

Other Viewpoints

Politics stymie beneficial plan

So much for Kansas seeking ways to be a leader in innovation.

Instead of acknowledging how a \$31.5 million federal grant would get the state involved in a cutting-edge technology project to help create a prototype, online health insurance exchange, Gov. Sam Brownback rejected the funding and in doing so put politics ahead of a sensible way to improve access to health care in Kansas and beyond.

Kansas joined six states in successfully applying for early innovator grant funds to help develop the online computer exchange capable of helping people select, enroll in and purchase insurance. Consumers and small businesses would have access to user-friendly features to simplify the process of buying coverage.

With a head start on development, Kansas could have pursued an exchange that best met needs in a state with 347,400 uninsured residents, including 74,800 children. (An astounding 24 percent of adults in Finney County are uninsured, according to the Kansas Health Consumer Coalition.)

Credit the stalled progress to political pressure from right-wing extremists determined to derail national health-care reform to include a way to give small businesses and people in need of affordable coverage the ability to band together and negotiate better rates.

After all, since the grant was part of so-called "Obamacare," it had to be unacceptable or so tea-party faithful and others who object to any spending regardless of need would have us believe.

Now the question is how Kansas plans to move forward. The state still must show progress toward setting up a health insurance exchange before Jan. 1, 2013.

Instead of being in position to help get the exchange up and running for use here and in other states with the aid of federal funds, Kansas itself would have to invest in a computer exchange that must be functional by 2014.

Brownback has addressed the need for Kansas to be innovative as a way to power growth. Even though the health insurance exchange fit the bill, the governor balked.

And all in the name of politics. Unfortunately, it was another step backward for Kansas. —*The Garden City Telegram*

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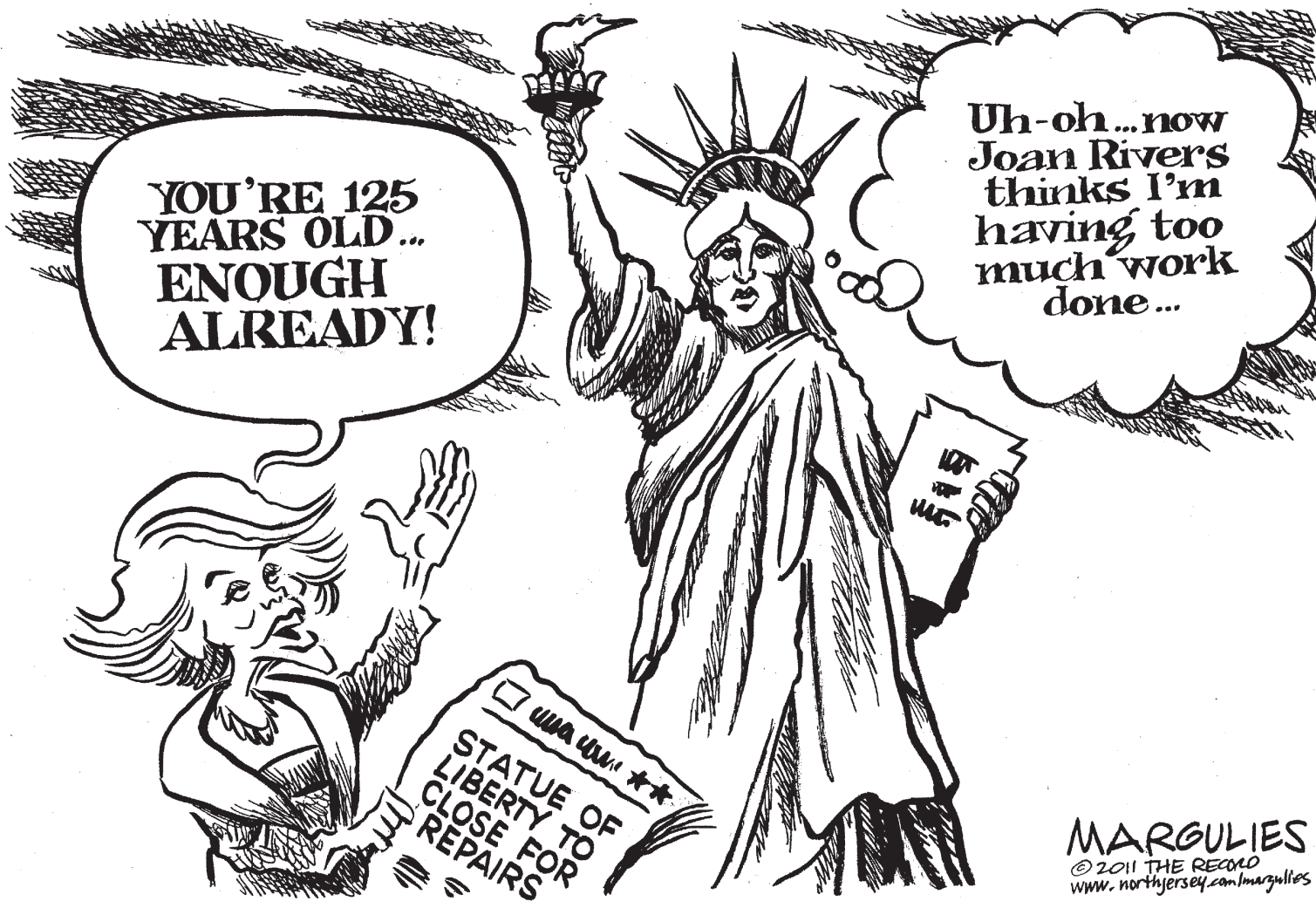
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Brochure leads to interesting trip

