



Other Viewpoints

Kansas must unify to support aviation

Thanks are due to Gov. Sam Brownback for devoting his first economic summit to asking the question for Wichita and Sedgwick County: What is it going to take to keep and build Wichita's reputation as Air Capital of the World? The answer, which he mentioned again in Topeka, is that the community and state must assume an "offensive position" toward recruiting aviation companies, suppliers and jobs.

Playing defense can work, as when leaders used incentives last year to fight off Louisiana's efforts to lure away Hawker Beechcraft.

But it's better to head off would-be poachers in ways that try to ensure that aircraft manufacturers' decisions will go Wichita's way.

Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Wichita, took from the aviation summit a confirmation of the importance of "good and forward-looking" tax and regulatory policies. "You have to have folks want to invest here," he told *The Eagle* editorial board.

Pompeo noted how Los Angeles used to be among the cities known for building airplanes. Only Wichita and four other U.S. cities have maintained that industry's manufacturing base.

He will help at the federal level as he can, Pompeo said, but "earmarks are gone" with the debt crisis and he now has a limited ability to secure funds for local projects such as Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research and Sedgwick County's National Center for Aviation Training.

In the ongoing 2012 budget negotiations and beyond, leaders should continue to push for National Institute for Aviation Research and National Center for Aviation Training funding at the state level. Both institutions are invaluable assets, signaling that Wichita not only wants to be the place where airplanes are built but where the future of aviation is forged.

Action on other areas could boost Wichita's aviation sector: The Legislature should pass the University Engineering Initiative Act, which would use Kansas Lottery money to help Wichita State University, the University of Kansas and Kansas State University boost the number of engineering graduates in the state to 1,365 a year by 2021. As Spirit AeroSystems Chief Executive Officer Jeff Turner said at the aviation summit, a business needs "people, product and capital," and Spirit and other companies are facing a shortage of engineers.

The Air Force should favor Hawker Beechcraft, and not Brazil's Embraer, with the pending contract to produce fighter aircraft. The same arguments that won the \$35 billion air-tanker contract for Boeing apply here: The job of building light attack planes should go to Hawker because it can provide far more jobs to Americans (1,400 jobs in 20 states), including perhaps 800 in Wichita, than its foreign competitor.

The summit also highlighted the need for more international marketing and trade agreements, and the importance of affordable commercial airfares in and out of Wichita. With so many other communities and countries offering aggressive incentives to companies, Kansas also needs its own set of economic development tools and a savvy strategy for using them.

As Pompeo said, "We have this unbelievable jewel here." It must be the unified mission of Pompeo, Brownback and every other leader to ensure that jewel remains not only polished but right where it is.

- *The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press*

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail colby.editor@nwkansas.com.

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Judge *Steve Haynes* at *the star.com*



"I JUST DROPPED BY TO TELL YOU HOW WE PLAN TO KEEP GOVERNMENT OUT OF YOUR LIFE."

Farewell, but not goodbye

Mixed emotions.

I guess that's how I'd describe writing my last publisher's column for the *Colby Free Press*.

It seems like only yesterday that John Van Nostrand was off to new adventures in Burlington, Iowa, and I thought I would come in and fill his position while we looked for a replacement. Then came the recession, and truthfully, there was no way we could afford to replace him.

That was OK by me. I was having fun. As far as I'm concerned, being publisher of the *Free Press* is one of the greatest jobs in this business. It hasn't always been the easiest, but it's a great job. I'll miss it. I know I'll miss the people of Colby.

Oh, there were days when the commute from Oberlin got a little much, especially when it snowed. I never had time to do all the community things I wanted to do.

Nonetheless, I'll be moving on. John Van Nostrand is in Burlington, Colo., now, and I'll be leaving the office in Colby after nearly three years.

Not that I'll be going far. I'll just be going back to doing my own job full time, something I haven't actually done for most of the last decade.

I'll be group supervisor for all eight of the Nor'West Newspapers publications, working with the publishers in five counties and guiding some growth projects for the company. There's a theory that, as retirement age approaches, Cynthia and I might be able to travel a little more. I'm not sure I believe that, but



Steve Haynes

• Letter From the Publisher

anyway ... I think there'll be plenty of work for both of us.

The time seems right. Business is better, Colby's economy is strong, and Sharon Friedlander showed up on the front porch, so to speak.

I thought we were six months away from looking for a publisher, but Sharon was looking for a job, a mutual friend had recommended us, and after we thought about it, Cynthia agreed maybe it was time.

