

Opinion



Other Viewpoints

Sebelius minions stall on power plan

Supporters of the planned expansion of the Sunflower Electric Power Corp. generating station at Holcomb must continue to wait for the project to move forward. That's the bad news.

The good news is that, even in the face of adversity, there's no plan to pull the plug on the project.

A year has passed since Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary Rod Bremby rejected the application for an air-quality permit needed to proceed with construction of two 700-megawatt power plants.

Bremby's surprise, arbitrary decision angered southwest Kansas supporters of the project, who were eager for the positive economic impact of the multibillion-dollar project, and also rightly noted the negative fallout of the state's ruling on the regulatory certainty Kansas needs to compete with other states for businesses.

Afterward, it was easy to tie the permit denial to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' political aspirations. ...

Moving forward, Sunflower and the chief investor in the project, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association of Colorado, remain committed to expanding the Holcomb facility to meet utility needs with affordable electricity — even in the face of economic uncertainty and possible new restrictions on carbon emissions.

(Both Tri-State and Sunflower are "generation and transmission" co-operatives, owned by rural electric co-ops in four states, not some "big business.")

Lawsuits triggered by Bremby's denial have yet to be resolved. And we expect lawmakers to again try to tackle this issue. It dominated the last Kansas legislative session, with a number of bills that would have cleared the way for the expansion falling short.

Sebelius reportedly has said rehashing the Sunflower project at the Statehouse next year would be a disappointment. But she can't be surprised.

The governor helped make this issue political. Had the proper decision been made a year ago, we wouldn't face another legislative session with Sunflower high on the list of state priorities.

Besides, we should welcome more public discussion of the needed role of clean-burning coal in an energy portfolio that also includes wind and other renewable sources of energy.

— *The Garden City Telegram, via The Associated Press*

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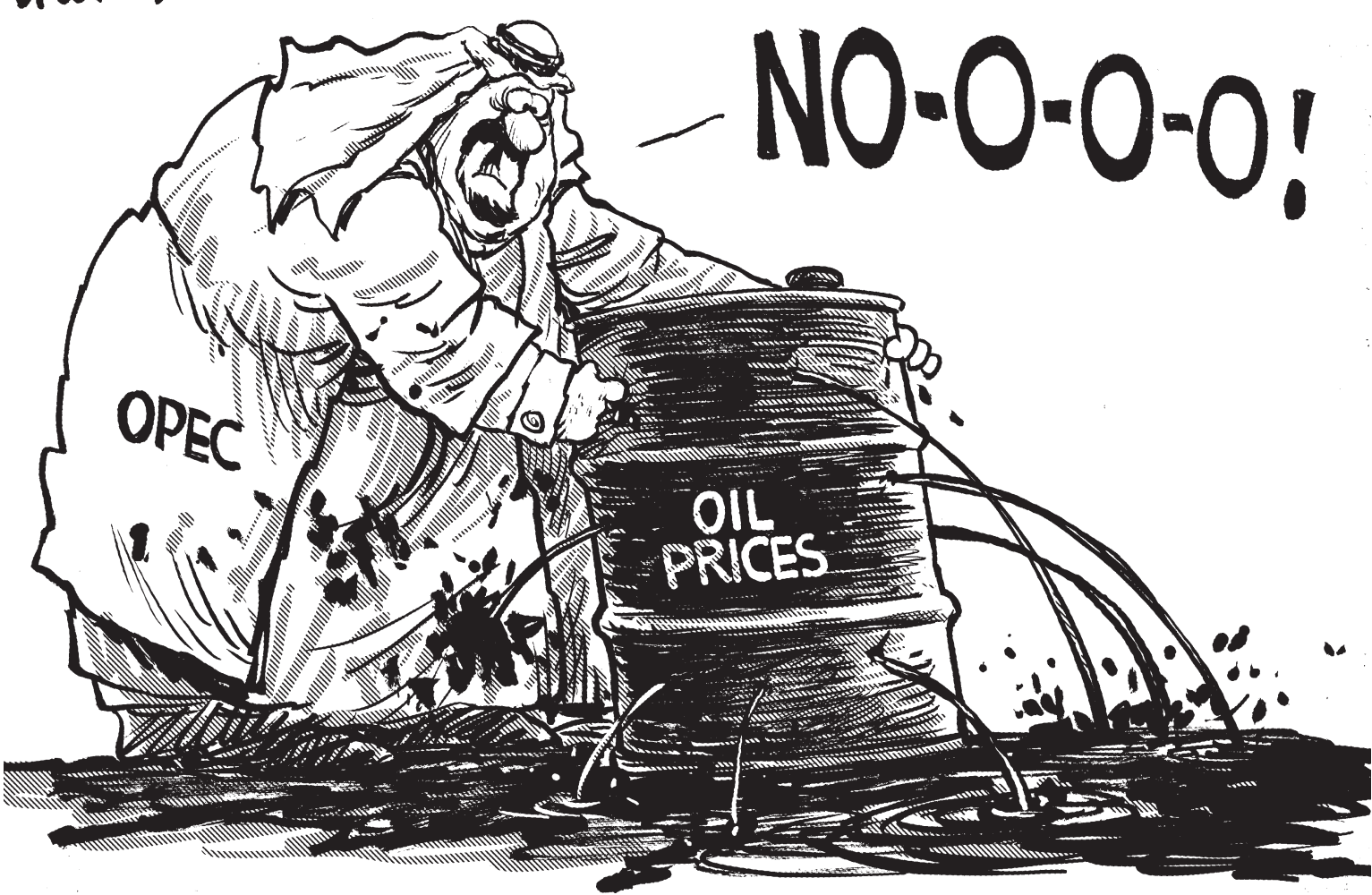
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Vote, or someone else will

A wise man once said, if you don't vote, someone else is voting for you on issues that are important in your life. This is particularly true as we head into the final stretch of the Nov. 4 election.

