

## Other Viewpoints

# Department split a bold restructure

Gov. Sam Brownback, with a stroke of his executive pen on Executive Order No. 41, has made the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services a thing of history and split its former responsibilities among two agencies.

It's too early to say how the arrangement is going to work out, but there's reason to hope it is successful and accomplishes the governor's goal of improving services at a restrained cost.

Children, seniors and the disabled are our most vulnerable citizens and realignment of the agencies responsible for ensuring they receive necessary services is a bold move. Brownback, however, has shown he isn't afraid of being bold and his decision to do away with Social and Rehabilitation Services will be praised if it provides the desired results.

The governor's executive order created the Kansas Department for Children and Families and broadened the duties of the former Kansas Department on Aging while making it the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services.

Brownback has made no secret of his interest in strengthening Kansas families and the realignment creates an agency that will be involved almost exclusively with family-related issues — children and adult protection services, adoption, foster care, welfare and food assistance. It also will deal with vocational rehabilitation services.

Cutting back on the scope of the former agency's interest should allow the new Department for Children and Families to improve services in its targeted areas.

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services will assume responsibility for mental health, addiction and prevention programs, state hospitals and home- and community-based services.

Shawn Sullivan, secretary of the Department for Aging and Disability, said the older adult population and the disabled share some common challenges but also have some different needs. Realignment obviously has created a huge agency here — it will have a budget of \$1.7 billion — but that doesn't mean it won't be able to effectively serve both populations entrusted to it.

We don't know if the subject arose during deliberations on the realignment, but it could have another benefit in addition to the governor's goals of delivering services more effectively and at a restrained cost.

The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services has been around for a long time, had dedicated employees and served a lot of people well. But it did have its miscues, and due to the nature of the family issues it dealt with, it quite often left someone unhappy with its decisions.

We won't go so far as to say the acronym SRS was toxic, but the mere mention of it was enough to raise the hackles of some who had dealt with the agency and come away disappointed or angry.

Granted, Children and Families will deal with some of the same issues and won't make everyone happy, but a new name and a new focus certainly won't hurt as it moves forward.

