

Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

Community colleges are helping out

From The Lawrence Journal-World

Grants announced recently as part of a 10-year initiative to address the state's nursing shortage are attacking the problem on many fronts and likely will be of great benefit to Kansas residents.

Rather than focus on a single nursing school or training program, the Kansas Board of Regents spread \$3.4 million across 20 state universities, community colleges and vocational technical schools. Some of the money went for facilities, but providing money to hire faculty members to support increased enrollment in nursing programs was a major focus.

Pittsburg State University got the largest grant: \$502,000 to add four full-time and two part-time nursing faculty members, create a patient simulation and learning resource center and fund four nurse educator scholarships. Kansas University Medical Center, which is responsible for training many of the teachers in other nursing programs, received about \$126,000 to fund two new faculty positions and six new nurse educator scholarships.

Fort Hays State, Emporia State and Wichita State also got funding for faculty and scholarships, as did Washburn University.

But right at half of the grant money, about \$1.62 million, went to nursing programs at 13 community colleges scattered all across the state.

The distribution of the grants is a recognition of the important role community colleges can play in training nurses. Not only do they bring nursing programs closer geographically to students in different parts of the state, those students probably are more likely to remain in those areas to work after they graduate.

The state's universities, and particularly the KU Medical Center, have an important role to play in providing faculty and support for these nursing programs. Community colleges also play an important role in training nurses, especially for underserved areas. It's good that in its mission to coordinate and maximize the state's higher education resources, the Board of Regents is taking advantage of what community colleges have to offer.

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The off button



Jan Katz Ackerman

• From Where I stand

Babies have a new pacifier being shoved at them and this one could damage them for life.

Baby TV is the latest effort to promote technology use by parents wanting to pacify their children.

What used to be a caress of a mother or father's gentle arms to quiet a child has been replaced by an infant seat and television.

Baby TV is billed as a 24-hour television channel for infants and toddlers under the age of 3. Available through subscription in most of the European countries, the cable and satellite channel is about to make its way to the United States.

"Designed to enhance development and learning," says the ad for Baby TV, "it encourages parent and baby interaction for a pleasant experience in parenting."

So what's happened to getting down on the floor and playing with a baby? Or putting him or her in a stroller and taking a walk? Or quiet time in a rocking chair reading to him or her?

Baby TV boasts two types of programming: daytime to educate and entertain, and nighttime to create a soothing and secure atmosphere in the home.

Give me a break. That's the role of a parent, not a television show.

There's also BabyFirstTV. This too is a subscription channel which promotes itself as having more than 40 programs specifically tailored to "meet the needs of infants and toddlers."

Needs of infants and toddlers? When my two children were infants and toddlers their needs were a dry bottom, a full tummy, and lots of hugs and kisses and interaction with live people.

And guess what, they didn't watch television until they were about 4 years old. And oh my gosh, they didn't have candy until about that age either and I think they both turned out OK.

Here's some facts about television watching

which just might give you goose bumps.

The American Pediatric Association recommends children 2 and under watch zero hours of TV.

And according to RealVision, a Washington, D.C. based initiative to raise awareness about television's impact on people, the average American home has a television on at least seven hours, 40 minutes per day.

On average, American children age 6 and under spend two hours per day in front of a TV, DVD, or video machine, but parents spend about 38.5 minutes per week talking with their children.

But try these facts on for size:

- 40 percent of families eat their evening meal in front of a TV, and when asked, 54 percent of children age 4 to 6 said they'd rather spend time watching TV than with their fathers.

Now that's down right sad.

- 70 percent of American daycare centers allow children to watch TV on a daily basis.

American children spend about 900 hours each year in school, about 1,023 hours watching television and children age 6 and under spend about 41 minutes per day reading or being read to.

Now tell me televisions aren't used as pacifiers.

But get this, American children see about 200,000 violent acts, including 16,000 murders on TV before age 18.

If you don't believe me, visit some of the 41,717 Web sites linked to the American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org.

