

## Other Viewpoints

### Inspect storage at natural gas sites

Kansas lawmakers usually complain about too much government regulation. So you know something's wrong when they are worried about regulators not doing enough about underground natural-gas storage.

In fact, the regulators aren't doing anything at several large sites.

As an article in the *Eagle* reported, a federal court struck down part of Kansas' gas-safety laws last year. As a result, 11 underground storage sites with a capacity of more than 270 billion cubic feet of gas have gone uninspected for 18 months.

The state laws came about after gas leaked from salt caverns and flowed underground to Hutchinson, where it made its way to the surface and exploded in January 2001. The first explosion destroyed half a block of downtown businesses, and a second explosion killed an elderly couple. It took more than a month for flares to burn off the remaining gas.

The Legislature voted to have two state agencies split responsibility for regulating underground storage of hazardous gases and liquids. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment would regulate man-made underground salt caverns, and the Kansas Corporation Commission would regulate "porosity" fields in which gas is stored in depleted oil and gas fields and reservoirs.

But Colorado Interstate Gas Co. sued, arguing that the state didn't have authority to regulate storage fields that are involved in interstate commerce. A federal judge in Topeka agreed.

That wouldn't necessarily be a problem if the federal government inspected the storage fields. But that's not happening. In fact, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration wouldn't even respond to questions from the *Eagle*.

The gas company says there is nothing to worry about, because it does its own internal inspections. But after the explosions in Hutchinson, "trust us" doesn't cut it.

That's why the Kansas House and Senate voted this past session to ask the federal government to restore the state's authority to regulate interstate gas storage. Even hard-core, anti-regulation lawmakers backed the tougher state standards.

But so far, nothing has changed, and neither state nor federal regulators are inspecting the interstate storage fields.

"I guess when we have the next field blow up, maybe the feds will figure out they did it wrong," state Rep. Carl Holmes, R-Liberal, chairman of the House Energy and Utilities Committee, told the *Eagle*.

If that occurs, the explosion and deaths could dwarf what happened in Hutchinson.

The federal government needs to either start inspecting the storage fields or grant Kansas the authority to do its own inspections. It shouldn't take another tragedy.

— *The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press*



### Apply common courtesies when hunting

In less than a month the Kansas fields, hills and woods will awaken to the sound of booming shotguns and barking dogs. Nov. 12 is the official opening day of upland game hunting. Hunters and their canines will once again swarm the countryside searching for pheasants, quail and prairie chicken. Duck and turkey season is already in full swing.

Farms and ranches have always been a handy, ready-to-use outlet for many urban dwellers who travel outside their city homes in search of recreational hunting. On opening day of the upland game season the interstate and U.S. highways will be a steady stream of pickups, SUVs and cars headed for central and western Kansas.

If you plan to hunt on private land remember one key word as you embark on this season's sojourn. That word is consideration. It means thoughtful and sympathetic regard.

In this country, wildlife belongs to the people, but landowners (farmers and ranchers) have the right to say who goes on their land. If you are interested in hunting, make arrangements before you hunt.

Don't wait until the day you plan to hunt someone's land and then knock on the door at 6 a.m. By now you should have already asked to hunt.

After you've secured permission, here are some suggestions to follow that will ensure a lasting relationship between you and the land-



**John Schlageck**

• Insights  
Kansas Farm Bureau

owner.

Agree on who, and how many, will hunt on the land. Specify number and furnish names. Talk about specific times and dates you plan to hunt.

Contact the landowner each and every time before you plan to hunt, and let the landowner know of your intentions. The landowner may have forgotten about your original conversation. It's just common courtesy to say hello before hunting and ask again for the opportunity — or privilege, as I consider it — to hunt on someone's property.

Determine the exact location on the land you have permission to hunt. Some areas may be off-limits because of livestock or crops.

Always, and I can't stress this enough, leave gates the way you find them. If they are open, leave them that way. If they are closed, shut them after you pass through.

If you ever leave a gate open and a farmer's cow herd gets out of the pasture, "Katy bar the door." You'll never be invited back to hunt.

Don't even ask.

Once you've enjoyed a successful hunt, stop by to thank the landowner for his generosity. Offer to share the game you bag.