— *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press*

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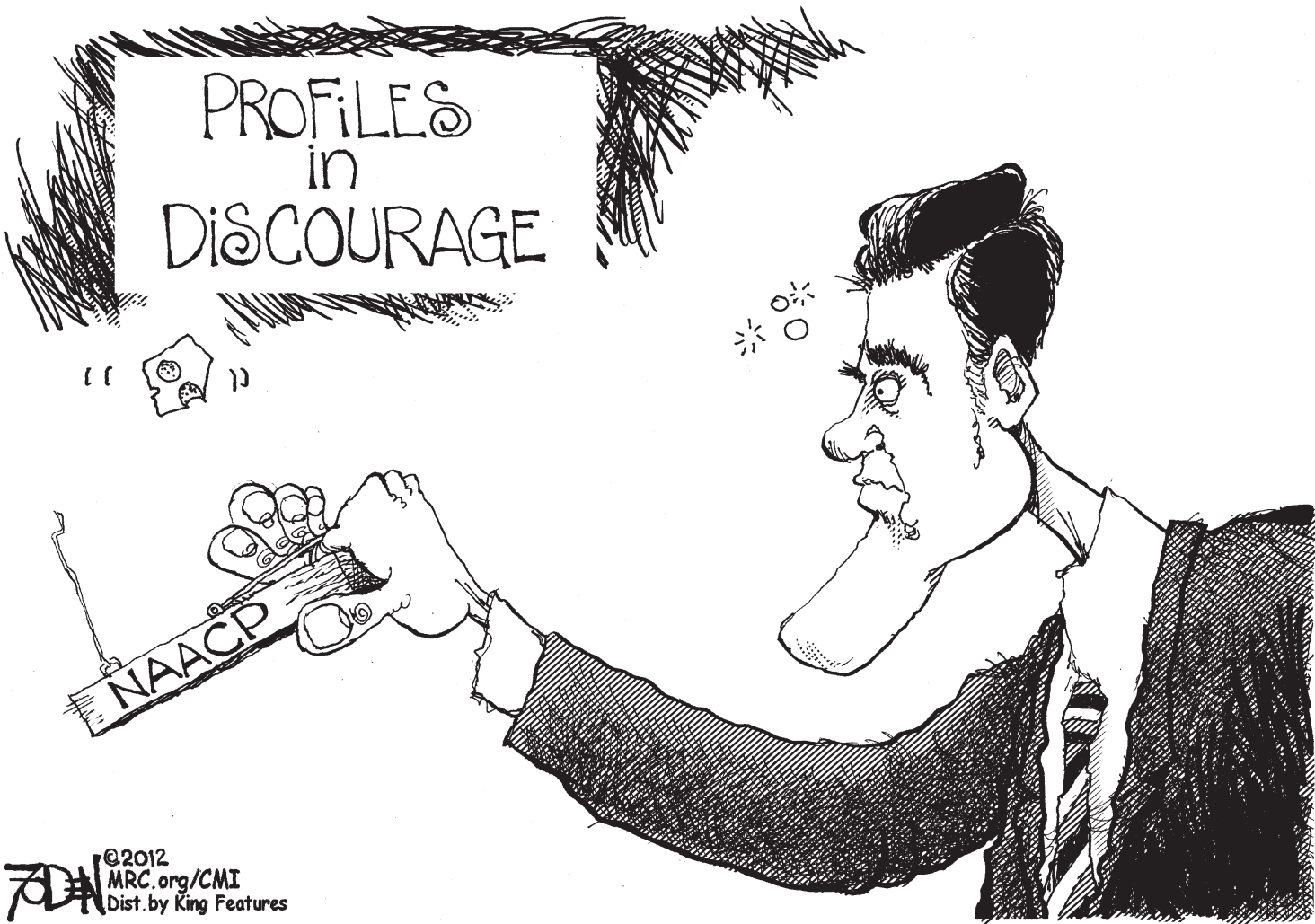
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# Great moving adventure's (almost) over

Moving.

The word can strike fear into the hearts of even the most intrepid among us.

The word means many things, but mostly “yikes” in my world. My husband and I embarked on our great adventure during one of the hottest Junes on record. The heat was only the beginning.

My world had become a sea of brown boxes and plastic bags. Before we made the first trip to the new house, we had done a walk through to plan where things should go. Well, at least we thought that was how it was going to work.

I had carefully planned out where in the garage to stack the different boxes. I envisioned that the soon-to-be-garage-sale boxes would go on the right, the unpack-before-too-long on the left and the open-first in the room in the house where they belonged.

It was a great plan; it was just the execution that was flawed. I tried to label the boxes with some sort of coherent description. That works really well if you can remember your logic the day you marked the boxes when you have to translate the description. By the time we started moving, all memory of that logic was gone.

Take 110 degrees, add three loads of heavy boxes and you have a prescription for disaster. My poor, patient husband would ask, “What does this mean,” and I would look at him as if



**Sharon Friedlander**

## • Musings

he had grown horns. Before long, the garage stacks started to look pretty ominous. Some of the boxes looked as if they should belong to someone else — and they just wanted us to move them.

Hours stretched into days and the stack of boxes on both ends seemed to be endless. After six days, I did manage to take a day off to help move some of the heavier items. It seems that one of my husband's friends, Rick, actually volunteered to help with that and he showed up bright and early that morning. My job was to open doors and point to where things went. Amazingly, this worked out very well. I have never been so grateful to someone for their help.

We kept at it, and the stacks on one end finally grew larger than those on the other end. I took Friday off, and we started early. By early afternoon, we were ready for lunch. The office was having a food day and we were invited. (I was promised that they wouldn't make fun of me in my work garb, but that only lasted

about two minutes. The lunch made the teasing worth it.)

Finally, Saturday dawned and we could actually see the end in sight. We had until Saturday to get moved, and we were going to make it. Saturday evening, we sat in the living room of our new home and celebrated the fact that everything was in one place for the first time in two weeks.

