

Other Viewpoints

Financial website shows tax spending

Kansas isn't exactly a bastion of openness when it comes to sharing what should be public records, so it is good to see a Web site that offers taxpayers a detailed look at how their money is being spent.

The site, www.kansas.gov/KanView, provides good information about where tax dollars are used. If you want to know how much the Abstractors Board of Examiners' budget is this year, KanView can show you. Or if you'd like to see how much of the state's budget is dedicated to education or public safety, that is available as well.

Recently, the site was expanded to include pay rates for all state employees. Though this initially met resistance from some legislators, the database is now available online. The site allows users to navigate by agency to find the various pay grades for all levels of employees.

The site provides another level of transparency for the state that should continue to be offered, and added to, in the future....

Hopefully, the state will keep this site up to date, readily accessible and continue to find additional detailed information to include for public view. It is a step in the right direction toward bringing Kansas government a little closer to the openness taxpayers deserve and expect.

— *The Hutchinson News, 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 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: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Write us

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We do not publish anonymous letters.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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Are you enjoying the green, green grass?

It's a remarkable year, not because it rained so much — out here, at least, rainfall totals are just about normal — but because it rained pretty much all season.

There were times when it got dry, but not for long. Just when it looked like the wheat might suffer, it'd rain. Most places, the wheat came in a bumper crop.

Then with the summer-planted fall crops, the same thing happened. Sure, some places reported occasional heavy rains. Other fields had hail.

Still, the crops grew as the prices fell. Fall harvest ought to be a bin buster. And just when it seemed like things might dry up, it rained.

It's been that way across the state. The place where you really notice it is in pasture country.

Does anyone remember a year when pastures have been green and lush clear into September?

Some years, the grass dries up in June. Some years, July or August. This year, it may take a killing frost to stop the grass from growing. Cattlemen, who could use a break, ought not to have to buy much feed this fall and winter.

One stockman told me earlier this month that he thought the grass was finally beginning to cure. Finally.



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

And it's not just here. The grass is green clear across the state. In fact, it's green from Grand Junction clear through to Kansas City. Driving to and from Lawrence last week, the state was as lush as anyone could remember. A friend said it's the same all the way to Illinois.

Through the High Plains and into the Smoky Hill, down the wide, deep valleys of the tributaries of the great Kaw River drainage, through the Flint Hills and down to the Verdigris and the Fall, the hills are green, the grass healthy and thick.

Along the creeks and road ditches, the undergrowth is high and bushy, almost impossible to push your way through. It'll die down soon enough, but it may leave a lot of trash behind.

The trees along streams, east and west, are starting to show fall colors. They're still green, but you can pick out each tree and identify

each species by the slight variations in color. It won't be long before some turn yellow or brown or red, while others just drop their leaves.

Rains over the weekend pushed a few eastern rivers to bank full and beyond. A band of heavy rain that started up near Oakley pushed clear across the state, causing floods wherever it went. Nothing serious; just a lot of wet fields and overflowing creeks. The rivers seemed to be going down as quickly as they'd come up.

The air remained full of smoke from California fires, making for a few notable sunsets, but clouds dampened most of the evening displays.

My advice to anyone who loves this state and its beauties is to drink this all in. We may not live long enough to see another fall this green and lush, this bountiful and this gorgeous.

The hills abound with green grass and fall-blooming flowers, and wherever you want to travel in Kansas, there's plenty to see.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

'Astroturf' wants straight answers

To the Editor:

How do you like being called "astroturf" if you are involved in a grassroots organization?

Or if you, as an individual, are simply wanting straight answers from your representatives and congressmen in Washington, how do you like being told that "trying to have a discussion with you is like talking to a dining room table"? Or "I don't care what my constituents say, I will vote for this health care bill if I think it's best for them?"

These are just some of the things that have been said by some House members about their constituents, about voters, the ones who put representatives and senators into office in Washington.

I don't know about you, but that just ticks me off! I resent it being implied that I or anyone else who questions Washington's actions am dumb or stupid or uninformed!

Those in Washington have lost touch with the people they are supposed to be working for: you and me, us! They work for us. We pay them with tax money. They want a pay raise and they expect us to pay it whether we want to or not.

I'd like to see them all try to live on a wage comparable to what the rest of us live on. Pay them by the hour, no more than 40 hours a week. No raises for the first year, a very small cost-of-living raise, if they do a good job, but no raise if they do not produce bills that average Americans can read or understand.

Do you know of any other job where you can do as you dang well please, consequences be damned, and still get a raise? I sure don't! There isn't a single job I've ever heard of, except a government job, where you can do that.

Folks, it's time to make your voice heard. I thought Americans stood for what is right, not to be a follower of what other nations around the world do. America has been a beacon of hope for over 200 years. Do we really want her to be bullied and beaten into submission by a



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

gang of thugs who call themselves congressmen/women and swear they represent us?

I don't believe most of them give a fig what happens to the "little guy" who has to pay for all the stuff they dish out of Washington. They are living "high on the hog," and the bills they churn are proof of that. The bills are so full of pork that the the guts of the bill are lost in the fat and garbage. Not very many congressmen/women want to be good butchers and rid the bills of the offal and return a great product with some real meat to it.

Hey, if the they turn out bills that are not consistent with the Constitution, vote them out of office!

Jari Skiles, Colby

Honesty honored

To the Editor:

I am writing this for a young lady who in our humble opinion deserves public recognition for her unquestionable honesty and integrity.

This young lady, Ashley Ricks, who lives in Gove and works at Montana Mike's Steakhouse in Colby, did something that deserves "Citizen of the Year" honor in our book.

On a trip back east, we stopped in Colby for the night, and as we customarily do, we dined at Montana Mike's. When we left the restaurant, an envelope containing almost \$1,000 in cash found its way out of my wife's purse onto the floor and beneath the booth. We did not

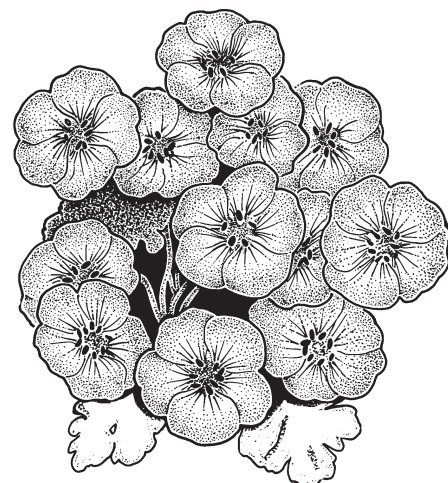
discover the money missing until we arrived in Kansas City the next afternoon.

My wife recalled that the last time she remembered seeing the envelope was in the restaurant the night before, after which she immediately placed a call to Montana Mike's and was connected with the manager, Rodger Cashion. To our great surprise and relief, the envelope with the cash had been found and turned in to Rodger the night before by Ms. Ricks.

We do not have the words to adequately express our gratitude and sincere thanks to Ashley, and we can't thank the management of Montana Mike's enough for their cooperation and the manner in which they handled the situation to its comforting end result. It certainly adds credence to my late sister's saying, "Kansas is made up of very special people." We shall emphasize the term "special."

We hope you will consider giving Ms. Ricks the public recognition in your newspaper that she so well deserves.

Duane and Mary Loban, Denver



Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

