

## Other Viewpoints

# Drought measures becoming routine

Recent rainfall in the region was refreshing, as always. Yet as welcome as any precipitation may be, the rain wasn't nearly enough to cure the lingering pain of drought. Another reminder of as much came in a request from officials in Kansas to extend emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program land.

State Agriculture Secretary Dale Rodman urged the U.S. Department of Agriculture to grant an extension through Nov. 30. The same step was taken during last year's drought without landowners incurring penalties in the form of a rental payment reduction.

The state has 2.15 million acres enrolled in the program. Years of drought have hindered farmers' ability to produce hay or to provide forage and pasture for livestock. Allowing ranchers to continue accessing that forage could be the difference between maintaining a cow herd or facing liquidation.

Feedlots and meatpacking plants also have been feeling the heat of severe drought for years. Soaring grain prices driven by drought mean more expensive livestock feed – so costly that cattle numbers continue to drop as feedlots find it tougher to survive.

It's a huge economic concern in Kansas, a state ranked third nationally with 5.85 million cattle on ranches and in feedyards as of Jan. 1, according to the Kansas Livestock Association. Kansas also was third in commercial cattle processed in 2011, with 6.4 million head.

When it comes to possible economic woes, the problem can extend well beyond Kansas. Difficulties for cattle producers also mean higher prices for consumers as the meat supply shrinks.

The environmental toll also mounts when drought persists. The CRP was designed to protect the land. Specifically, the program was put in place to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat.

Allowing relief to livestock producers by way of extending emergency haying and grazing on CRP land should only be a temporary fix.

Drought's fallout tends to materialize in many ways. The latest request regarding CRP land would be just one more reminder of how far-reaching the impact of painfully dry conditions continue to be in parts of the region.

– *The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press*

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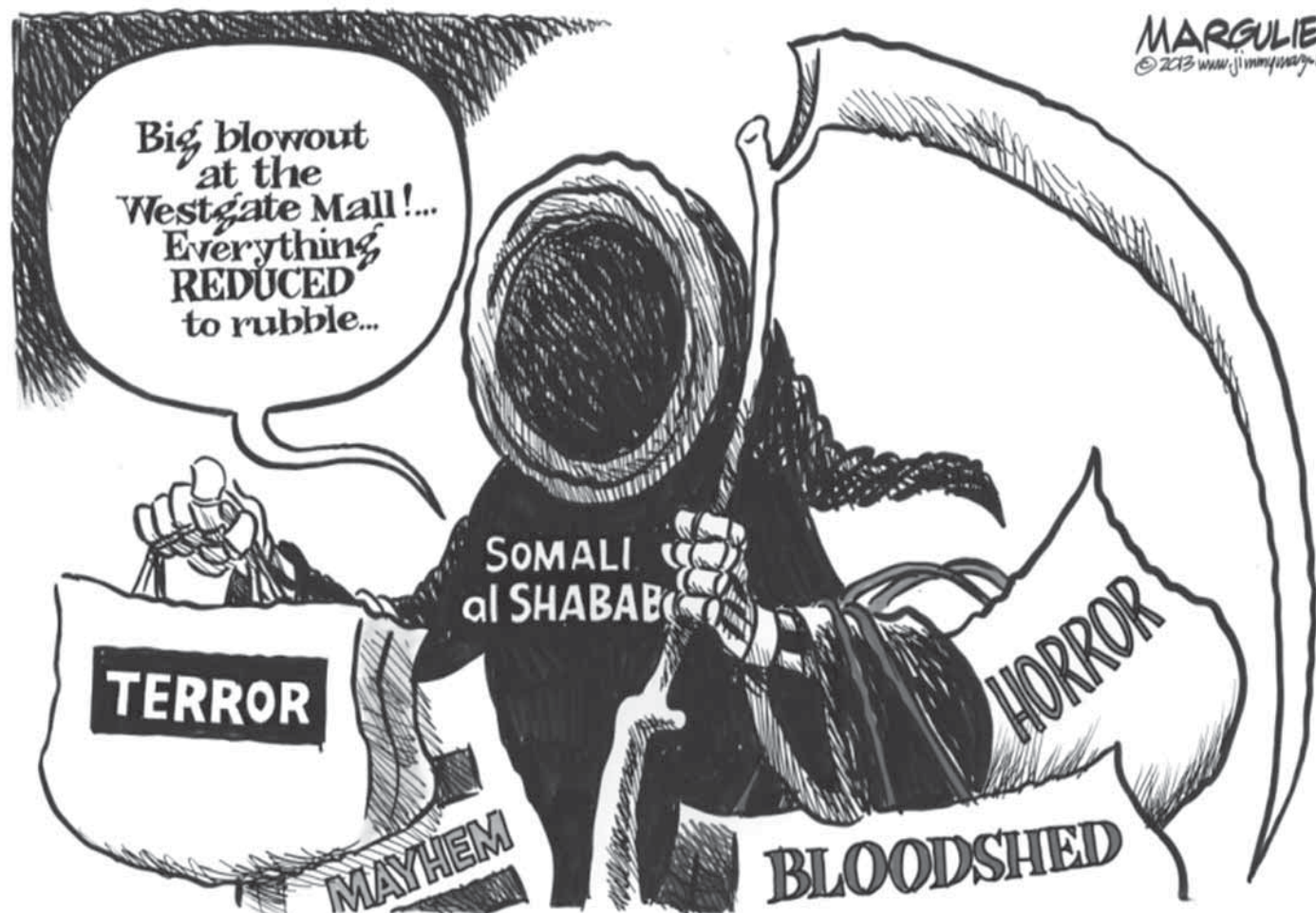
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# Scout hut built in 1950

In 1950, the Boy Scouts of America program was going strong in Colby, with two Scout Troops, three Cub Packs and one Explorer Post. On July 13, the Colby Lions Club decided to build a Scout hut in Fike Park.

