



Capitol gridlock may hurt at home

State government bracing for loss of federal funding

By John Hanna and Roxana Hegeman
The Associated Press

WICHITA - As the gridlock continues in Washington over the national debt, Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback said Wednesday his administration is making plans

for "a substantial contraction" in federal money to the states in the event of a default.

The Republican governor told reporters that his administration has calculated the amount of federal money Kansas could lose, a number he termed as a "target." He refused to disclose that inter-

nal figure, saying only that it's a substantial number. Brownback said half the state's resources come from federal dollars.

The state had predicted it would receive about \$3.9 billion in federal funds for its current fiscal year, which began July 1. About \$2.2 billion of that would help finance social services programs, while another \$948 million would go to the public school and higher education systems.

Brownback said it is questionable whether the federal govern-

ment will actually default on its debt because there is cash flow to make the interest payments on the bonds, but making those bond payments will leave much less money for operating the rest of the government.

"That is what I'm focused on. We are looking at what we can and what we need to do to really cut down on and anticipate far fewer dollars, because that is what will actually happen to the states," Brownback said. "The bonds will get paid first because it will be a

higher priority by the government, but they will then stop making transfer payments to the states."

The governor also says his office is not planning for across-the-board program cuts because the federally funded programs that would be cut will be determined in Washington.

"But we may look at saying, 'OK, we want to backfill this piece of this program because it is critically important to us, but there are others that we just don't have the resources,'" Brownback said.

"And we don't have resources as a state to do a complete backfill at the federal level - it is a far larger number than we can possibly reach."

The governor didn't specify which state services he thought would be the most vulnerable in the event of the loss of federal monies.

Kansas Senate Majority Leader Jay Emler, a Lindsborg Republican, said his contacts with offi-

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Garden needs volunteers for harvesting

By Christina Beringer
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Thomas County Coalition Community Garden volunteer and co-founder Orvella Romine said Wednesday the garden is going strong thanks to help from volunteers who are working especially hard during these hot summer days.

An assortment of produce is ready for harvest and many more volunteers are needed to keep up with production, especially during the evenings and weekends, Romine said. There is also one morning shift that is available.

"Anyone can volunteer," she said, "and we need as much help as possible to water, tend to weeds and pick vegetables. Volunteers can donate however many hours they can spare and in return, they can even take produce home."

The garden is located at 105 Experiment Farm Road on the east side of the Kansas State University Area Experiment Station in Colby, behind the main office.

Romine said that the garden is producing a lot of squash and there

is enough zucchini and yellow summer squash to be picked every other day. Tomatoes are starting to ripen as well, and with over 100 plants there will be plenty to go around. Watermelon, okra, cantaloupe, green beans, corn and peppers can also be expected soon.

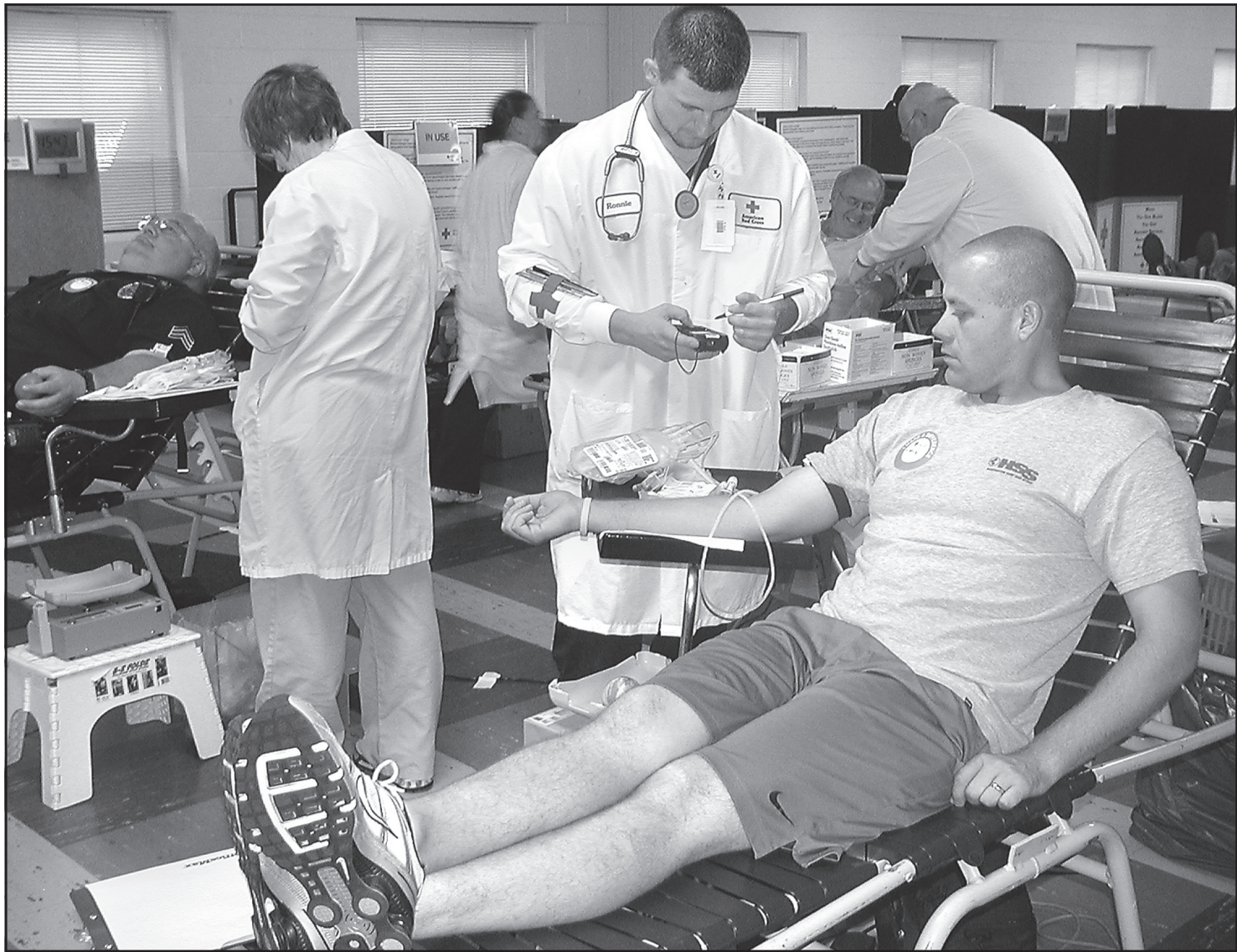
"We have set aside Tuesday evenings at 8 p.m. to pick," said Romine. "25 percent of what we pick on those days is donated to Genesis-Thomas County food bank and today we were able to give them 39 pounds of produce."

