



Consolidation in rural Kansas will be coming

A statewide conference last week on local government consolidation drew a lot of interest, and out here in rural Kansas, we should be listening to what was said.

The first thing to mark down is that consolidation is coming, like it or not.

Kansas has more local government employees per taxpayer than most states, and sooner or later, people will get tired of paying them. There's only so much money to go around.

With pressure for consolidation building, though, we have time now to decide what kind of local government we want.

One model would merge Kansas' 105 counties to form "supercounties" with larger populations and a single, presumably less expensive, government.

That could mean joining two or three adjacent counties, but in northwest Kansas, you could easily see a nine-county cluster with a single courthouse and branches in the eight former county seats.

Another model joins city and county governments to provide the same services we have today with a single bureaucracy and governing board.

That's the model used by populous Wyandotte County (157,461 people) and tiny Greeley County (1,503, the state's smallest).

Other counties have consolidated a service or two, including law enforcement under a professional chief in Riley County or under the elected sheriff in Cheyenne County.

Any way you look at it, consolidation is a fight because somebody will lose power, position and influence when counties, cities or agencies merge. Farmers suspect city folk won't pay to grade their roads anymore if cities and counties merge, and employees fear for their jobs.

Many questions need to be answered, many fears are valid, but consolidation is an idea whose time has come.

Today, though, consolidation is next to impossible. Wyandotte and Riley counties had to get special bills passed by the Legislature. Greeley has to follow the same path.

A bill last year to allow government to consolidate without a special law failed. Farm Bureau opposition to a single vote of all county citizens was critical, because most people assume a consolidation measure would never pass that way.

If the summit last week is any indication, the subject will come up again and again until it does pass. Farm Bureau is fighting a rear-guard action here.

We think citizens should have the right to decide how they'll be governed. If that results in a patchwork of different solutions, all the better. If people are happy with a plan, and willing to pay for it, let them.

The question we should ask ourselves is this: how do we want to be governed in this century?

By separate county and city governments with overlapping functions? By megacounties, where it might be an hour's drive to the courthouse to get tags for the car or pay taxes?

Do we want separate three-person sheriff's departments and city police in a lot of little counties, regional law enforcement or joint city-county departments?

We have our ideas. You may have yours. One thing is for certain.

If we don't decide how to do things, someone will decide for us. And that's wrong.

Our centuries-old system of city and county government is changing, and we, the people, ought to decide how we want the new system to work.

— Steve Haynes



Origins of Veterans Day

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This site, on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River and the city of Washington, became the focal point of reverence for America's veterans.

Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each national's highest place of honor (in England, Westminster Abbey; in France, the Arc de Triomphe). These memorial gestures all took place on Nov. 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I fighting at 11 a.m., Nov. 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The day became known as "Armistice Day."

Armistice Day officially received its name in America in 1926 through a Congressional resolution. It became a national holiday 12 years later by similar Congressional action. If the idealistic hope had been realized that World War I was "the War to end all Wars," Nov. 11 might still be called Armistice Day. But only a few years after the holiday was proclaimed, war broke out in Europe. Sixteen and one-half million Americans took part. Four hundred seven thousand of them died in service, more than 292,000 in battle.

dead were brought from overseas and interred in the plaza beside the unknown soldier of World War I. One was killed in World War II, the other in the Korean War. In 1973, a law passed providing interment of an unknown American from the Vietnam War, but none was found for several years. In 1984, an unknown serviceman from that conflict was placed along side the others. To honor these men, symbolic of all Americans who gave their lives in all wars, an Army honor guard, the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), keeps day and night vigil.

A law passed in 1968 changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. It soon became apparent, however, that Nov. 11 was a date of historic significance to many Americans. Therefore, in 1978 Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.

National ceremonies held at Arlington

The focal point for official, national ceremonies for Veterans Day continues to be the memorial amphitheater built around the Tomb of the Unknowns. At 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, a combined color guard representing all military services executes "Present Arms" at the tomb. The nation's tribute to its war dead

is symbolized by the laying of a presidential wreath. The bugler plays "taps." The rest of the ceremony takes place in the amphitheater.

Every year the President of the United States urges All Americans to honor the commitment of the Veterans through appropriate public ceremonies.