I think you'll love Sharon. She's a great person, loves newspapers and small towns and knows a lot about sales. From her first job through this one, she's worked with friends of ours, though far as I can tell, we'd never met. They all loved Sharon.

She'll get to write the next column, and I leave the details to her.

This isn't exactly goodbye. I'll be in Colby often, talking with Sharon and doing various errands. My editorials and column - love them or hate them - will continue to run in the *Free Press*.

And I'll have to say, I'll know a lot more about Colby going out than I did coming in.

I think we've accomplished some things in

the last couple of years. Our carrier delivery system works better today than it did then, though we still have trouble filling all the routes. We've thought of switching to the mail, but there are problems with that. It may never happen.

The news department was down to - at one point - just me and Andy Heintz for a while in 2008. Then we found Marian Ballard, who proofs and organizes everything, and things got a little better. The arrival of Kevin Bottrell the next spring allowed the department to grow and stretch its wings. Under him, the paper has done well.

The advertising department has struggled at times, especially with the recession. It's stronger now, and getting better. Under Sharon, it should thrive.

We think customers will see the strong residual value of the *Free Press* and the *Country Advocate* together as the only advertising channel that can truly claim to reach into nearly every home in northwest Kansas and eastern Colorado each and every week.

To the many of you who renewed or started subscriptions, wrote letters, called with complaints or suggestions, showed you cared about "your" newspaper, thanks.

I've enjoyed meeting you, bringing you a missed paper, dealing with your ads, covering your stories. It's been fun. I'd do it again in a minute.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

Spring is time to consider kids' safety

Before long kids will toss their schoolbooks and pencils in the far corners of their rooms, don their Magellan garb and embark on a summer course of outdoor exploration.

For many rural children, railroads, dumps, junkyards, abandoned properties and ponds make exciting places to explore. It is up to parents to decide where suitable adventure sites may be found.

Each year, hundreds of railroad trespassers are killed and injured, according to the National Safety Council. Children who crawl under or pass around lowered gates, walk the tracks, cross trestles, take shortcuts across railroad property, hop trains, climb in, on or around railroad cars run a tremendous risk.

This spring take the time to warn your children of these dangers, says Holly Higgins, Kansas Farm Bureau safety director. Instruct them to obey warning devices and insist they never cross a railroad track until they have looked both ways and are sure it is safe.

"Never assume children will act like responsible, mature adults," Higgins says. "Advise them often because they forget."

Kids will be kids. For most, life is an adventure. Anything and anywhere is fair game for exploration.

When I was a boy growing up in northwestern Kansas, there was always something magnetic about a junkyard. We had an abandoned dump within easy walking distance. We dug and sifted through the trash at the site for hours, collecting little treasures to add to our growing collections. Sometimes these "keepers" as we called them consisted of rusted iron spikes, neat-shaped bottles, broken wrenches



John Schlageck

• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

and tools, discarded containers and other cast-offs.

While we weren't aware of it or didn't care, the risk of injury was always present. Wasps, snakes, rats, spiders and other creatures scrambled and slithered to move out of the way of our excavation projects. Broken glass and boards with rusty nails threatened to cut or puncture our small feet. I will never forget the pain and tears of stepping on a nail.

Dumps also feature trucks, bulldozers and other heavy equipment. It's difficult for operators to see children scooting among the debris. Such equipment can easily crush kids. Warn your children to stay away.

Dark deserted buildings - including barns and abandoned farmhouses - often have the reputation of being haunted. Such structures were always considered another adventure when I was a youngster.

Big kids often dare little kids to go in. I remember accepting the challenge and brushing my way through cobwebs and crawling around rodent holes and fleeing mice. Although I survived, I wouldn't advise any child of mine to do the same.

As a youth, my dad always warned me again and again about swimming ponds. I guess the

repetition paid off because I never swam in such pools of water until I was in high school and an OK swimmer.

Remember to tell your children about such ponds. They are deep. You can be into water up to your knees the first couple of steps and the next - over your head.

There are no lifeguards. Fencing off ponds may help. Warning signs also may serve as a deterrent, but kids always find a way into the water.

Warn children about such potential hazards. Then warn them again. Saving one child's life is worth the effort. Many times it takes more than once for them to grasp your warnings.

Lead by example and remember that as a parent you have been entrusted with safeguarding your children's wellbeing. Summer-time is a special time for kids. Having a child is indeed a treasure. Take care of, cherish and nurture this wonderful gift.

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.

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