

Other Viewpoints

Road funds smooth the path to moving Kansas

They aren't among the more sizable projects when it comes to road work, but they still are necessary. Look for road crews to soon begin fixing cracks in roadways around Kansas. Such ongoing efforts to keep roads in decent shape almost stalled as — in the midst of the state budget crunch — the Kansas Department of Transportation had to postpone more than \$80 million in work statewide.

Recently, though, the department announced plans to go ahead with work on trouble spots, thanks to the Kansas Legislature restoring nearly \$100 million worth of preservation projects.

Of course, such projects hardly sound like earth-shattering developments. But ongoing maintenance efforts are worth every penny if the state is to maintain the quality of a road system recently rated best in the nation in a Reader's Digest study — a lofty ranking in jeopardy in the face of lingering state budget woes.

Fortunately, a majority of lawmakers embraced the need to inject taxpayer dollars in state roads by approving another 10-year, \$8.2 billion transportation plan. Previous transportation plans contributed to better quality roads.

Even in the face of a budget crisis, lawmakers rightly acknowledged that good roads are key to economic survival and recovery, survival and growth. Developing plans to improve highways isn't wasteful in the face of economic uncertainty; it's essential.

Along with better positioning the state for economic development, road projects to come as part of the new transportation plan promise to keep people working at a time good jobs cannot be taken for granted.

Motorists, meanwhile, may have to endure some inconvenience this summer as crews go to work on roads in the Sunflower State. Annoying as it may be, it's important to remember that in the long run, it's better to put up with the road work than go without.

— *The Garden City Telegram, 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 274-W, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansan.com

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Steve Haynes - Publisher
s.haynes@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter
ahaintz@nwkansan.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansan.com

Vera Sloan and Aubrey Spencer - Society Editors
colby.society@nwkansan.com

ADVERTISING

Heather Woofter - Advertising Representative
hwoofter@nwkansan.com

Andrea Miller - Advertising Representative
a.miller@nwkansan.com

Kathryn Ballard - Graphic Design
kb Ballard@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager
rtubbs@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager

Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker, Judy McKnight, Barbara Ornelas, Kris McCool

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Turn about fair play?

The United States of America is involved in a conflict with a shadowy enemy that shows a complete disregard for human life. Whether you support U.S. foreign policy or not, any reasonable observer would recognize the vicious nature of the terrorists our soldiers are fighting.

At its best, this country has been a model for reformers in other countries because of our freedom of speech, freedom of religion and our ability to assimilate people of different races, religions and cultures into our society. But America's virtues shouldn't prevent our media, government and citizens from turning the mirror onto ourselves to see if we are holding to the same standards we hold other countries to.

While the threat of terrorism is serious and our country has right to defend itself, I'm uncomfortable with U.S. unwillingness to recognize our past support of terrorism, even genocide.

Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, the founder of a Haitian paramilitary group that killed thousand of civilians in the early 1990s, lived for over a decade in Queens, N.Y., presumably because he once served as an "asset" for the Central Intelligence Agency in Haiti. In a ironic twist, he was later sentenced to 37 years in prison for mortgage fraud.

If another country was harboring someone who was responsible for thousands of deaths



Andy Heintz

• **Wildcat Ramblings**

in the U.S., what would we do? I'm willing to bet the folks on Fox News would be calling for at most an invasion and at the very least harsh sanctions against the country, combined with occasional air strikes from Predator drones in places where the terrorist was suspected of living.

One of the reasons used to justify the invasion of Afghanistan was the Asian nation was harboring al-Qaida and our country had a right to defend itself. But what if the people in East Timor had used this logic? East Timor's Commission for Truth and Reconciliation contended President Gerald Ford's administration turned a blind eye to Indonesia's invasion of the country in 1975, even though it knew the Indonesians were using U.S.-supplied arms.

"The commission finds that the United States of America failed to support the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination and that its political and military support were fundamental to the Indonesian invasion."

Washington Post reporter Colum Lynch

wrote that U.S. military support was vital to Indonesia's invasion and a 24-year occupation that cost the lives of at least 100,000 people.

If we apply the same standards to ourselves that we hold everyone else to, this means the East Timorese would have been justified in invading the United States during the 25 years — 1975-1999 — of Indonesian occupation. After all, the people who helped arm the Indonesian army were living freely in our country.

The justification for the invasion of Afghanistan would also raise eyebrows in El Salvador. A civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s caused 75,000 deaths. A United Nations "truth commission" found that 85 percent of the atrocities were committed by the military and its death-squad allies. Despite the Salvadoran army's alliance with right-wing death squads, the Reagan administration continued to supply military weaponry throughout the decade.

These are just a few cases of our country's past relations with individuals and governments guilty of terrorism or worse. If we want other countries to take our battle against terrorists seriously, we must take responsibility for our past roles protecting terrorists and financing people guilty of unspeakable acts.

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

Teacher endorses former student

To the Editor:

It is a rare opportunity when a teacher can speak on behalf of a former student who is running for political office.

Tracey Mann was raised on a western Kansas farm. He was a student of mine at Quinter Junior-Senior High School, where he was an award-winning participant in a program I sponsored, the National History Day Contest. From those days, I have watched Tracey grow into the 33-year-old man who wants to represent the Big First District in the U.S. House of Representatives. In my opinion, Tracey would be a tremendous asset to us.

Tracey is a young man of uncommon leadership ability, an asset recognized by classmates who elected him student body president at Kansas State University. He has an ability to connect with us on a one-to-one basis, an ability to understand our cares and concerns because they are his concerns, too.

Tracey would take common sense, high moral values and a tremendous energy to Washington. He believes that Congress should reflect the beliefs of the majority of Americans: cut government spending while reducing taxes, reduce government involvement in businesses and the personal lives of Americans, repeal Obamacare, preserve Social Security and Medicare, protect Second Amendment rights, advocate for the livestock and agricultural industries and support legislation that recognizes



Free Press Letter Drop

• **Our readers sound off**

the value of a human life.

Rep. Jerry Moran has done a tremendous job representing the Big First in Congress. I encourage you to send him to the U.S. Senate and to elect his former intern, Tracey Mann, to fill his seat in the 1st Congressional District of Kansas.

Joanne Emerick, Hoxie retired social studies teacher

Barrett feels left out

To the Editor:

In the Friday, June 11, edition of the *Colby Free Press*, the article, "Township clears up road condition flap," certain people were attacked.

If there was a public information meeting on June 8, why weren't the residents of Barrett Township informed? Since the residents were not notified, they probably assumed it would

be like the other meetings where their concerns were not addressed.

The September 2009 meeting is one example of this. If notification was given about the public information meeting, residents could have attended to voice their opinions and defend themselves.

The low-water crossing is a problem with an easy fix that would not have to cost lots of money. If the people grading the roads would remove the pile of dirt at the bottom of the hill, water could flow freely. The pile sits on the north side of the road and it acts as a dam. A cement slab at the bottom of the crossing keeps the crossing from getting muddy when the water can flow.

Improved communication between the township board and the residents it serves would help address these problems and come up with practical solutions. The trustees should be addressing these problems, while the treasurer should be handling the money. The clerk should have an accurate record of these problems.

If the township board would welcome residents to share their concerns, instead of attacking people who present problems, a harmony could be restored between the board and the residents of Barrett Township.

Melissa Baird, Brewster

Write us

The *Colby Free Press* encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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.

Mallard Fillmore

• **Bruce Tinsley**

