pinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Gambling windfall a bad budget bet

Early this year, state lawmakers offered a variety of ideas about how Kansas could use the expected windfall profits from its new destination casinos.

In fact, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius submitted a budget that included nearly \$82 million in gaming receipts for fiscal year 2009 — money from the fees collected from operators who wanted to run the state-owned casinos. When the expanded gaming law passed in 2007, legislators expected four casinos and slot machines at three race tracks to generate roughly \$200 million a year.

Now, however, in the face of an economic downturn and the subsequent withdrawal of two casino operators, the state expects to reap a measly \$23.5 million for the next budget year.

As a result, Kansas' already stressed budget will include the additional complication of finding money that was spent in anticipation of the high-roller-level revenue expected from casinos....

Not only is gambling money not materializing, money for projects already on the table — such as the K-61 highway expansion — seems to be disappearing rapidly in the face of an ever tougher economy.

This session, legislators should take a cautious approach to any budget that includes revenue from expanded gambling. If there is one certainty in this economy, it is to expect the unexpected and not to count your money before it's in your hand.

The Hutchinson News, via The Associated Press

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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 or 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

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We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

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Make kindness part of the season

Random acts of kindness still help me keep on keeping on. If not for these acts, I'm not sure how long I would last at any job. A smile from a stranger or a kind word from a fellow worker can make a bad day a little better, and make a good day tremendous.

"Every time you smile at someone it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing," said Mother Teresa.

But there are some people who don't seem to get the same affection as others. The desperate conditions of low-income people in our country seem to be regarded as inevitable by many people who dismiss ideas geared toward ending or drastically decreasing poverty as hopelessly naive. To make the situation even worse, many people seem to believe poverty is solely caused by lack of ambition and reckless decision making.

I always wonder how they know this. It's not like they knocked on the door of every poor person in the world and asked them to tell their life story. Where is the concrete evidence that the majority of poor people are victims of their own self-destructive personalities?

As the weather gets colder it's impossible for me not to feel sorry for the homeless every time I fumble with my car keys frantically trying to open the door while a cold winter wind and angry that so many people are forced to human being. live on the street during these harsh weather



Andy Heintz

 Wildcat Ramblings

Now I'm sure that there are people who are poor because of bad decision making. I'm sure there are some people who gave in to the instant-gratification, over-consumption culture promoted by the media and spent more money then they could afford to. And I'm sure there are some people who committed a crime when they were young and reckless that has made it hard for them to find a decent-paying job. There are also poor people who went into debt after become addicted to drugs.

While these people may have created their own problems, does that mean we shouldn't still try to help them? Doesn't everyone deserve a second chance? What separates human beings from other living things is that we have precious traits like empathy and mercy. Even if we can't save every lost soul in the world, we should at least treat them with the respect blows into my face. It always make me sad and kindness that we would give to another have no time to love them.'

As Christmas draws near, many of us will conditions. I can't imagine spending a couple be heading to the mall to get presents for our is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. of hours in the cold on a particularly cold day loved ones. Mothers and grandmothers, and the He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, in Montana, New York, or Minnesota, much occasional revolutionary father, will be frantiless spending the majority of my winter in the cally trying to get Christmas dinner cooked

before the relatives come over for Christmas Eve. We will go looking for a Christmas tree and we will string lights on our houses. Famous movies like "It's a Wonderful Life", "A Christmas Story", and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" will be playing on our favorite television stations.

But in the midst of all these festivities, I hope we don't forget that Christmas is also a time for giving. And I don't think this means only giving to our own families. Privileged people should also give to those in need during the holiday season. There are countless causes out there that people can donate money to.

The health care providers in Colby are currently collecting donations of food and money that will go to the Genesis Food Bank. The food bank provides food for people in need living in the city. A donation to the food bank will not change the world, but it can make a huge difference in the lives of a few families who are having trouble feeding their children.

And if we all engaged in small acts of kindness, then eventually this will create a more just and humane world to live in. So I hope everyone will put aside their prejudices toward the less fortunate and give money to a worthy cause this Christmas.

Mother Teresa said,"if you judge people you

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, sports and opinion writing.

Treasurer reflects on her time in office

Nearly six years after taking the oath to become the 37th State Treasurer of Kansas, I am resigning from the office to represent Kansas' Second Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. Serving as your state treasurer has been an incredible experience and one that I will always cherish. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in this capacity.

As I reflect on the past six years I hope that Kansans are reaping the rewards of the changes we have made to the various programs at the State Treasurer's office. For instance, the Kansas 529 Education Savings Program has seen many positive changes. Legislation our office presented to Kansas lawmakers increased the amount Kansas taxpayers can deduct from their Kansas adjusted gross income from \$2,000 (\$4,000 for married, filing jointly) to \$3,000 (\$6,000) for contributions into each beneficiary's Learning Quest account.

We have also expanded investment options and lowered fees for those who contribute to a Kansas 529 account. Another important change that we made in Kansas was to be one of the first states in the nation to pass parity. This means that Kansans may invest in whichever accredited 529 plan in the United States they choose and still take the Kansas state tax deduction. In nine short years since Learning Quest was created, the Kansas 529 plan has grown to nearly 200,000 accounts and has more than \$1.5 billion in assets.

Another important and very popular department at the State Treasurer's office is the un-



Lynn Jenkins

 Kansas Treasurer

claimed property program. Finding money you didn't know was due to you is almost as fun as winning the lottery! Unclaimed property can be inactive savings and checking accounts, uncashed checks, stock shares and bonds, dividend checks, insurance proceeds, mineral royalties, utility deposits and safe deposit box contents. When Kansans take back their money - \$12.8 million last year alone - they don't pay to do it. The Kansas Unclaimed Property program is impressive. Kansans are able to search www.KansasCash.com for real-time results and in some cases begin the claim process online. The Unclaimed Property Professional Organization awarded our website the 2008 Holder's Choice Award for Best Website for user-friendliness.

An initiative that I began in 2004 is the Financial Literacy program. I started this to help Kansans of all ages develop a better understanding of money and to help them learn how to make their money work for them. We offered free seminars and workshops to senior citizens and eventually found a niche with grade school and middle school students. One of the programs - Save@School - partnered

schools and financial institutions to bring the bank to the school. Grade school students opened savings accounts, made deposits and were taught lessons approved by the Kansas State Board of Education on interest, credit cards, accounts and other topics. Since 2004 Kansas grade schools have saved \$1.2 million as a result of the Save@School program.

Another important program that reached out to middle school students is the MoneySmart Financial Management camp. The camp was created specifically for Kansas middle school students. It is designed to offer students training in sound personal financial philosophies and practices in a fun environment that enhances leadership and teamwork skills. Students engage in specific workshops regarding topics such as Money & Choices, Budgeting, Saving and Goal-Setting and Cash and Credit. Money\$mart was developed in partnership with the Kansas Credit Union Association. We have seen more than 1,085 middle school students go through the camp.

The Kansas State Treasurer's office serves every Kansan whether it is through the Agricultural Production Loan Deposit program, Bond Services, Cash Management or one of the previously mentioned programs. The employees at the office are here to serve the best interest of Kansans and it has been a pleasure to work alongside each of them. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your Kansas State Treasurer.

Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley



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