



Other Viewpoints

Lawmakers seek better smoking ban

The days of smoking at Kansas' first state-owned casino appear numbered.

Kansas legislators are headed in the right direction with a move that would tighten up a statewide ban on smoking in public places by extending the policy to all state-owned casinos, the first of which was built in Dodge City.

When the Kansas Legislature enacted its statewide ban on smoking in public places in 2010 as a way to protect people from the hazard of secondhand smoke, the members left out state-owned casinos.

It was a poor decision. While lawmakers were correct in attempting to curb secondhand smoke that contributes to serious ailments, they shouldn't have singled out casino workers and patrons from that very protection.

When it came to any plan for restrictions on smoking, it should have been easy for Kansas lawmakers to embrace the goal of cleaner, more breathable air for all — as happened with the comprehensive smoking ban in Garden City, one that was a welcome change.

Kansas got into the casino business to generate revenue and create jobs, yet ended up with a smoking policy that would put more people in unhealthy environments at its own gambling venues. Sadly, casino workers and patrons didn't warrant the same consideration as others as lawmakers succumbed to business and political interests in allowing the exemption.

Among the protests were claims that prohibiting patrons from lighting up inside casinos would hurt the operations financially — even though smoke-free casinos in other states have succeeded. After all, about 80 percent of all Americans don't smoke.

In the wake of approving the flawed bill, lawmakers noted that they could revisit specifics later. Yet it seemed a long shot that the state would move quickly in righting that wrong.

So, give them credit. Expect the state Senate to sign off on improving the statewide restrictions to create a truly comprehensive ban.

Kudos to lawmakers interested in turning the statewide policy into what it should have been from the start: a way to protect all workers and customers in Kansas from the threat of secondhand smoke.

— The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press

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roberts.senate.gov/public/

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U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

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MARGULIES
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Unity helps our community

Other Opinions

● **Melinda Olson**
Community Foundation

Ten years ago, a group of forward thinking individuals in our community accepted a challenge to start an organization that would be a central meeting place for those wishing to give, and those who needed money.

They had a vision of a local organization, run by our own neighbors and friends, that has our community's best interest at heart — and thus, the Thomas County Community Foundation was born.

Probably one of the best descriptions that can be used to describe a community foundation is a "donation facilitator." A community foundation is not a place to give, but a way to give. We are not here to "take away" from your favorite charities, but rather to enhance and make the most of donations that go to your favorite causes, schools, charities and projects.

Community foundations specialize in endowments, which means that the donated dollars are not spent, but invested. The earnings off of this money are granted out according to the donors' wishes.

For example, let's say Bob and his family have been avid participants in 4-H their entire

lives. Now that his kids are grown, Bob feels like 4-H camp was a wonderful benefit in his children's lives and would like to support future 4-Hers going to camp who may not have the means to go on their own.

Bob made a tax-deductible donation of \$20,000 in and endowment, telling the foundation that he wants it to be used for this specific purpose. He names the fund "Bob's Family Fund for 4-H."

Not only has Bob now preserved a way to generate around \$1,000 per year "forever" (assuming an average payout of 5 percent) to assist county youths with 4-H camp fees, but he now also has left a legacy for his children that they can add to at anytime to increase the im-

pact in the area they most care about.

Because of his decision to support the 4-H program in this way, over 100 years his family will have been responsible for grants totaling around \$100,000 helping children experience 4-H camp. This is just a hypothetical situation, but it shows you what the power of endowment can do for your cause over time.

We have only just begun our legacy in Thomas County. Ten years is not very long, but in the last 10 years, through the caring individuals of our community, we have been able to grant out \$300,000 to Thomas County schools, nonprofits and government agencies.

We hope your life, or the life of someone you care about, has been touched by the efforts of our foundation, but if not, just wait — we've only just begun!

Melinda Olson is executive director of the Thomas County Community Foundation. The office is at 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 14, in the Thomas County Office Complex, (785) 460-9152. For information, go to www.thomas-countycommunityfoundation.com.

Small-town story important to world

Only once in a blue moon do Kansas farm and ranch families have an opportunity to tell their story to people halfway around the world. That was the case March 23-24 when a Dutch public broadcasting television crew traveled to Smith and Sheridan counties to portray life on the farm in rural Kansas.

Theron and Lori Haresnape and family in Smith County and Harold and Bridget Koster and grandchildren and Wilfred Reinert from Sheridan County provided an up-close and personal view of their farming operations, family, faith and how folks live in the Heartland.

So often visitors from other countries only travel to the East or West coasts, says Paul Rosenmoller. He interviewed the Kansas farmers and ranchers as part of the Dutch film crew.

