

# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### Kansas highways one of 8 Wonders

So far, the state's highways haven't made any of those 8 Wonders of Kansas lists.

That's too bad, because the roads deserve consideration. Kansas boasts one of the largest highway systems in the nation, and the roads generally are in good shape, thanks to long-range planning and a remarkable commitment of money by state leaders and taxpayers.

But as state officials take the first steps in another round of planning, they're facing some orange barrels over how to pay for future projects.

To pay for the first comprehensive highway program in 1989 and the follow-up program a decade later, the state used a money package that included bonds, sales tax revenue, increases in fuel and diesel taxes, federal money and vehicle registration fees.

Now that the 1999 plan is drawing to a close, the question is whether that toolbox of financing options is still adequate.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has already weighed in, saying she couldn't support any increases. That was a good call, with gasoline prices in the neighborhood of \$3.50 per gallon and no significant relief in sight. ...

Traditional money sources look like they're on the ropes, considering Congress recently had to approve \$8 billion in general revenues to keep the federal highway trust fund propped up until the end of the month.

But here's hoping officials don't let the current economic problems keep them from pursuing a highway plan.

The state's roads are one of its better assets, and it's important to keep maintaining and improving them. If you don't believe that, try traveling to some other states — including the one just to our east, where it's not unusual to face construction delays and rough stretches even on major highways.

— *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press*

### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715, Fax (202) 225-5124

**State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail s.haynes@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

### COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

**Steve Haynes - Publisher**  
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

#### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**  
pdecker@nwkansas.com

**Jan Ackerman - Reporter**  
jackerman@gmail.com

**Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter**  
aheintz@nwkansas.com

#### ADVERTISING

**Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager**  
jstewart@nwkansas.com

**Heather Woofter - Advertising Sales**  
hwoofter@nwkansas.com

**Steifon Matthews - Graphic Design**  
smatthews@nwkansas.com

**Jessica Estes - Classified Ad Desk**  
jestes@nwkansas.com

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
support@nwkansas.com

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Becky Foster, Jim Jackson, Kris McCool, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Cheryl Holub, Amanda Campbell

**THE COLBY FREE PRESS** (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

**PERIODICALS POSTAGE** paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

**THE BUSINESS OFFICE** at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$85, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.



© 2008 BRANCH SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

## More Colby in the paper today?

"Well," the man at the counter said, "are you gonna put anything about Colby in today's paper?"

Fair question, I thought. We've been short of news lately, with staff coming and going. We know we've had way too many Goodland stories on Page 1.

Looking at the page I was frantically trying to put together Thursday, I thought my answer would have been a pretty solid "yes." — if I'd had time to go talk to the gentleman. Which I didn't, with a press crew, dozens of carriers and 4,300 readers waiting for that page.

And I wish I could say the answer will be yes every day from here on out. But that might not be entirely true. Our staff is way too thin to make any rash promises, and we're dealing with a stack of problems.

Most people probably don't care. They just want their paper on their doorstep, on time, full of local news, some ideas and columns, the editorial cartoon and puzzle, and of course, the comics.

We can deliver most of that most days, but until we get up to full strength in the newsroom, it won't be easy and we may not always hit our standards, let alone yours.

A lot of you asked about sports. Our new sports editor, Andy Heintz, arrived Monday



**Steve Haynes**

### • Letter From the Publisher

and dug into reporting and working up pages. Thursday, though, part-time reporter Jan Ackerman left for another job and long-time Editor Patty Decker leaves today for other parts. We'll miss them, and so will you.

We have a full-blown search on for replacements, focusing on an editor with experience in covering local news and producing a great newspaper, and on a part-time society/local editor to gather obituaries, social notes, business news, local items and all those things people have been complaining about not seeing in the paper.

It'll happen. We'll find the right people. And you won't have nearly as much to complain about.

I just can't say when. But these things always sort themselves out.

We're also still looking for an office manager to take over billing and the like; another ad

sales person to join the two we have, Jasmine and Heather; and several carriers. We still have one route that's being mailed to unhappy customers, we need another motor carrier and we need some substitute carriers, people willing to take on a route once in a while on a day or two's notice.

Already, though, with the people we've added, and the dedicated employees beside them, things are getting more organized. Complaints are down and people seem to be getting their paper one way or another.

Our new classified manager, Jessica Estes, has her desk organized and started in on our back-issue file, known delicately in the business as "the morgue." Jessica, a student at the college, came to us from the Dodge City, where she started working at the paper while in high school. We still don't know everything she can do.

All I can say is, bear with us. We're making progress — one step at a time, a couple sideways and one or two to the rear now and then.

And keep complaining. We need the incentive, we need to know what you like and don't like, what you want to see and what you don't.

And especially if your paper doesn't arrive. The number is 462-3963.

## Real choice: Reagan or Roosevelt

The middle class seems on edge these days, and it's not hard to see why.

Wages are stagnant and the price of gas, food, education and health care are on the rise. Parents around the country are worried their children's generation will have to lead tougher lives than they did. The consensus in the country seems to be that something has to change.

It seems to me that the people who make up this country's middle class have a choice to make. We can either choose to continue on our current course and let the free market correct itself, or we can elect Sen. Barack Obama and see if the government can come up with some ideas that will help.

While this race may be between Obama and Sen. John McCain, it is also a battle between the philosophies of former presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and former Ronald Reagan. When it comes to economic issues, it is these two men who have shaped the ideologies of America's two major parties.

After the presidency of Herbert Hoover, the majority of Americans flocked to the Democratic Party and elected FDR. Roosevelt's four terms proved to most Americans at that time that government can help people who are working hard and still struggling to get by. His popularity even forced the Republican Party to



**Andy Heintz**

### • Wildcat Ramblings

move to the left.

Former Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon all governed more moderately than their predecessors. If you told Americans back then that this country would return to championing the economic policies of Hoover and former president Calvin Coolidge, they'd have said you were crazy.

Unfortunately, Hoover-like policies have come back with a vengeance. For 28 years, the Republican Party have been hell bent on driving a stake through the heart of the New Deal. I don't mean to convey that Republicans are evil — I grew up in Kansas, and most of my best friends are Republicans — I'm just saying people shouldn't expect anything new to happen if we keep sending them to Washington.

If you like the direction the country is going in than you should vote Republican, but if you think working and middle-class citizens need

more government assistance to help them deal with today's global economy, then you should vote Democrat.

For better or worse, Ronald Reagan is responsible for the economics that dominate America today. He is the one who convinced the majority of Americans that government is always the problem. His policies were not much different than those championed by Coolidge or Sen. Barry Goldwater, but they did not have his charisma.

The results of "reagonomics" have been great for the wealthy and not so great for the middle class. Workers' rights have decreased and executive payrolls have skyrocketed, labor union membership has shrunk and big corporations get tax breaks to ship jobs overseas, poverty is increasing and the wealthiest 5 percent of is getting richer, family farms are selling out while the nation's wealthy farmers still get subsidies, and millions of people can't afford health care while oil companies making record profits are subsidized by our government.

Make no mistake about it: this election is as much about Reagan and Roosevelt as it is about McCain and Obama.

*Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing.*

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