The traveling bug got us again, and we decided to check out a photography show in Santa Fe, N.M., a retrospective winnowed from 10 years worth of exhibitions.

The gallery sent us a brochure about a month ago on their latest show of mostly black-and-white prints. It looked interesting, we hadn't been to Santa Fe in several years and we were in Colorado already, so we decided to head south.

The show was all it promised to be and more. We were mesmerized by pictures from the World War II years – Hitler greeting Mussolini for the first time, a soldier wading ashore on D-Day and the famous photo from *Life* magazine of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on V-J Day.

Then there were the 1960s and '70s. We remembered those. There were the famous shot of John F. Kennedy Jr. saluting his father's casket and the one of Jack Ruby killing Lee Harvey Oswald. Dr. Martin Luther King was featured in several, being arrested, speaking, the day of his death.

There were photos of Woodstock and protests and one poignant one of the Brown sisters walking to their segregated school along the railroad tracks in Topeka.

Steve and I especially liked that one. He had worked for the Santa Fe Railway, switching trains on those same rails 15 years later. It's



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

still a little hard to think that one of the biggest victories of the Civil Rights movement was won in abolitionist Kansas: the Brown versus the Board of Education ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that outlawed segregated schools.

Further on were color photos from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The pictures – three generations worth of memories – were hanging there. The gallery owner said he and his wife put the show together to celebrate the shop's 10th birthday. It took about a year to gather the prints, many of which were for sale for more than you'd believe.

The show was wonderful, and we loved the art, but left with our pocketbooks intact.

Santa Fe is always a busy place, especially down by the square, where Indians sell their wares on blankets in front of the old Palace of the Governors.

This week, however, the place was a zoo.

There were people everywhere.

We had stumbled upon the annual Indian Market. The square and every street for three or four blocks around it were covered with little white tents with Native Americans selling everything from modern to traditional artwork. While jewelry and pottery predominated, other crafts included textiles and painting.

A couple of stages were set up for shows, but I only saw a little of one of them.

I didn't have much time and, over the years, I've looked at and purchased a few nice pieces of both jewelry and pottery. I wanted to see something different, so I headed over to the area set aside mostly for Alaskan tribes.

I found a bracelet that I love. It's a small strip of hide about 1 1/2 inches wide with no adornment. It doesn't look like much, but it's pretty and soft and I like it. I'm also pretty sure it's made by a real Eskimo, since everyone at the show had to be certified as a native American craftsman.

It also was one of the least expensive pieces of Indian art I'm every likely to find.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

College taxes increasing

To the Editor:

On the Colby Community College budget, it was not said like the paper said. I said the taxpayers of Thomas County had to pay about \$1 million more in taxes in just three years – about a 33 percent increase in three years. There is now more than \$3.7 million coming to the college from us. That stands at 41 mills, which is about to be as high as out USD 316 levy of 43 mills. By the way, that's a very good school.