Outside of taking the television out of your home, the American Academy of Pediatrics, suggests a child's TV viewing be limited to two hours per day and there be no TVs in bedrooms.

The Academy also recommends TV viewing be planned versus surfing, and that parents supervise all programs. The other huge recommendation is to set an example.

Speaking of setting an example, did you know August is turn off the TV month?

Dennis Rainey, president of the Christian organization called Family Life Today, is supporting a Turn Off the TV Fast.

No, you don't have to go without food for 30 days, which might not hurt some of us, but the fast is to shut off the tube for 30 days. To learn more about this idea visit Rainey's Web site at www.familylife.com.

Another Christian organization supporting the 30 day TV fast is Nancy Leigh DeMoss of Revive Our Hearts.

DeMoss, along with her first cousin, Bob DeMoss, are on a crusade to make people aware of the ill effects of too much television. To learn more, visit DeMoss, web site at www.reviveourhearts.com.

It wouldn't be difficult for me to give up TV for 30 days or longer, but it will have to be a household decision as to whether or not we participate in the fast. But just think of the reading, crocheting and other stuff one could get accomplished in 30 days.

Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press.

Your turn

Finding the solution

Edna Hatcher Colby

In the July 7, 2006, edition of the Colby Free Press Editor Patty Decker in her column captioned, "Lessons can be learned" particularly intriguing was her question "What's the solution with the Enron-type corporations or higher prices? I don't know but if anyone out there can offer their suggestions I am all ears.

This caused me to think about what one financial writer said, in effect, several months ago when the gas pumps began their surprises. He said, "The next time gas prices go up everyone invested in the stock market should pull out their shares and wait for three years, then you would see gas prices come down fast!"

The automobile industry is built on machinery that consumes gas and oil and to change that immediately would throw thousands of employees out of work but nevertheless, I think it could be done faster than the Bush Administration makes out that it is doing.

I don't know whether the Bush Administration has managed to put the quietus to the following plan or not and oil companies to my notion are "Enron-type corporations."

This is what Editors Jim Hightower and Phillip Frasier had to say about it in the May 2005 edition of "The Hightower Lowdown":

FLEXIBLE FUEL

These efficient, plug-in electric motors do most of the work of powering the vehicle, thus reducing gasoline consumption to 100 miles per gallon, twice as good as the Prius and Civic. That's great, but to take us from great to 500 mpg of gasoline burned, we need to add a second technology. Flexible-fuel vehicles. FFVs can run on either alcohol fuels or gasoline or any combination of the two.

The most common of these alcohol fuels in America is gasohol an ethanol made from corn or other grains, then mixed with a small amount of gasoline.

But growing corn consumes a lot of energy, and alcohol fuel can be made more efficiently by distilling plant wastes (such as stalks left in the fields after harvest, sawdust and tree trimmings, and urban landscaping waste) to make "cellulosic ethanol."

This alcohol creates almost no greenhouse gases during its manufacture or when it's burned as a fuel, which is why cellulosic ethanol is get-

ting a green thumbs-up from enviro groups, and biorefineries in Canada and the U.S. are gearing up for mass production.

Existing gas stations can distribute all of these biofuels, and the FFVs that use them are conventional vehicles with minimal mechanical adjustments costing under \$100 per vehicle. Again, no rocket science involved. An FFV simply has a different control chip and fittings in the fuel line. The technology is on the shelf, and it's already being used.

Combine the two technologies, and you have a flexible-fuel plug-in hybrid that blends electric, alcohol, and (when necessary) gasoline fuels and can take you 500 miles per gallon of gasoline used."

Wouldn't this plan throw Enron-type oil companies into a tizzy if it were to pick up speed? And that's not all—oil is being used so fast that even China with all its oil has to go to outside sources in order to have enough oil to run its economy.

The world will run out of oil sooner than expected at this accelerated pace. I'm for flexible fuel plug-in hybrids now—without the nod of the companies with Enronitis.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce

Tinsley

