



Water officials to meet with public here

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Anyone concerned about the recent water policy proposals put out the Kansas government will have an opportunity Tuesday to ask questions of the agencies responsible.

Representatives from the Kansas Water Office, Kansas Water Authority and the Department of Agriculture will meet with the public at 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College.

authority secretary, and Gary Harshberger, chairman of both the authority and the Ogallala Aquifer Advisory Committee.

Two meetings were held last week in Topeka and Wichita.

'We're expecting more people than we had in Topeka,' said water office spokesperson Katie Patterson-Ingels. 'We want everyone to be able to attend, of course, but it will affect people out there more. They're the stakeholders.'

The new policies, developed from the governor's water summit in Colby in July and the recommendations of the Ogallala committee, were put forward on Nov. 30. They will be proposed to the state Legis-

lature when it convenes in January.

One of the proposals is to amend Kansas' 'use it or lose it' doctrine, part of the Kansas Water Appropriation Act. Currently, water users can lose their rights if they do not use that water for five consecutive years unless there is 'due and sufficient cause.'

The government's proposal is to get rid of the 'use it or lose it' doctrine for areas closed to new water right development.

Another of the proposals is to put in place a process for creating Local En-

hancement Management Plans, conservation plans developed at the local level which can't be made more restrictive after being sent to the state's chief engineer.

This measure was proposed by Groundwater Management District Four, which includes Thomas County, as a way to replace the little-used Intensive Groundwater Use Control Area system, which is similar, but the plans can be altered at the state level and there is no way to stop the process.

Other proposals include allowing more groundwater banks and evening out the flex plans, which are based on a five-year average of water usage, but didn't take

into account several very wet years followed by drought.

The Kansas Water Authority is made up of people from different business and government sectors, including representatives of the groundwater management districts, conservation districts, the League of Kansas Municipalities and the public. It advises the governor and Legislature and water policy issues.

The Kansas Water Office conducts most of the planning and coordination, including preparation of the Kansas Water Plan. It also reviews water laws and makes recommendations to the governor and Legislature.

Some farmers have banner year

By Jim Suhr
AP Business Writer

ST. LOUIS - An Illinois farmer made so much money this year he made loan payments on one tractor a year in advance and exchanged some older ones for newer models. An Iowa farmer upgraded his combine and also paid off debt, while an elderly Oregon farmer poured into retirement funds a bundle of his \$2 million take from a well-timed sale of much of his turf and equipment.

While much of America worries about the possibility of a double-dip recession, such stories of prosperity are cropping up as U.S. farmers enjoy their best run in decades, thanks to high prices for many crops, livestock and farm-

land and strong global demand for corn used in making ethanol.

Farm profits are expected to spike by 28 percent this year to \$100.9 billion, and the amount of cash farms have available to pay bills also is expected to top \$100 billion - the first time both measures have done so, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All the while, crop sales are expected to pass the \$200 billion mark for the first time in U.S. history, and double-digit increases are expected in livestock sales.

'We're just experiencing the best of times,' said Bruce Johnson, an agricultural economist at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. 'It's a story to tell.'

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Brewster junior attends conference in Washington D.C.

Brewster junior Shane Rice attended the National Youth Leadership Forum on National Security held in Washington in October.

He is the son of Shanon and Darla Rice of Brewster.

Each day of the six-day forum gave Rice a different look at American diplomacy, intelligence and defense. He got to meet with key leaders in those areas, explore career options and develop his personal leadership skills. Rice was assigned to the Marshall National Security Action Meeting group led by Erica Garnett, his faculty advisor for the week.

On the second day Rice and his group had a session exploring the issue of ethics in national security, particularly as it relates to nuclear weapons.

He was introduced to the second of five National Security Strategy Exercises to help prepare him for the culminating simulation in which each scholar took on a role in a fictional nuclear weapons crisis that might take place on the Korean Peninsula.

Preparing for this simulation, the scholars considered four vectors of strategic analysis: basic national interests, intensity of those interests, instruments of national power and execution of a national strategy.

In the morning, Rice explored

the U.S. Capitol building, the Library of Congress, the House and Senate office buildings and the Supreme Court.