After the season, write a note expressing your appreciation for the opportunity to hunt. Consider offering a gift as a token of your gratitude.

Leasing of land by the hunter from the landowner is becoming more popular in Kansas. Such agreements allow a hunter a guaranteed hunting site. It also provides the landowner income necessary to recoup some of the investment he needs to leave habitat suitable for wildlife to survive and prosper.

If you enter into such a lease, make sure it is written and includes all provisions both parties deem necessary. This should include a clause for the landowner and his/her family to hunt on the land.

Always remember that the hunter and landowner should discuss the terms of the hunt before hunting begins. This is extremely important. Hunters, never forget you are a guest and it is a privilege to hunt on the owner's land.

*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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### Opt Out group joins 'Occupy Wall Street'

A national group promoting opting kindergarten through 12th grade students out of assessments has put together an extended platform for the "Occupy Wall Street" movement. With the blessings of Dr. Timothy D. Slekar, Head of the Division of Education, Human Development, and Social Sciences at Pennsylvania State University at Altoona, I am distributing their following proclamation.



**John Richard Schrock**

• Education Frontlines

"We, administrators of United Opt Out National, wish to collaborate with the Occupy Wall Street Movement and offer our vision for corporate-free public schools.

We believe that quality public education is a democratic right for all persons. It is through vibrant and fully funded school communities that all children have the opportunity to develop and grow into happy, successful, free, and active citizens. High stakes testing functions in opposition to quality public education, as it is used to punish children, to malign educators, and to provide financial gain for testing corporations and their political sponsors.

Therefore, we demand an end to the following:

1. All high stakes testing and punitive policies that label schools, punish students, and close public community schools;
2. All high stakes testing that ties teacher evaluations, pay, and job security to high stakes test results;
3. Corporate interventions in public education and education policy;
4. The use of public education funds to enact school "choice" measures influenced and supported by the corporate agenda;
5. Economically and racially segregated school communities;
6. "Model" legislation that provides special rules to charter schools that are forced upon public schools;

7. Corporate run for-profit charter schools that divert public funds away from public schools; and

8. Mandates requiring teachers to use corporate approved, scripted programs that sublimate and negate authentic and meaningful learning experiences imparted by varied and rich curricula.

Furthermore, we demand restoration and/or implementation of the following:

1. Libraries and librarians to all schools and communities;
2. Teaching force educated through accredited college teacher education programs only;
3. School buildings in all neighborhoods that meet health code including clean drinking water, heat and air conditioning;
4. Developmentally appropriate, problem-based, literacy-rich, play-based and student-centered learning, with the return of nap, play, and snack time for kindergartners;
5. Smaller student to teacher ratio (25 or fewer to one);
6. Wrap-around services for schools that offset the effects of poverty and social inequality, including but not limited to: school staff such as nurses and health providers, community social workers, community organizers, family counselors, free quality community daycare and preschool programs, healthy food availability, safe and healthy housing options, community social facilities, and after school programs to enhance learning and provide safe recreational spaces

for all students;

7. Fully funded arts and athletics programs;

8. Recess and adequate time allotted for lunch;

9. New national funding formulas that ensure equity in funding to all public schools regardless of zip code;

10. Requirement that textbooks or testing company profits go back to public education;

11. Requirement that all Department of Education positions are filled with qualified and experienced educators; and

12. Requirement that Superintendents and school administrators have exceptional, extended teaching and school-based experience."

The above manifesto expresses the sentiments of many Kansas teachers. However, how you say something is often as important as what you say. And "Occupy Wall Street" is a movement that does not fit the Kansas style, nor may it have much duration on the coasts. Nor do we listen kindly to the word "demand" although that is precisely what the federal education policies do.

Nevertheless, a large number of parents and teachers for whom the above rings true should certainly check out the website [www.unitedoptout.com](http://www.unitedoptout.com). Our Washington legislators have failed to end the No Child Left Behind overtesting. Indeed, the new waiver plan and national science curriculum extends testing even further. Enough is enough. This coming spring is the time for Kansans to join parents in other states and pull their students out of the assessments — and bring this test tyranny to a halt for the sake of our children.

*John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.*

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

