



Other Viewpoints

Renewed funding good news for arts

Kansas has rejoined the other 49 states in the union in funding the arts. That’s good news for Iola – and for the dozens of other Kansas communities, large and small, that have used state and national funds to supplement their arts budgets.

When Gov. Sam Brownback vetoed funding for the Kansas Arts Commission last year, it cost the state about \$1.3 million in federal arts funding. A small, but significant, part of that would have come to the Bowlus Fine Arts Center to pay part of the cost of productions staged there.

Gov. Brownback’s decision to leave the funding intact this year and create a new arts commission made up of the former Kansas Arts Commission and the Kansas Film Commission requalifies our state for federal support.

It is to be called the Creative Arts Industries Commission, in the hope that it will create more jobs for Kansas than the two organizations did operating separately.

Let’s not look this gift horse in the mouth.

Kansas should spend a few bucks helping motion picture entrepreneurs shoot pictures in Kansas. It should also invest in the small but very important arts programs that caring citizens have created and operated in almost every Kansas community of any size. That is a particularly good investment because state funding qualifies the state for two-to-one federal matching funds.

Will spending on the arts create jobs? We’re talking about \$2 million, state and federal combined; plus an unknown amount of local investments. Sure, jobs are created and parts of salaries are paid. Attending plays, concerts, arts fairs and exhibits are a significant part of the tourist industry. Iola’s restaurants and motels benefit a bit from the traffic generated by events at the Bowlus. The impact on larger centers is proportionately greater.

But it’s both crass and futile to try and put a dollar figure on the value of music, drama, paintings, photographic art, and all the rest of the human strivings that shelter under the arts umbrella.

The dollars aren’t the point. It is reason enough, and more, to support the arts because the arts give Kansans fuller, richer lives.

– The Iola Register, via the Associated Press

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774
roberts.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7659 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov

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Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander @ nwkansas.com

NEWS

News Editor
colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports @ nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard @ nwkansas.com

Christina Beringer - Society Reporter
colby.society @ nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING
colby.ads @ nwkansas.com

Kathryn Ballard

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Give our skateboard enthusiasts room

The other day two young gentlemen, Zack and Dyan, came to our office to see how to get the word out about skateboarders. I asked them to share with me what their concerns were and how they came to this point.

They pointed out that they were yelled at by a local resident for riding their boards in town. The resident admonished them and claimed that skateboarders were causing all sorts of problems, including damage to private property.

My visitors said that they had heard this complaint before, but were personally not involved in anything more sinister than getting plenty of fresh air and exercise. They were trying to figure out how they could find an area where they could use their boards without being verbally accosted by the uninformed.

The City of Colby has built a beautiful aquatic park and is in the process of building walking trails to accommodate those who want to enjoy walking in a safe environment. The City Council has brought up skateboards and is considering a resolution to ban skateboards on the trails. One of the comments was that if you were inline skating and took a fall, the skates stayed with you whereas the skateboard would not be controlled in a wipeout. I can understand the concerns, but if we ban them from the trails, why can't we provide them with a safe place to hone their skills?



Sharon Friedlander

• Musings

We are a nation of growing obesity, so it seems illogical to deny our youth a place to be active and safe. Skateboarding requires a high level of exercise, coordination and imagination – all skills we need our youth to have. Other communities have organized skateboard parks that are success stories for solving the problems often associated with skateboarders.

Sterling, Colo., has had a skateboard park for years and the boarders use it on a regular basis. The park is simple and lighted, giving kids a safe place to compete with each other during the day and into the evening.

Nearby Goodland also has a skate park for their residents. The cost for the park was in the range of \$30,000 to \$50,000, and funds were raised by the boarders and others. The committee also helped draft the rules for the park. The city manager of Goodland said that they can regulate the park, but that parents and skateboarders have done a good job of doing it themselves.

Adults are always complaining about the lack of activity of our kids, so it is time to pony up a solution. Give the skateboarders a safe and well-lighted place to be. The boarders can get plenty of exercise without risking cars and pedestrians, and those who want to watch will have a safe place to do so, too. The investment in our youth should be a prime consideration. The city has provided a place to swim and walk, so it's time to give them a place to practice their sport.