People who live and work in the Midwest are often overlooked and seldom included in visits by travelers from abroad, he continued. The same holds true for television documentaries.

"Farms, ranches and small villages of 14 people like Seguin are an integral part of the United States of America," Rosenmoller says. "I believe these rural areas are underestimated. The people who live here have sentiments, opinions and views just like other parts of America. So what is happening in the countryside has a huge impact on what we know in Europe as the United States."

Rosenmoller and the other three members of the crew were fascinated by the big sky and wide-open spaces of Western Kansas. All expressed the feeling of being at the edge of the world — though very beautiful, with so many acres of land and so few farms and people.

"It gives you the ultimate feeling of freedom," Rosenmoller says. "It's like you are here by yourself, on your own and you can do anything."

And that's what the Dutch crew found with the farm and ranch families they interviewed. They met their families, broke bread with them and shared a fabulous, home-cooked meal, walked on their farm/ranch land and looked at their crops and cattle and even attended mass



John Schlageck

● **Insights**
Kansas Farm Bureau

at St. Martin's church in Seguin.

The Haresnapes, Kosters and Reinert shared their faith, family and vocations with the film crew from the Netherlands. These Kansas families all opened their hearts and homes to the Western European visitors while extending the legendary hospitality of those who inhabit central Kansas and the great High Plains.

The three Kansas family's willingness to share their intimate thoughts on life's tough day-to-day issues was inspiring. All provided a comprehensive, thoughtful portrayal of their farm and ranch vocation as well as family life in rural Kansas.

All were truly outstanding representatives of our state — true ambassadors for agriculture, family and their faith.

The three Kansas families demonstrated their care for livestock. They said doing so allows them to continue in their vocation of farming and ranching. They also talked about the thirsty winter wheat crop.

At their final stop on Reinert's farm on the northwestern edge of Seguin, the 75-year-old Angus rancher fed his cow herd as the Dutch cameras rolled. When he finished, he told the film crew his cattle love him.

"I look after them every day," Reinert says. "I feed them, doctor them, fuss after them and care for them in return."

On the Haresnape farm, the central Kansas family expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to "teach four people from another country about our industry and make friends in the process."

During their interview, the Kosters emphasized how important every person in the town of Seguin is.

"We may only have 14 people here, but

they're 14 of the best people anywhere," Bridget says. "You can count on them. They look out for you, and you reciprocate."

When the Dutch crew departed Kansas, they left knowing they had indeed spent time they would remember always with some unique, wonderful people.

As he departed, Rosenmoller asked the Kosters if there had ever been a film crew in Seguin.

"No," they said, not to their knowledge. "You did very, very well," Rosenmoller told them. "You can be proud of the way you conducted yourselves and proud of your story."

And while the Dutch camera crew had traveled half way around the world for this story — it was more than worth the effort.

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

Write us

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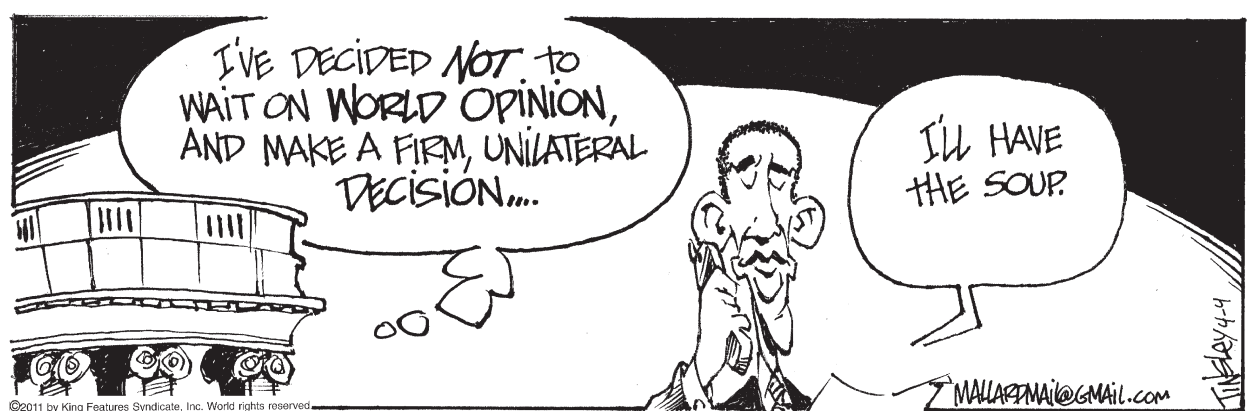
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Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

Mallard Fillmore

● **Bruce Tinsley**



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