Back at the forum site, Rice attended a career exploration panel and a panel discussion featuring experts on Northeast Asia.

On the third day Rice received an up close and personal look at national security in action as he headed off to his 'site experience.' After dinner, he attended two current issue seminars, headed up by a leader in national security, to learn about and discuss key issues presently confronting the national security community.

On the fourth day he focused on preparations for the simulation, 'Crisis or Crossroads: A Nuclear North Korea and the Future of a Northeast Asian Community.' After learning more about the various simulation roles in the fifth National Security Strategy Exercise, Rice attended a workshop led by key players in one of the fields of: media, intelligence, defense, diplomacy, legislative and executive. This workshop gave him an opportunity to ask the experts about their role in the simulation and allow him to talk through potential strategies.

The simulation began after dinner.

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Governor: no pardons to be issued this year

LAWRENCE (AP) - Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback says he won't be granting any of the 37 requests his office has received this year for pardons.

The Kansas constitution gives the governor authority to issue pardons, but they're not common in the state. Former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius issued only one during her six years in office, in 2009 to a Kansas businessman who

couldn't get into Canada for business because of a drunken driving conviction.

The Lawrence Journal-World reports her successor, Mark Parkinson, issued four pardons during his two years as governor. Of those three were for members of the 'Wichita 8,' a group of black men convicted of various robbery charges in 1969 by an all-white Sedgwick County jury.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press



Volunteers turn out to fill baskets

Several dozen volunteers from civic groups and the general public came to the 4-H Building on Friday to help fill food baskets for Genesis-Thomas County. The building was set up like an assembly line, with volunteers taking grocery carts around to get each food item, off-loading the food and then going around again. Genesis has been taking food and money donations all year to go to the Christmas baskets. The organization received more than 200 requests for baskets, an increase from last year.

President's speech frames Kansas tax issue

By John Hanna
AP Political Writer

OSAWATOMIE - When President Barack Obama gave a major speech on the economy last week in Kansas, he aimed his message at a national audience, but he also framed an issue for state legislators to consider after they convene their annual session next year.

History led Obama to Osawatomie, with its 4,400 residents about 50 miles southwest of Kansas City, because there's no sense that anything the Democratic president says or does in the next 11 months will allow him to carry Kansas, which has given its electoral votes to every Republican presidential candidate since 1964. Osawatomie was the site of a 1910 speech by former President Theodore Roosevelt, extolling a 'New Nationalism' that reined in corporate interests to help the downtrodden.

Obama argued the middle class is in peril and a key reason is many congressional Republicans' refusal to raise taxes for wealthy Americans to help solve the nation's financial problems. He said the U.S. needs to rethink its

tax system to see that billionaires pay the same income tax rates as their secretaries.

The president didn't mention Republican Gov. Sam Brownback or his administration's work on proposals to overhaul the state's tax code. Nevertheless, Obama raised an important issue for Kansas legislators who'll consider the governor's yet-unreleased plan.

An AP News Analysis Brownback and officials in his administration have said the plan is designed to move the state toward a simpler and, in their view, fairer income tax and make Kansas more competitive. They've also said it won't reduce the state's overall tax revenues, meaning cuts in one area will be offset elsewhere, raising questions about who will benefit and who will pay more.

'We were trying to figure out: How do we get the message out?' said Kansas Democratic Party Chairwoman Joan Wagon, a former state revenue secretary. 'And here comes the president.'

Brownback argues that Kansas is losing residents to states with lower income taxes and states without income taxes, and he contends

lowering income taxes will spur economic growth. This year, the House, led by Brownback's fellow conservative Republicans, embraced a plan to phase out individual income taxes and cut corporate income taxes in half over time. A new group, Kansans for No Income Tax, has kicked off a public campaign.

A major debate on what constitutes fairness in taxation clearly is coming. Revenue Secretary Nick Jordan, a former state senator, said the governor wants to help all Kansans and move away from using the tax code for social engineering.

'We want obviously to put together the best economic growth strategy we can,' Jordan said during an interview last week. 'We're just trying to figure out what is the fairest, simplest flat tax we can go to.'

When Roosevelt gave his speech in 1910,

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