The ladies at Homeland Realty have been amazing. They have a rich sense of humor that was greatly appreciated by the time we were moved. I had joked early on that if we didn't find a place to live, we were going to move into my Blazer and his truck. Cindy and Megan said they would bring the food to the Blazer warming and almost seemed to be disappointed when we found a home.

These ladies, along with Marilyn, fielded many calls during this adventure. If I identified myself as homeless when I called their office, they knew who it was. Thanks, ladies!

We have now been in the new house for two weeks, and I still can't find stuff, but we love the house. Maybe someday in the near future, I will re-find the floors that I know must still be there under all those boxes!

*Sharon Friedlander, publisher of the Colby Free Press, enjoys reading, hot rods and critters. Contact her at [sfriedlander@nwkansas.com](mailto:sfriedlander@nwkansas.com).*

# Summer movie memories echo the past

It seems like only yesterday when I raced my buddies down the red-carpeted ramp of the Pix Theater in Hoxie, trying to nail down those good seats. You know the ones I'm talking about — in the front row, where tennis shoes could be heard latching into congealed soda from the matinee.

Back in those days, “the guys and me” could watch “Davey Crockett,” “Old Yeller” or “It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World” for only a quarter and a seal from a milk carton produced at Ada's, our hometown dairy.

Outside, as we waited in line for our tickets, you could smell the popcorn and watch the soda machine as it dropped a cup from its innards and spewed forth an overly sweet combination of syrup, carbonated water and ice. Sometimes, the cup turned sideways and the liquid missed and sprayed the hand of the kid expecting a tasty treat.

Mom didn't keep chocolate at home, so going to the movies meant we splurged. I couldn't wait to eat my favorite candy — a Denver Sandwich. This bit of heaven consisted of two long strawberry wafer cookies with oodles of caramel and peanut bits wrapped in a thick coating of milk chocolate. It cost 5 cents, and as I recall, it was almost as big as an ice cream sandwich.

Other movies I loved were westerns starring Gary Cooper, Roy Rogers and my favorite, Randolph Scott. When I was 5, I saw my first horror movie — “The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms.”

This movie premiered in the early '50s and, like so many of the other films of this period, featured a nuclear explosion that freed a frozen dinosaur from his icy tomb. This armored giant wreaked his prehistoric fury on modern man and my young psyche. I had nightmares for weeks.



**John Schlageck**

## • Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

When we grew a bit older, we drove nearly 80 miles to Hays to go to a big theater. This theater overwhelmed our tiny one-aisle venue, featuring a beautiful balcony. Being the older kids now, we always sat upstairs where we could hold hands and carefully put our arms around our girlfriends.

The point of all this, I guess, is they don't make movie theaters like they used to. The multi-screened mazes and cinema complexes that thrive today are designed for volume and efficiency. Forget cozy, close and jam packed. This only happens occasionally when a blockbuster is released, usually only on the first day.

And sneaking into one of these new theaters in our high-security world is a thing of the past, not that I ever tried such a thing as a youngster.

I have nothing against these modern chain theaters. I guess it is just good business in the age of DVDs, palm entertainment systems and satellite television. They have to compete, and who doesn't like to watch some of the latest Hollywood offerings on the giant screen?

Still, whenever I travel in rural towns across Kansas, I keep an eye out for the little movie houses that have survived in small towns. I can number the ones I know on one hand.

Owners of such small operations lament the price to be paid for keeping up with new technology, the smaller number of movie-goers in

their shrinking communities and the long wait for new releases like Harry Potter or parts for their old, tired projectors.

Several have managed to hang on, and their battered neon lights still attract the summertime moth brigade and sweaty-handed kids on first dates.

Most of these operators have outside jobs. They cannot make it by running a theater in a rural town alone.

One operator I ran across several years ago in south-central Kansas told me he runs a small printing operation and dons the robes of a municipal judge.

“I keep the theater open,” he said, “to keep the kids out of my courtroom.”

*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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## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

