

Residents question ask where sales tax is going

The recent announcement of the increase of sales tax brought some questions from a few Cheyenne County residents who had thought the tax increase was for the hospital. No, the sales tax was increased all over the state of Kansas.

In 1996, the people voted to add 1 percent sales tax to help keep the hospital doors open and that tax is still being collected although, the board is looking forward to the day when that tax is removed.

When the hospital bond issue was okayed by the voters in April 2002, the hospital board and administrator were unsure when the county commissioners would sell the bonds and when the taxes

would be raised to cover the payments of bonds and interest. However, with low interest rates and on the advice of several knowledgeable people, the commissioners will levy the hospital bond taxes on the next tax statement and the residents of the county will begin paying off the bonds for the next five years.

Sometimes it seems like the people are being taxes to death but, as the old saying goes, two things people can depend on — you have to die and pay taxes. And paying taxes for things that we can see and use such as keeping a good hospital in the county seem to be worth the expense.

—By Karen Krien

Water usage is small issue

Letter to the Editor

To the editor,

It's a sign that summer has arrived when articles about water usage start to make the headlines. I'd like to try to give the issue some perspective. (My thanks to the City of St. Francis and the Northwest Kansas Ground Water Management offices for their assistance.)

In Cheyenne County, there are more than 455 wells, and those wells will pump perhaps 30 billion gallons of water this year. Nearly all of this water is for irrigated crops. I support this usage: it is of great economic benefit to our county, and it benefits the nation as a whole.

The cities of St. Francis and Bird City, by comparison, will pump only 200 million gallons, or less than 1 percent of the total water pumped in Cheyenne County. Let's be generous and assume that half of domestic usage is for yard watering, and that lawn sprinkler systems allow as much as 5 percent of the total water pumped to escape into the city streets.

Crunching all of these numbers, we find that of all the water pumped annually in Cheyenne county, 99.98 percent does not run down the street. Another way of saying this is that for every 31 gallons pumped, one ounce runs down the gutter. More importantly, the other 30 gallons and 127 ounces are used to grow food, wash

cars and people, cook food, and make our yards and gardens more productive and beautiful.

My conclusions? There are several: • It makes little sense to talk about the tiny amount of water that runs down the gutter. To focus on this minute fraction is to miss the forest for the trees. It's easily visible, but it is statistically irrelevant.

• Even if we were to severely limit domestic usage - cutting it by a draconian 50 percent - the total amount of water pumped from the aquifer under Cheyenne County would only be reduced a negligible amount: about 0.3 percent (three tenths of one percent.)

• When discussing water usage, it's important to remember what they taught you in third grade: water is neither created nor destroyed. Humans move it with pumps and pipes, and nature moves it with gravity, evaporation, and wind currents. Aquifers are depleted and recharged: rivers wax and wane; climates vary from decade to decade and century to century. That 30 billion gallons of water that we pump sounds like a tremendous amount of water but a general rain of 1.6 inches over the entire county would replace it all in one day.

• Finally, never forget that we live in a semi-desert. It's a great place to live, but

we simply have to pump water from the aquifer, or else we will have a greatly reduced quality of life, both economically and esthetically. Those people who live in Topeka - where the natural precipitation rate is much greater - are able to pump less water per capita through their city water systems than do we. But it is important to note that they don't necessarily use less water - unless you consider rainfall "unused" when it falls onto your lawn - they simply pump less through their water meters. This is an important distinction which they conveniently ignore.

Indeed, it can be argued that merely measuring metered water is an unfair comparison. Since we don't ask those Topekans to limit their use of rainfall, why should they tell us to limit our use of the aquifer? They live in an area where the water is above them, in the clouds, and we live where the water is below us, in the aquifer.

Whether you agree or disagree with me, I hope that you will continue to stay informed and involved with water management issues: water is the lifeblood of western Kansas.

Robert Grace
St. Francis

Out-in-country people offended

To the editor:

For many of us, "out in the country" is a special place to live. It appears however that there are others who have a different opinion of "country": Those who think it's a place to dump their trash. Those who think it's where you abandon unwanted pets...and those who think it's where you go to test your driving skills

Landfill is appreciated

To the editor,

It is so nice to be able to take our yard waste, eg: weeds, lawn clippings, small branches, to the dump during off-hours.

All one has to do is back your pickup up against the truck that's parked at the dump gate for this purpose. This enables one to throw their waste to the front of the truck bed, therefore, leaving room for others to do the same.

Let's all be considerate of other "dumpers", and the dump site staff, so we can continue to have this convenience.

Joy Anderegg
Bird City

after belting down a few cold ones.