There is plenty at stake for each one of us. Elected officials responsible for helping determine our future, that of our children and our agricultural industry will be chosen at all levels.

This presidential race is historic, some believe astonishing. And the race between Sen. John McCain and Sen. Barack Obama appears to be going down to the wire.

On the national level, there are many issues at stake, but none so important as the economic health of our nation. Other key issues such as energy and trade must continue to be advanced.

With a new president, we can expect movement on the main issues affecting this nation and its farmers and ranchers. One of the key issues will be appointment of a new U.S. trade representation and broadening our trading partners. Other countries are eager to get back to trade talks.

Congress has yet to take action on three critical trade agreements — Panama, South Korea and Colombia. Every one of these will positively affect every sector in Kansas, and agriculture is at the top of the list.

What about future farm bills? Have we seen our last commodity title in this nation's farm bill?



John Schlageck

• Insights
Kansas Farm Bureau

We barely came up with the current farm bill. It took an override of a presidential veto. This farm bill wasn't vetoed because President Bush doesn't like farmers. It was vetoed because he saw the price tag as too high.

Budget pressures will drive the agenda in Washington for the foreseeable future. The political will to sustain direct payments to farmers simply may not exist when the next bill is written.

Closer to home, cost and availability of credit, contracting export markets and the recent declines in commodity prices compared to input costs are paramount on the minds of Kansas farmers.

In the energy arena, there will be debates on coal-fired electricity generation and greenhouse gas emissions. Every sector of the economy could be hurt by inappropriate and over-reaching regulation.

Local governments may feel pressure to raise property taxes because of the state budget pinch. And we must ensure that management of Kansas reservoirs is not detrimental to farmers and ranchers dependent on their water.

We must manage reservoirs in a more prudent manner beneficial to all Kansans.

Yes, every one of the candidates in our Kansas election is vital to farming and ranching. When it comes to figuring out which candidate to vote for, each one must be evaluated individually to determine strengths and willingness to work on behalf of agriculture and rural Kansas.

Some farm organizations, including Kansas Farm Bureau, recently finished their final and vital push to implement grass-roots public-policy positions that members have developed throughout the year. Our organization has endorsed 114 candidates for the U.S. Congress, Kansas Senate and the Kansas House. All are friends of our organization and understand the importance of agriculture in our state.

So many of the issues have been cussed and discussed. The machinery is in place. All that remains is the action of voting for those candidates who have an ear to listen to those in agriculture and rural Kansas.

Exercise your privilege and vote this next week. Remember, if you don't someone else will vote on issues that affect your life and livelihood.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Strange church makes her feel at home

I've always been fascinated by different cultures and languages. I enjoy hearing about family traditions, the foods people eat, the holidays they celebrate, they beliefs they hold in their hearts. That's why I was excited when I learned that I was required to take World Christianity, which will give me a peek into the lives of Christians around the world.

As students of this class, we have been assigned to attend two churches with a different cultural/ethnic make-up. Whether it'd be Asian, African, Latin or even Greek, we had to experience what it feels like to be lost and feel out of place. So this past Sunday afternoon, four guys and I entered Vietnamese Hope Baptist Church in Portland.

One of my friends found the Vietnamese church about 10 minutes from campus. That afternoon, we piled into my car, all of us feeling apprehensive about encountering the unfamiliar and unexpected.

When we entered the church foyer, we were warmly greeted by a man and a woman with, "Are you guys lost? Do you need directions to get somewhere?"

We kindly told them that we were not lost at all, but we were there for the Vietnamese worship service. They looked confused so we told them that we are students at Multnomah Bible College, and were visiting a different ethnic church as an assignment for a class. They asked us several times if we wanted a translator or if we wanted to wait for the next service, which would be accompanied with an English translation. But we told them that we wanted the full feel of the service.

"So you want to feel lost and completely out



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

of place," he said.

We gave him an affirming nod. We met the pastor a few minutes later and he said in response, "Well, just tell yourself that we are speaking in tongues!"

Feeling a bit out of our comfort zone already, we entered the small sanctuary and were escorted to the third row from the front. A man sitting in front of us motioned for us to sit in the front row, but one of us gave him a thumbs up to let him know we were good.

As we waited for the service to begin, I examined the bulletin — or rather, than tried to figure out what it says, since I don't know a syllable of Vietnamese. A woman behind me must have noticed the blank look on my face (or perhaps that I was the only blonde-haired girl in the sanctuary), so she started explaining the order of the service to me. I learned that "Chua" means God, "Thi-thien" means Psalms and "Chua Se Lo Toan" is the hymn, "God Will Take Care of You."

After I left the church, I realized that it hadn't been as uncomfortable as I thought it would be; in fact, I wouldn't mind going back and getting to know these people more. I want to learn about their country and their families. What made them leave their home country

and come to North America? What was home like anyways? Did they experience persecution for being Christians in Vietnam? Maybe I have so many questions because I am journalist — and I wouldn't be a very good journalist if I didn't have any questions. Or maybe I'm just curious.

Whatever it is, I enjoyed the Vietnamese people. It was like a breath of fresh air because it reminded me that the world does not revolve around Americans, even though many think it does. It also reminded me of why I enjoy being a Christian.

In a sense, we have our own culture and our own language when we talk about our beliefs. And when we meet another Christian with the same beliefs, even if they are from the other side of the world, there's an immediate bond that's unexplainable. We may differ on how we express it, but for those of us who believe in one God and the inerrant Word of God, we are a big family that encompasses the earth. And that's the most fascinating thing of all.

Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