— Honor Roll —

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Josh Schultz, Lake-wood, Colo.; Jennifer Fey, Flowery Branch, Ga.; Craig Van Allen, St. Francis; Dale Faylor, St. Francis; Carol Redding, St. Francis; Eloise Holliday, St. Francis; Shirley Straub, Sharon Springs; Jana Wilhelm, Royal, Neb.; Marta Walz, Colorado Springs, Colo.; Elmer Walz, St. Francis; Gerald Bier, St. Francis; Albert Gilliland, Bird City; Roger Brenner, Kirk, Colo.; Cheyenne County Soil Conservation, St. Francis; Donald Reichert, Boulder, Colo.; Elvera Neitzel, Bird City; Bill Wilger, St. Francis; Ted Busse, St. Francis; Bradley Smull, Seattle, Wash.; Fred Isernhagen, Aurora, Colo.; Dulcie Henderson, St. Francis; Martin Hilt, St. Francis; Darrel Weber, Spring Hill, Fla.; Janice Clark, Claremore, Okla.

Hangin' With Marge

Picket Fences

By Margaret Bucholtz



When I worked at the lumberyard, I decided one year that I wanted a scroll saw. Just had to have one! So I bought one, wrapped it up for me, put a tag from Kurt on it and placed it under the Christmas tree. Since we don't get each other gifts I thought I would feel better about it if it came from him, but I have to say it didn't do much to brighten his day.

After Christmas I got him to set it up for me and I started making what was going to be Christmas tree decorations. However, with any craft project, you have to paint them. When I got them all done they looked more like Halloween decorations so I gave up and put the saw away.

Late this summer, I got to thinking about that saw and the old wood I had drug home from the barn that

had fallen down at the place where I grew up. I decided I was going to make a picket fence. Kurt asked me where I was going to put it and I told him I was going to have a big vegetable garden next year and I wanted it to go around the garden.

I got a pattern and I started in. I had enough old barn wood to make 25 pickets and I knew that wasn't going to be enough.

I have to say that Kurt is a lot brighter than I am and when I told him I needed more wood, he got that look on his face — you know the kind that says "Wow, where could she get more wood?"

Then he said, "Margaret, you know that old shed down by the barn that we never use? Maybe that wood would work."

I knew which one he was talking about because, for years, I had kept

telling him we needed to take that down. The next morning, I went out and, by the end of the day, I had all the wood off, ripped and piled in the shop to start making more fences.

Today I finished sawing out the last one and I counted my pickets. Yep, I had 92 of them made so I started putting them up around the building to see if I had enough.

Three saw blades later, a shed torn down, I now could probably build about a 4- by 4-foot fence! The way I look at it, Kurt got me to tear down a building, kept me busy and out of his hair and I'm not even done.

As for the pickets — they are kind of cute, but even though I used the same pattern for each one, I now have 92 pickets and all of them are different.

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



What crazy times lately! Between the ugliness of another election, the holiday rush quickly arriving and John Kerry putting his foot in his mouth about our troops, things have been a little nuts.

How about some good news? Saturday is Veteran's Day. We owe so much to all of them. Especially,

as congressman Kerry said, the "dumb" ones in Iraq.

But Friday is also an important day. The United States Marine Corps will celebrate its 231st birthday. The Corps was born on Nov. 10, 1775.

This week, Marines, along with soldiers, sailors and airmen, had an early party at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

During a cake-cutting ceremony, a tradition took place. The oldest Marine present served a piece of cake to the youngest. This symbolizes the Corps traditions and responsibilities passing from one generation to the next.

At Landstuhl, Chief Warrant Officer 2 William Lawson, 37, gave cake to Pfc. Christina Burnett, 19. Both Marines, who were serving in Iraq, are in Germany for medical treatment.

The deputy commander of U.S.

Marine Corps Forces Europe, Maj. Gen. Andrew Davis, attended the ceremony.

"Whether you are walking patrol in Fallujah or Haditha and dodging high-speed metal, or you are patching together our wounded warriors here at Landstuhl, or you are volunteers helping the healing process, or are our families, without whom we couldn't do any of this. You are having a huge, huge impact in that historic moment when we're in this struggle of good versus evil," Davis said in an article in *Stars and Stripes*.

"I also believe in my heart of hearts that it won't be easy and it's not going to happen overnight, but we absolutely will prevail."

So on Friday tell a Marine "Happy birthday," and on Saturday remember to tell a vet "Thanks!"

GOD SAYS

Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Honor Roll

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So on Friday tell a Marine "Happy birthday," and on Saturday remember to tell a vet "Thanks!"

Praise the Lord

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