



Other Viewpoints

Vehicle registration plagued by bugs

Registering vehicles in Kansas has been a joke for more than a month. But no one's laughing.

The state's attempt to bring the Division of Motor Vehicles into the modern ages has come with some glitches that have frustrated customers, wasting their time and money.

A \$40 million computer update, which was turned on many months behind schedule, still is not working as advertised. These problems are affecting plenty of people, including in Johnson and Wyandotte counties, because thousands each day need to navigate the often-tedious process of taking care of the paperwork that goes with owning a vehicle.

Making things worse, Kansas motorists had to shell out extra for what the state hailed as a "modernization project" over the last few years.

Kansas owes it to DMV customers to make sure the \$25 million spent on 3M Co. software wasn't wasted. And if the company contributed to the problems, the state should look for a break on those costs. At this point, it's apparent some of the \$15 million invested in equipment and training wasn't well spent, either.

The contract was signed in 2009 by former Kansas Gov. Mark Parkinson's administration. Gov. Sam Brownback's staff last year agreed with 3M to delay the launch until 2012, giving everyone time to make sure the system would work as intended.

That hasn't happened, however.

Officials from the state and various counties say they are continuing to work to resolve computer-related problems and to reduce waiting times. It's unfortunate that it's taking so long to get the waiting times down to reasonable levels.

Given all of these concerns, the decision to extend expiration dates for registrations with April and May deadlines was a correct one.

Once the bugs are worked out, officials say Kansas will be able to keep better track of all the vehicles in the state, who owns them and who drives them. That, in turn, will make it easier for motorists to get titles for their vehicles, license them and register new ones.

At least, those are the promises being made now.

— *The Kansas City Star, via the Associated Press*

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FIRST SIGN OF SPRING



THE SWALLOWS RETURN TO CAPISTRANO.

FIRST SIGN OF SUMMER



THE BURGERS ARE SWALLOWED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.

Hide and Seek, Red Rover kept kids busy

I often wonder if children now play outdoor games like we did when I was in grade school in Oklahoma City.

We used to play Hide and Seek, Red Rover, Statues, Annie-Annie Over, Kick the Can and King of the Hill. We also loved foot races.

Of course we didn't have televisions or computer games. We were active.

After dark we would go in the house and the family would gather around the table and listen to a radio program such as "The Inner Sanctum," "Amos and Andy" or "One Man's Family."

We moved from the downtown area of Oklahoma City to a residential area. Most of the homes on our block were average size, made of brick, wood lap siding or stone. Our home was the smallest and oldest on the block. It was a three-room wooden farm home that the city had grown around.

The house was owned by my dad's boss, Pop Enders, an elderly, heavyset man who would have to stretch to be five foot two. Pop owned a construction company and my dad worked for him as a plasterer, a person who puts plaster on walls with the use of a trowel.

There was no such thing as sheetrock. Inside walls were first covered with thin, narrow boards about an inch wide called laths, placed a quarter of an inch or so apart. When the plaster was spread on the wall with the trowel it seeped into the slits between the laths. That helped it adhere to the walls when it dried.

Our family had three girls and a baby boy, plus Mom and Dad. We girls slept in the same bed, my baby brother slept in a baby bed in the corner of our bedroom and Mom and Dad slept on a pull-out couch in the living room.

The back porch just off the kitchen had been enclosed and converted into a bathroom with a stool and a sink. Baths were taken in a washtub in the middle of the kitchen. Mom would fill the tub with water and then pull it through the bathroom and dump it out the back door when we had all taken a bath in the same water.

There was a big cottonwood tree in our front yard I loved to climb. In the rear of our back



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

yard there was a large two-story barn where Pop kept construction equipment, so he was in and out of our yard occasionally. He was a jolly, friendly guy and we loved for him to come over because he often brought candy for us.

The barn had an average-size door on the south side and big double doors on the east side for loading equipment. The double doors latched with a large board that fit into a curved metal bracket on the opposite door. We found we could sit on that board and someone could push the door back and forth and give us a ride.

There were large vacant lots on both sides of our house. The one on the east had a drainage ditch across it that was always full of water. It was great for catching crawdads. The weeds in that lot were tall enough that we could hide in them if we squatted down. The vacant lot on the west was also full of weeds.

Even though we had the smallest and oldest house in the neighborhood, all the neighborhood children wanted to play in our yard. I think it must have been like going to the country for them.

The game I liked the most was Post Office. OK you can stop laughing now. I wasn't talking about the teenage kissing game of Post Office. We actually made a post office. We stood an old bed spring up against the wall of the barn and each spring section was someone's post office box.

We would write notes to each other and our postmistress, usually one of the older girls who could read and write the best, would put the notes in our boxes. We would write silly things like, "I think Jenny likes you," or "I'm having a birthday party and you're invited."

On vacation, remember farmers' work

All across our country Americans are checking their cars and SUVs, studying road maps, installing GPS devices and adding another item to their to-do lists in preparation for their long-awaited summer vacations.

Anticipation will soar and tempers will flare as husband and wife teams take to the great American highways and byways in search of rest, peace and tranquility. Children will ensure this dream remains only partially fulfilled with road questions like: "Mommy, I want a snack." "I need to go to the bathroom." "Daddy, Bethany pulled my hair." "Are we there yet?" and "I don't want to go on this dumb vacation, I want to go home."

Regardless of such comments, moms and dads everywhere will set their jaws and push ahead. After all, the money spent for the family vacation often represents cash left over after paying the family's food, clothing, fuel and other necessities throughout the year.

Parents will remind their children, "We worked hard for this time off. We deserve it and we're going to enjoy it."

Americans remain some of the most fortunate inhabitants of our planet. Try to imagine what it would be like if we had to all be self-



John Schlageck

• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

sufficient. What would happen to leisure time if family needs were not produced for them by others?

Although we all work hard throughout the year, we should not forget those people who also work hard to free up time so we can vacation with loved ones. One such group is Kansas farmers and ranchers. They meet our food, fiber and fuel needs. These needs are met without worry of availability.

The next time you walk into your local supermarket, remember milk comes from carefully cared for dairy cows on someone's Kansas farm. Remember, the butcher performs a service by cutting and packaging the hamburger and steak we grill for our families while the Kansas rancher cares for and produces this beef. Styrofoam cartons only hold the eggs

that are laid by hens on farms.

Few other countries enjoy the wide selection and availability of such wholesome, good tasting food. Few other countries can claim that so few people feed so many. Today, little more than 1 to 2 percent of our nation's population are farmers and ranchers. They supply the other 98 percent of us with most of the food and fiber.

Remember as you plot your vacation course this summer, and as you motor through the Kansas countryside to notice the fields of corn, milo, soybeans, sunflowers and alfalfa. Take a look at the cattle, hogs and sheep grazing in the pastures.

Don't forget, the Kansas farmer and rancher helps fulfill our family's food needs. These professionals also care for the livestock and crops you see as you drive by. They do so carefully and with as much care as possible.

Travel safely.

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.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley



PUBLIC REACTION TO THE STUDY THAT SAYS THE AVERAGE CONGRESSPERSON SPEAKS AT A TENTH-GRADE LEVEL HAS BEEN...

"...AMAZINGLY AWESOME," ACCORDING TO ONE CONGRESSPERSON, WHO ASKED "LIKE, YOU KNOW, NOT TO BE, YOU KNOW, IDENTIFIED, AND STUFF..."