

A strong healthcare system attracts economic growth

A strong health care system is essential not only for the health and welfare of community residents, but to enhance economic opportunity as well. That was the consensus from a study of the economic impacts of the health care system in Kansas produced by researchers at K-State Research and Extension.

Though the connections between health care services and local economic development are often overlooked, there are at least three important relationships to be recognized. A strong health care system can help attract and maintain business and industry growth, attract and retain retirees, and also create jobs in the local area. This press release focuses on attracting and maintaining business and industry growth. Additional press releases focus on the other economic relationships.

Studies have found that quality of life factors play a dramatic role in business and industry location decisions. Health care services represent some of the most significant quality of life factors for at least three reasons. First, good health and education services are imperative to industrial and business leaders as they select a community for location. Employees and participating management may offer strong resistance if they are asked to move into a community with substandard or inconvenient health services.

Secondly, when a business or industry makes a location decision, it wants to ensure that the local labor force will be productive, and a key productivity factor is good health. Thus, investments in health care services can be expected to yield dividends in the form of increased labor productivity.

The third factor that business and industry consider in location decisions is cost of health care services. A 1990 site selection survey concluded that corporations looked carefully at health care costs, and sites that provided health care services at a low cost sometimes received priority. In fact, 17 percent of the respondents indicated that their companies used health care costs as a tiebreaking factor between comparable sites.

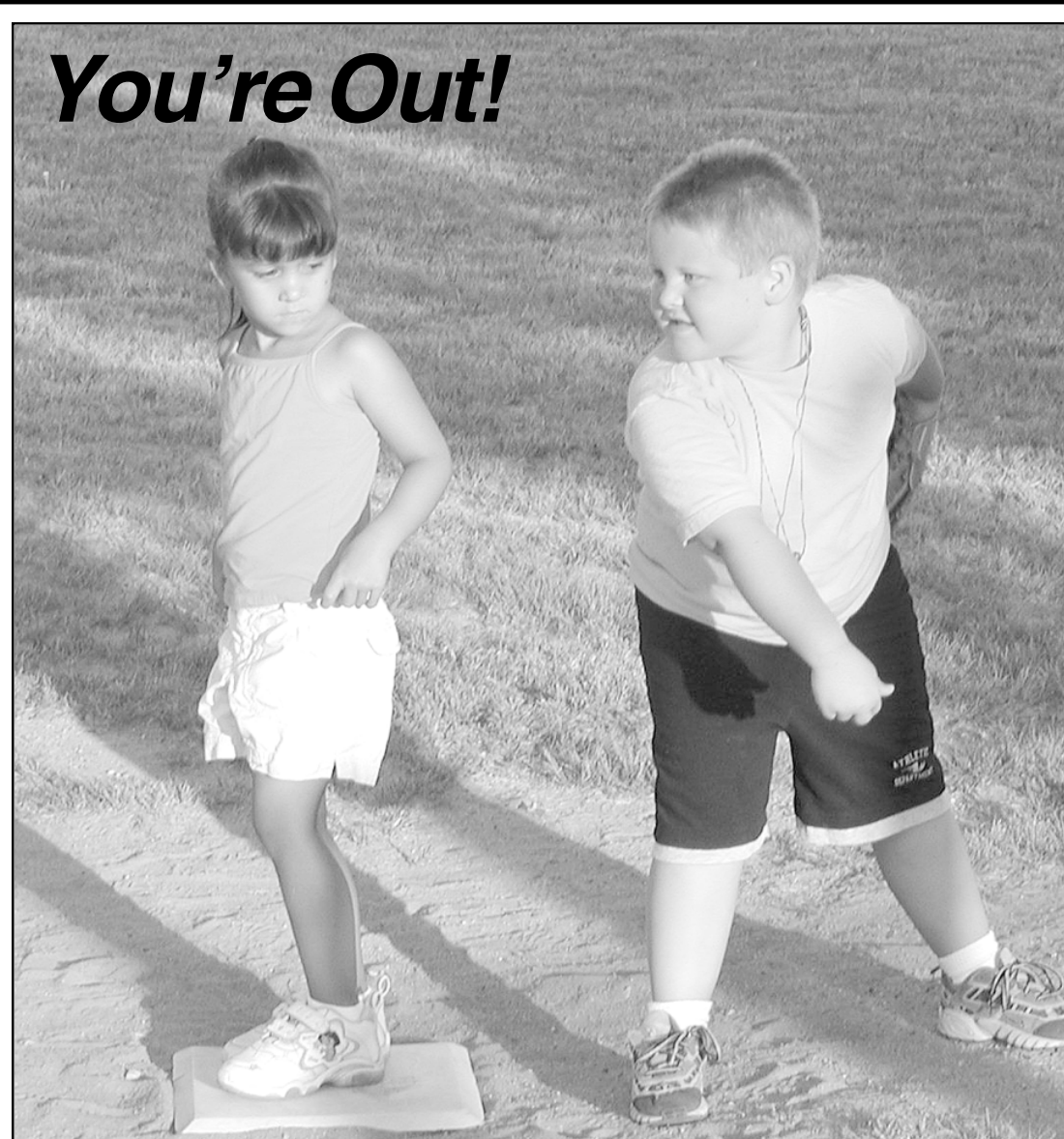
This year, Kansas is ranked No. 1 in Expansion Management magazine's 3rd annual Health Care Cost Quotient rankings. Expansion Management magazine reported how states stack up in terms of health care costs and availability. Expansion Management magazine's health care cost quotient was based on data grouped into five major categories: health care facilities, health care providers, health insurance costs, health care provider costs and malpractice insurance costs.