The *Colby Free Press* reported plans for a 30-foot-by-60-foot cabin with a fireplace. The Lions donated \$1,700 to the project and pledged to do the work. The Colby Business and Professional Women gave \$450 for the fireplace. Estimated cost of the project was \$6,000, and more donations came in from organizations and individuals.

By October, work was started and by November, it sat proudly at the southwest entrance to the park. On Nov. 2, the hut was dedicated and the Scouts thanked those who helped with the project.

It so happened that the Boy Scouts of America were celebrating their 40th anniversary. A business man and Scout leader from Kansas City, Jack P. Whitaker, proposed that, in honor of the occasion, small replicas of the Statue of Liberty should be placed in towns across America. A *Free Press* article by reporter Maxine Nelson in 1964 noted, "Whitaker envisioned diminutive Statues of Liberty in towns across the land, part of a patriotic 'Crusade to strengthen the Arm of Liberty.'"

"The original 151-foot statue in New York is that of a woman holding a book on her hip and



**Marj Brown**

### • Marj's Snippets

a torch. The Scout statues, sheathed in copper, were identical, 8 feet, 4 inches tall, 1/19th of the size of their big sister in New York, and cost about \$300 each. They were made by a Chicago foundry."

A total of 195 replicas were made, and Kansas received 26 of the small Statues of Liberty. These placed across Kansas. Due to the efforts of Colby Scouts to find a donor for a statue to be placed at the northwest corner of Fike Park, Colby received one.

The man who graciously agreed to pay for the statue was Charles Murray. I remember him well. He was one of those people who get your attention.

He drove a great big car – Jim said it was probably a Chrysler or a Dodge, because those were the brands of cars his son, Dwight (Red) Murray, sold at his dealership just over the Rock Island Railroad tracks on North Franklin. The driver's-side window of Charlie's car was always rolled down, summer or winter,

and he would have his left arm resting on the base of the window as he drove 10 mph up and down Franklin Avenue several times a day, just looking the town over. He was a large, elderly man with thinning gray hair, a ruddy red-head complexion, and always had a big cigar in his mouth.

John Pratt, a state legislator from Colby, stated in a July 4, 1986, *Free Press* article, "He was a good man in the community. And he didn't make any big show. Usually, it was only the people he dealt with that knew what he did."

"During World War II, we made eight savings-bond drives. They always made their quota, because if they didn't, Murray would buy enough bonds for his kids to make up the difference."

"Murray was one of the biggest benefactors in building Thomas County."

Organizations that donated to building the base for the Colby statue included the American Legion Auxiliary, the Friendship Unit and the Business and Professional Women.

The base is a pyramid made of bricks. The statue was refurbished in 1961 and 2002 with donations from many organizations.

*Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.*

# New regulations need to be curtailed

From job-killing regulations to invasions of our privacy, the executive branch in Washington is out of control.

The alphabet soup of federal agencies is on an all-out push to produce new regulations: from the EPA, to OSHA to HHS. According to the Heritage Foundation, during President Obama's first term in office, the annual regulatory burden on the economy increased by \$70 billion! And in 2012 alone, the President's team put forward 2,605 new rules. Of those new rules, 69 cost more than \$100 million, but only two rules actually decreased regulations.

Consider the story of Marty the Magician. Marty owns a rabbit as part of his act. He was informed by federal regulators that he has to file a "contingency plan" for handling his bunny in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. Marty is subject to an unannounced home rabbit inspection by the U.S. Department of Agriculture once a year to evaluate his plan, and he will be required to carry a copy of the contingency plan with him at all times.

In Kansas, we know a little bit about federal rules and regulations causing us headaches.

New school lunch regulations have taken away the flexibility of local school districts to provide meals that parents want and students will eat. The regulation will cost schools at least \$3.4 billion to implement – taking much of that money out of the classroom.

The Fish and Wildlife Service wants to list



**U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp**

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the lesser prairie chicken as endangered even though Kansas has enough birds to still allow them to be hunted.

Sunflower Electric has been unable to bring much-needed new power generating capacity online in Holcomb because of federal rules. Now, President Obama's EPA is proposing a rule that even the EPA admits would prevent coal-fired plants from being built for nearly two decades. This will lead to more expensive, less readily available power to our local economy.

Regulations even threaten our religious liberties. A rule promulgated by Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius, in the name of Obamacare, mandated abortion coverage in all insurance plans, even by employers who hold constitutionally-protected rights of conscience opposed to it.

Last week, I worked with my House Small Business Committee to pass our Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013. This proposal requires the federal government to

account for the real economic impact of any new regulation. It also requires regulators proposing new regulations to identify alternatives that would minimize any adverse impacts on small businesses. Further, I amended the bill to increase transparency in these agencies. My amendment requires federal agencies to turn over all information on how proposed rules impact small businesses before the regulation is finalized. At a minimum, small businesses and all of America should know why and how agencies make decisions that so affect our daily lives.

The House also passed a bill this summer, called the REINS Act, to require all major regulations to gain congressional approval before taking effect. If Washington adopted this approach, Americans could rest easier knowing bureaucrat-filled agencies inside the D.C. beltway would no longer be free to pass regulations that strain the bounds of common sense – like their abandoned proposal to limit the ability of kids to work on farms.

When dealing with a huge Washington bureaucracy, legislative proposals like these are a necessary check on this ongoing D.C. power grab.

*Congressman Tim Huelskamp, a Fowler Republican, represents the 1st District of Kansas. He serves on the House Veterans' Affairs committee.*

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## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

