

# Sebelius signs cable TV bill

TOPEKA (AP) — State and industry officials said Thursday that a new law governing cable television franchises will mean more services, more choices and lower costs to consumers.

The law, sought by telecommunications giant AT&T, changes the way companies are granted rights to provide services. The law allows companies to sign statewide franchise agreements rather than negotiating deals with each city where they want to provide service.

Supporters said that change will allow for greater competition to traditional cable television providers by new technologies, such as providing voice and data over the Internet.

"The goal is to expand competition and lower prices for consumers," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said.

David Kerr, AT&T's Kansas president, said the company hopes to offer video service, using fiber-optic cable and phone lines, to half its customers nationwide. But he said a big barrier is having to sign franchise agreements with thousands of individual cities, including more than 600 in Kansas.

The law, patterned after one in Texas, permits new video service providers to obtain a certificate to operate statewide from the secretary of state's office. Instead of paying franchise fees to cities, a company would pay a 5 percent gross receipts tax, with the money going to local governments.

The law would allow cable companies to go through the same process — after their current agreement with a city expires.

The National Cable and Telecommunications Association, which opposed the legislation, argues cable companies must operate under stricter rules with their current franchise agreements, including setting aside channels for local public service programming.

Similar legislation stalled in Missouri, despite aggressive campaigns by supporters.

Senate Commerce Committee

Chairwoman Karin Brownlee said Kansas was able to overcome those difficulties by bringing together all parties, including local officials concerned about loss of revenue from the franchise agreements.

"This is the goal for any bill, but it was especially important for the video franchise bill because of the expectation that this will touch consumers in such a positive way," said Brownlee, R-Olathe.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

1st District Rep. Jerry Moran, left, visited with newly-minted Eagle Scout Cory Sager, right, after his Eagle Court of Honor Sunday at Colby United Methodist Church. Moran is a friend of the Sager family, and spoke briefly on leadership during the event where Cory was officially made an Eagle Scout, the highest rank that can be attained in the Boy Scouts of America.

## Missouri sextuplets never existed

GRAIN VALLEY, Mo. (AP) — The big lie about six little miracles makes for great tabloid TV.

But the city administrator of this small suburb on the fringes of the Kansas City area said the worldwide interest in the scandal of a couple who faked the birth of sextuplets misses an important point. "This isn't an 'Americans behaving badly' story," City Administrator Gary Bradley said Thursday. "This is a story about a vigilant police department stopping a crime 24 hours after it started."

Police sent their reports to prosecutors on Thursday for possible criminal charges against Kris and Sarah Everson of Grain Valley. Van Buckley, a spokeswoman for Jackson County Prosecutor Mike Sanders, said he did not expect an announcement of any charges until Friday at the earliest.

"It's my understanding that police are still taking statements from victims," Buckley said.

Police Chief Aaron Ambrose said Thursday that the couple had taken

in about \$4,000 through a bank fund, a post office box established to receive mailed gifts and an online PayPal account that allowed visitors to the couple's Web site — since shut down — to give money.

"That's just the money," Ambrose said. "That doesn't count the material items people might have given them."

Also on Thursday — a day after the couple tearfully confessed to the hoax — Sarah Everson told The Associated Press that her husband believed for months that she was pregnant.

"He had no clue I wasn't pregnant until a couple of weeks ago," Sarah Everson said in a brief cell phone interview.


Kris Everson, who worked on the assembly line at the Haldex plant in Grain Valley, no longer has a job there, the company said. A spokeswoman refused to say whether Everson quit or was fired.

On Thursday, Ambrose — who has not been present when detectives questioned the Eversons —

said detectives told him Sarah Everson furthered her ruse by overeating.

"She told them she gained about 40 pounds," Ambrose said, adding that she had told detectives she duped her husband until about a month ago, which would have been around the time the couple had claimed the babies were born.

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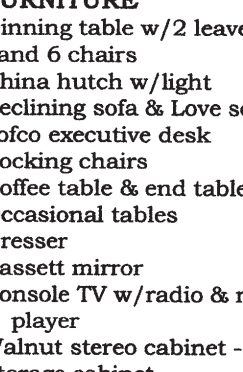



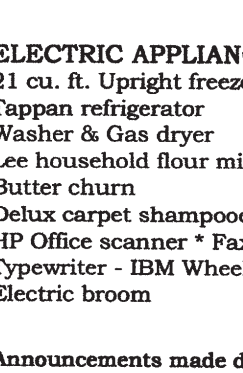
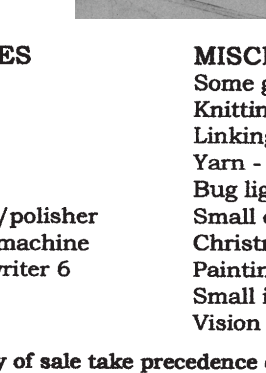
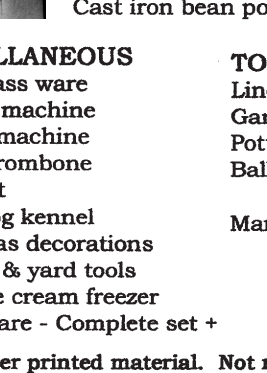
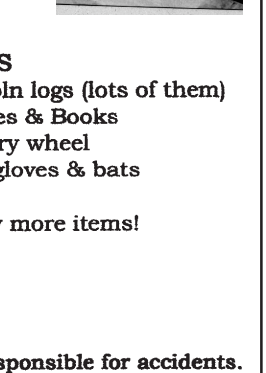
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