The remaining produce is divided up amongst the volunteers. There are currently nine active volunteers who help maintain the garden on a regular basis.

In addition to the large section of community garden, there are also 18 group plots that people can plant and maintain on their own and a smaller area that has been designated as a kids' patch. Volunteer and co-founder Robin Whelchel said that there are seven kids, from three to 12 years old, who tend to their special bed of vegetables and fruits.

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Cops compete in blood drive



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Sheriff's Deputy Lance Goodman and Colby Police Sgt. Kent Dible gave blood Wednesday at the Red Cross "Battle of the Badges" blood drive at the Community

Building. The drive, which continued this morning, was a competition see which emergency responder - police, sheriff or emergency medical services - could give the most blood.

State finds low unemployment in Thomas County

By Kevin Bottrell
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A recently released report from the Kansas Department of Labor shows Thomas County has maintained a consistently low unemployment rate.

The report, released last week, says the unemployment rate in Thomas County in June was 4 percent. The civilian labor force in Thomas County numbers 4,201, and of that 169 are unemployed.

The rate rose slightly from May when unemployment was at 3.9 percent. However, it was still lower than the state aver-

age, 6.6 percent.

Unemployment was generally higher in urban areas like Topeka, 6.7 percent; Wichita, 8.6; and Kansas City, 7.3. Neighboring Sheridan County had an unemployment rate at 2.6 percent, the lowest in the state. Other northwest Kansas county rates included: Cheyenne, 3.7; Rawlins,

3.9; Decatur, 4; Gove, 3.1; Logan, 3; Wallace, 4.6; and Sherman, 3.5.

Linn County in east central Kansas had the highest rate at 11.6 percent.

The report also says the state lost about 4,000 nonfarm jobs from May to June. There were 9,600 fewer government jobs, mainly state level jobs in education that

ended for the summer. The technology sector also lost about 400, but businesses in the leisure and hospitality industries added about 2,500 jobs. Construction and manufacturing added about 1,000 jobs each and education and health services jobs increased by 4,700.



CHRISTINA BERINGER/Colby Free Press

Family duo wraps up picnics

Taylor McLemore (above) and her father Larry serenaded the audience at the last Picnic in the Park of the summer Wednesday. Lesley Wagoner (right) enjoyed her time at Picnic in the Park on Wednesday as she tickled her godson Josten Sabatka. His sisters, Jalyn and Jalyssa, also had fun listening to the McLemores.



Partisan fight beginning over state redistricting process

By John Milburn
The Associated Press

TOPEKA - Kansas Democrats raised concerns Wednesday about how the Republican-controlled Legislature will redraw the state's political maps to solidify the GOP's hold on the state's four U.S. House seats.

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, a Topeka Democrat, presented a map during public hearings Tuesday and Wednesday that would extend the 1st District from the Colorado line east to the Missouri border, taking in Atchi-

son, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties.

Atchison and Leavenworth counties currently are in the 2nd District represented by Republican Lynn Jenkins, while Republican Rep. Kevin Yoder represents Wyandotte County in the 3rd District.

"There will be all kinds of variations, but I felt compelled to discuss this map early on," Hensley said. "If it's not true, let (House Speaker) Mike O'Neal make me a liar."

Hensley said Republicans would be able to dilute the effect

of Democratic votes in congressional elections for the next 10 years by keeping Shawnee, Douglas and Wyandotte counties in separate districts. Douglas is presently split between the 2nd and 3rd districts, with Shawnee and Topeka in the 2nd District.

O'Neal, a Hutchinson Republican and chairman of the House committee, said Hensley's concerns amount to a "conspiracy theory."

O'Neal said moving Wyandotte County to the 1st District would

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Logan County approved for emergency grazing

The Farm Service Agency announced today that Conservation Reserve Program acreage has been approved for emergency grazing in Logan County.

Emergency haying of Conservation Reserve acreage has also been approved for Wichita County.

Forty counties were previously approved for CRP emergency grazing through Sept. 30. Thirty-one counties have been approved previously for CRP emergency haying through Aug. 31.

Conservation reserve participants in approved counties need to contact the local Farm Service office to request emergency haying or grazing on an

individual contract basis before haying or grazing and work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop a forage management plan.

Participants must also accept a 25 percent reduction in the annual rental payment for the acres actually hayed or grazed.