To the person(s) who dumped your trash...nevermind, it was picked up and properly disposed of. To those who abandoned the two young female dogs...we found nice homes for both of them, after they showed up at our farm hot, thirsty and hungry on a 100-plus degree day. And, to you who wiped out our mailbox and post late last Friday night...I'm sure that in your condition, the road must have seemed about 4 feet wide. However, I'm sure that by now you've discovered that

the case of Bud Lite (you dumped the empty box up the road) was pretty expensive considering the damage done to your pickup. I've cleaned up the debris...your mirror, broken window glass etc, you left strewn down the road. And, I've replaced the mailbox and post.

As I said, living in the country is pretty special. It's just too bad that we have to deal with the inconsiderate, rude and destructive few.

Gary Neilan
St. Francis



GOD SAYS
For the scripture saith,
Whosoever believeth on him
shall not be ashamed.
Romans 10:11

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Reader defines speechless

Letter to the editor:

I don't know why the city council would be or even "appear to be speechless" over the possibility of a Driving Under the Influence or a "DUI" check point at the corner of US 36 and College Street the night of the fair demolition derby. Speechless is when a police officer and your minister arrive at your door in the middle of the night and tell you that your daughter has been killed in an accident caused by a person who was Driving Under the Influence. What about the many that have been killed in Cheyenne County, and the thousands that have been killed across our nation? Their voices have been silenced and they shall be speechless forever.

As for the check point having to be published in the newspapers two weeks prior to the planned check, fine. There aren't too many people who will not hear about the planned check, either by reading about it in the paper, or hearing about it by word of mouth. As for the possibility of those who don't hear or read about it, should it matter? Drinking and driving under the influence is against the law.

I'm not sure how Mr. Jensen's state-

Letters to the Editor

ment of the city police department's status from being a "speed trap" relates to a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) checkpoint, and how it will reflect on the police department. I feel that having a checkpoint will reflect on the police department in a positive way. Perhaps we feel bad that the city police department didn't think of doing the checkpoint first with the help of the Kansas Highway Patrol.

I was not aware that the majority of the people who attend the fair or the demolition derby was or is based on the beverages that are allowed or not allowed to be consumed. Why would the attendance drop by the lack of drinking? Is the sole purpose of the fair to consume liquor and have a good time at the expense of others, or to go out and enjoy the 4-H displays and livestock, commercial booths, visiting with friends that come home for the fair, and of course the rides.

Perhaps we should check into the statement which states that Trooper Rieger may not be replaced once he is

transferred from St. Francis. It is probably true that Saturday night would not be an accurate count of tickets issued. Fair is fair though. Why not set up random checkpoints at any time throughout the year?

I feel that we should be doing our utmost to prevent this kind of a tragedy from happening to anyone else. Perhaps a checkpoint would prevent one accident from happening. I sure wish there had been something done far sooner than this. You have my full support. This letter is written in memory of Heather Marie Draper, who was killed by a person who was over the legal limits of intoxication on May 25, 1996.



Heather Draper

Stella Draper
St. Francis

Voter looks at pros and cons

To the editor,

For several months, I have followed the news coverage of the two main Republican candidates for attorney general, Phill Kline and David Adkins. Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to hear them both speak about why they want to serve in that post.

While Mr. Adkins appears to be a well-rehearsed politician, I have repeatedly noticed that his message is void of any substance or documentation. The largest part of his presentation is filled with sly remarks about Mr. Kline or innuendoes as to Mr. Kline's ability to serve as attorney general.

Mr. Kline, however, seems to speak with sincerity and great passion. His

message is packed full of examples of how our criminal justice system is failing to protect the residents of Kansas and what he, as our next attorney general, can do about it.

One thing that I noticed is that Mr. Kline carries background research with him everywhere he goes. On the occasion I heard him speak, he invited the audience to examine the documents he brought as proof that his claims were factual and accurate. Knowing his reputation as a man of honesty and integrity, I don't think that anyone took him up on his offer. But he wouldn't have offered it if weren't true.

In fact, when Mr. Adkins denied ever voting against our nation's Pledge of

Allegiance during a debate, Phill Kline held up, as evidence, the roll call vote showing that Adkins had, in fact, voted against protecting the Pledge of Allegiance.

I, for one, am tired of electing a bunch of pretty faces who lack the honesty, integrity, and conviction required to put their personal needs aside and get the job done regardless of the personal sacrifice. From what I've seen and read, I do not believe that David Adkins is the type of man who is ready to make the personal sacrifices needed to make Kansas a safer place.

Edward Carson
Cheyenne County

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