While industry trends in Kansas are generally positive, significant

challenges remain for many communities. If a community wants to maintain the benefits associated with accessible and affordable health care, it must actively work to meet these challenges. The challenges cannot be met by those directly responsible for health care administration alone. They require a community-wide response involving government, business and civic leaders. It also requires supportive state- and federal-level policies and programs to assist communities that may not have the wherewithal to respond to all of the needs that may exist.

This study was part of a statewide initiative called the Kansas Rural Health Works program sponsored by the Kansas Rural Health Options Project. The initiative also generated a county-by-county-level analysis of the economic impacts and potential of the local health care sector on the economies of each Kansas County. Copies of the full report can be found on the KHA Web site at: <<http://www.kha-net.org/>>www.kha-net.org.

The Kansas Rural Health Options Project is a partnership of the Kansas Hospital Association, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment-Office of Local and Rural Health, the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services and the Kansas Medical Society.



You're Out!
NOT REAL IMPRESSED WITH Taryn Zwegardt's call, Lindsey Johnson is not ready to give up her base yet!
Herald staff photo by Casey McCormick

Agri-tags available at county treasurer's office

By Karen Krien

Up and down Kansas highways, a special tag highlighting Kansas Agriculture can be seen. These tags are available at the Cheyenne County Treasurer's office.

To get one of the tags, people

need to send a \$25 yearly donation to the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. In return, the supporters then present the official certificate and a once-every-five-years specialty charge to the county treasurer in exchange for the

Agri-Tag.

Currently one in five Kansas children, rural and urban, will grow up to be professionally employed in agriculture-related jobs, according to the Kansas State Department of Agriculture.

In 2000, Kansas was the leading producer of wheat, sorghum and beef production. Kansas was also ranked in the top five for many other areas of production.

"It is important to the future of the Kansas economy that students learn about where their food and clothing come from," said Barbara Oplinger, administrator of Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

Kansas Foundation for Agricul-

ture in the Classroom has many programs to reach today's youth concerning agriculture literacy. Among those programs are graduate credit courses for teachers with some scholarships, agriculture resources for teachers, a postcard art contest for children kindergarten through sixth grade and school assemblies.

"As Secretary of Agriculture, I see fewer and fewer people with an agriculture background and a natural understanding of agriculture and what it contributes to our state and world," said Adrian Polansky, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture. "Producers who support the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's efforts to connect



classrooms to agriculture are investing in the future of Kansas agriculture and our children."

Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom depends on public and private funding to provide all their programs to students and teachers throughout Kansas. However, a large fund-raiser for the program is being threatened. The

Agri-Tag license plate program needs 300 more tags on the road by July 2006 or the state of Kansas will discontinue the program.

For more information on Agri-Tag, Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, to become a member or other programs, call toll free 12-866-759-8031 or visit www.ksagclassroom.org.

Interesting facts

- "Dreamt" is the only English word that ends in the letters "mt".
- All 50 states are listed across the top of the Lincoln Memorial on the back of the \$5 bill.
- Almonds are a member of the peach family.
- Winston Churchill was born in a ladies' room during a dance.
- Maine is the only state whose

name is just one syllable.

• There are only four words in the English language which end in "-dous": tremendous, Horrendous, stupendous and hazardous.

• Los Angeles's full name is "El Pueblo de Neustra Senora la Reina de los angeles de Porciuncula" and can be abbreviated to 3.63% of its size: "L.A."

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