We cannot expect our youth to show respect without returning it. There will always be bad apples, but to paint all skateboarders with the same brush seems unfair. Clearly posted rules will give all parties involved a reason to police themselves. Encouraging good behavior while providing a place for their sport seems like a reasonable solution. Skateboarders will help maintain the park and they will police themselves with the help of involved parents.

This is a long term solution to a continuing problem and having the city step up with a reasonable solution would go a long way toward giving our youth a reason to respect our city.

Sharon Friedlander, publisher of the Colby Free Press, enjoys reading, hot rods and critters. Contact her at sfriedlander @ nwkansas.com.

Energy policy will be shaped by election

A presidential election year is a good time to look at our nation’s energy policy direction. The decisions voters make in November will determine our political leadership. The decisions those leaders make on energy policy will have far-reaching impacts on our country.

The question facing America is not whether we will use oil but whether we will use our own resources or import that oil. The Energy Information Administration predicts the world will need 45 percent more energy in 2035, and the U.S. will need 16 percent more.

To get there, we need more energy of all types, but let’s be clear. According to the government’s own projections, oil and natural gas supply most of the energy we use now and will continue to do so for generations. We must acknowledge this reality and make the choices that will lead us to a future with more jobs, more economic growth, higher government revenues and greater energy security.

With the right leadership and vision we can take control of our energy future. We have the resources. The U.S. Geological Survey released an assessment earlier this year that confirms that America’s technically recoverable conventional oil resources are 26 percent of the world’s supply, not including oil shale, tight oil and heavy oil resources.

Moreover, the assessment shows that the U.S. holds almost 30 percent of the world’s technically recoverable conventional natural gas resources, without including shale gas.

The U.S. has the most recoverable oil and natural gas reserves in the world – more than Saudi Arabia, Brazil or China. Developing our own resources could mean 1.4 million new jobs by 2030. That’s good news for American workers and for our government.

Energy policy would be greatly improved if policy makers took into account the actual energy landscape. Far too often, energy bills are based on incorrect assumptions, such as

Other Opinions

• Edward Cross
Oil and Gas Association

the notion that new, revolutionary technology is just around the corner if only the federal government provides sufficient mandates and subsidies. Time after time, experience has shown that the government cannot force new technologies to the market.

Policy makers should take time to understand the facts about energy and the obstacles to making it affordable and reliable. America is home to vast natural resources, but many of our energy policies are built on the notion that energy is scarce and becoming more scarce.

The reality is we have more fossil fuel resources than any other country on the planet. We have enough energy resources to provide reliable and affordable energy for decades, even centuries to come.

Policies that support development of American oil and gas resources doesn’t just mean more jobs, more economic growth and more money for federal and state governments. It means something important to all of us and something many political candidates will be talking about – it means energy security.

Policies that encourage the development of America’s vast oil and gas resources, combined with measures to strengthen partnerships with Canada and Mexico, could rebalance energy geopolitics – making North America energy independent.

This is not a vision of America at the mercy of other oil-producing regions, or an America threatened by scarce resources. It is a vision of

America holding the reins of her energy security and future prosperity.

But a rational energy policy and common sense regulatory structure is necessary to support and encourage the development of that vision. A former Environmental Protection Agency official’s comments about “crucifying” oil and natural gas companies are a visible indication of a regulatory approach that is adversarial and perhaps hostile.

We need an approach that invites input from industry and bases rules on sound science, legitimate cost-benefit analyses and economic impact. A new approach would keep energy development from falling prey to regulatory strangulation and encourage business development rather than discouraging it.

This vision is threatened by those who want to restrain oil and natural gas development. They favor only certain resources. They obstruct and delay oil and natural gas investments with legal hurdles, excessive regulations, delayed permits, and by calling for increased taxes on oil and natural gas companies.

We must resist those who would pit one resource against another.

Our nation faces enormous challenges of providing affordable and reliable energy supplies in the years ahead. With the right leadership and vision, we can turn these challenges into opportunities for energy security.

Edward Cross is president of the Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association.

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

