wait for him.

By the end of the summer last year I told him I had changed my mind and I didn't want to enlarge the patio. The logic worked and we spent the last two weekends building my new patio. Yesterday we got the last bit of sand on it and today I can sweep it off. (If the weather man is right, it will just blow off with those 50 mile an hour winds.)

Late in the afternoon I got out my rocking chair and went to put it in place. Of course the patio is in the sun, so I moved the chair into my flowers and sat down. When Kurt came over I told him I was thinking about putting in a small patio over in the shade. He took one look at me, turned around and on his way off he said, "Plant a tree, it will be faster."

I think that must be a "No."

## Farm Bureau serves community

Dear Editor:

In recent weeks there has been interest expressed in Farm Bureau and its ability to have influence on governmental policy. Because of local current financial situations many people wonder what Farm Bureau as an entity can do. Established in 1918, we are a non-profit advocacy organization that supports farm families who earn their living in a changing industry.

Farm Bureau represents grass-roots agriculture. One example is the PL480 program. The Food for Peace program was developed originally by the Cheyenne County Board in the 1950s. This major

cornerstone of foreign agricultural trade expansion is an example of an idea that originated at the county level and still has a national impact today.

Our mission is to serve Farm Bureau members in Kansas through programs, products and services which enhance the business and profession of farming, increase members' net income, and improve the quality of life in rural Kansas.

During these tough economic times, Farm Bureau members are working to find solutions to tough local, state and national issues. These issues affect not just our farmers, but our entire community. Farm Bureau conducts meetings throughout the year to learn of local concerns, and brings them to the attention of the state resolutions committee which in turn is conveyed to our state and national leaders.

If it impacts farmers, ranchers or rural Kansas communities, Farm

Bureau is involved with it. This effort takes many forms - policy and political advocacy in Washington, Topeka and in conjunction with county commissions, city councils and school boards. Farm Bureau also stands up for its members through leadership development, agriculture education, legal defense work, environmental advocacy, farm safety, risk management, rural development and international trade.

We would like to invite you to join Cheyenne County Farm Bureau in our efforts to improve the local community. You don't need to be a farmer or a rancher to receive the benefits of being a Farm Bureau member. Please contact any Farm Bureau board member or Alisa Rath, County Coordinator at 332-3312.

Sincerely,  
Dan Sowers, President  
Bird City

### —Honor Roll—

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**GOD SAYS**  
A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. Ecclesiastes 7:1

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*Laise the Lord*

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