The college years back was at about half the mills as our district. What is the college doing for this kind of increase? It is out of hand and the well is running out. The money that the college takes from us is hard earned. The board needs to understand that.

Fred Albers
Rexford

P.S. I do think the college itself is a good college.

Association head wrong on checkoff

To the Editor:

In regards to recent remarks by Bill Donald, president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, might I just remind all of you that we tried to get a handle on the checkoff.

First, how did it get to this place with the issue of misappropriation of funds at all? Remember that thousands of producers signed on with the Livestock Marketing Association "referendum" challenge several years ago only to get stopped by the Cattlemen. Why did we not get to fix it then and have the ability to vote on the board, direction and messages we would have liked to have? It is simple: it was just one big happy fraternity with a lot of cash!



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

We as checkoff-paying producers know the abuses that happened. We also know that the fox (the Cattlemen) isn't going to protect the chickens, or in our case, the "wolf" isn't going to protect the calves. I have a Cattlemen's magazine in which multiple articles are marked "paid for and promoted by Checkoff dollars."

Go figure; we can't even in the United States (with the best retail market in the world) promote our own "Product of the USA" for our cattle producers' benefit with a well-funded checkoff system that we all pay for.

So, the next time you read about how they are going to "improve the system," ask just how much one of those full-page ads cost. The last time I asked a major media magazine editor, it was thousands of dollars.

I am not throwing any stones, but I don't like being lied to, either. So divest your fraternity ties and let each individual organization, the Cattlemen and the Cattlemen's Beef Board, stand alone. There is far more to this subject than in print, and I ask that each of you personally get involved and not to buy into the political garbage that we are fed every day. I believe those on these boards all should be held accountable for dereliction of duty and failure of fiduciary responsibility as board members. Either they were asleep or just yes men to the system.

Accountability starts when you take a seat on any board. By being a yes person on the board doesn't exempt you from your responsi-

bilities as a member for the use of producers' money collected by those who pay with hard earned dollars.

The Cattlemen and the board need to prove the change. We should demand a "USA Produced Beef" label; it will do far more good for our producers than any product labeled from Mexico and Canada. Ask any consumer if it matters; many tell me they now pay closer attention to the origin labels.

By the way, we need to tell the World Trade Organization and the congressional supporters to take a hike or find a new job. This battle is all about competition to the best market in the world, the U.S.A!

Mike Schultz, Brewster

Chairman, R-CALF USA
Country of Origin Labeling Committee

Editor's note: Bill Donald's remarks were made at the Cattle Industry Summer Conference on Aug. 4. They can be viewed at beefproducer.com/story.aspx?s=51996&c=10&pv=1

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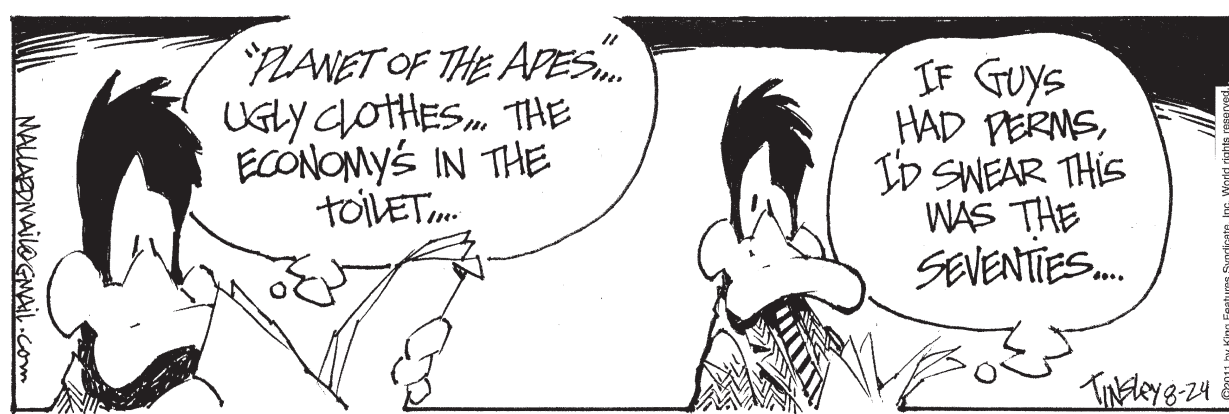
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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



Tinsley 8-24