

Getting rid of the evidence



Blake Roe used a snow blower Sunday to remove snow from a sidewalk by his house at 1303 Caldwell.
Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

kanorado chronology

By Dixie Hooker
Kanorado Correspondent

Useless facts: Western Resources is a consumer services company with interests in monitored security and energy. The company has total assets at more than \$8 billion; include security company holdings through ownership of Protection One which has more than 1.6 million security customers in 48 states and Europe. Its utilities, KPL and KGE, provide electric service to approximately 600,000 customers in Kansas. Through its ownership in ONEOK, Inc. a Tulsa-based natural gas company, Western Resources has a 45 percent interest in the eighth largest natural gas company in the nation, serving more than 1.4 million customers.

Our natural gas bills are a killer. So I decided to get some help, no sense sitting here and doing nothing!

PSYCHIC: Hello, this is medium Fabian; you have reached the Psychic Hotline for Consumers. I feel you are a little chilly.

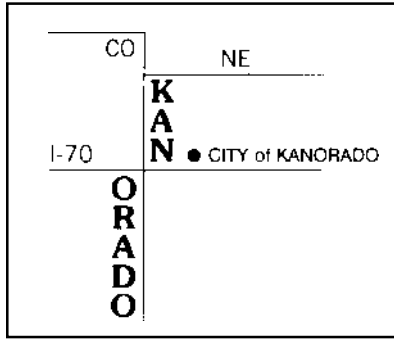
ME: Wow! You are good, Fabian! I have turned my furnace down, as I just received my monthly natural gas bill. I have on two pair of socks, slippers, a long sleeved shirt, a vest and a sweater. I am wrapped up in my fuzzy blanket while making this call to you. Tell me medium Fabian, what's up with these gas prices?

PSYCHIC: A cold aura is aspiring from my gazing ball, informing me that you are not the only one my frigid child.

ME: Heck, I know I'm not the only one! I'm asking what we, in this area, can do about these prices.

PSYCHIC: I see you have turned down the furnace. Have you thought about washing in cold water and vacuuming your floor continuously as this will keep you warmer?

ME: Hey, hold on a moment, if I do everything your psychic abilities tell me to conserve on this gas bill, won't they



just raise prices more or continue with the prices, so they can pay their employees?

PSYCHIC: Hmm-m. good point ole complaining chilly consumer. Have you considered a payment plan?

ME: Payment plan? If my bill is running 200 to 500 bucks a month and the gas company... lets say sends me a monthly rate of \$50, won't this bill follow me for the rest of my days at these prices?

PSYCHIC: Look my little chilblain, it's you I have on line, not the gas company.

ME: In the beginning of climbing gas rates the media announced that many consumers of propane switched over to natural gas, and by doing this, it was one of the things which helped make the prices rise. Can this be possible?

PSYCHIC: It's a reasonable evaluation of more demand for the product.

ME: You're kidding right? With natural gas, a crew must be dispatched, trenches dug, pipe laid and all that stuff.

PSYCHIC: Have you thought of bringing back the twist or hula hoop and inviting your friends and neighbors into your living room and with the vigorous dancing and exercise and their hot breath, you and them could be warmer for at least 20 minutes to an hour?

ME: But what about my mother? She's on a fixed income. She never changed

over from propane to natural gas. She lives in the Ozarks and that place is nothing but rock. No way has the gas company gone in there and laid lines. And she can't dance.

PSYCHIC: I envision your mother now, sitting in her favorite chair with an electric lap robe lying across her legs.

ME: Yes! That's my mom. But won't the price of electricity go up also?

PSYCHIC: Yes, ole nippy one.

ME: That's impressive, Fabian. You can see prices going up too.

PSYCHIC: You must be willing to sacrifice. Make a list of things you can cut back on, and while writing, if your fingers start getting stiff with the cold, go take a drive in your car and turn up the heater.

ME: Take a drive in my car! I'm beginning to think you work for the fuel industry. What about this summer?

PSYCHIC: Ole child of chilly you know it will be warmer, hence no running of thou furnace.

ME: But what about the farmers who are running natural gas wells to pump

water to their crops?

PSYCHIC: They are a minority in the country. The powers that be will not give a flying fig. Besides, the crop isn't worth anything anyway, let them shut down the motors!

ME: You know, after all these minutes I am thinking you aren't worth much.

PSYCHIC: Ahh-h you see, you do not have the comprehension of the aura. This call was 21 minutes. Breaking it down you will receive a bill for: 1. customer charge, \$7.00; 2. commodity increment time, \$63.87; 3. increments of airtime for 10 minutes, \$46.70; 4. increments of airtime for 6 minutes, \$155.80; 5. increments of airtime for 2 minutes, \$21.17; 6. increments of airtime for 3 minutes, \$8.75; 7. franchise tax, \$9.10; 8. County sales tax, \$4.55. Total charges for Psychic Consumer Hotline, \$316.94.

ME: What!? This is airtime robbery! You are billing like the gas company!

PSYCHIC: But of course ole benumbed complainant I too, just received my monthly gas bill. How else is the famed Fabian going to pay it? Click!

Examination planned

TOPEKA (AP) — Attorney General Carla Stovall's office will examine the planned merger of Tyson Foods and beef and pork processor IBP Inc., her chief deputy has told legislators.

However, Senior Deputy Attorney General John Campbell warned legislators that Stovall's office will need to hire three employees.

He also said the attorney general's office would need to tap \$100,000 in revenues generated from consumer protection cases to have the resources for its examination.

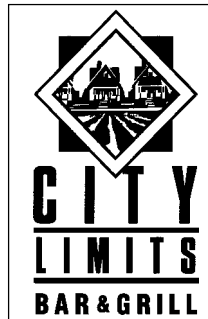
Campbell outlined the attorney general's plans in a letter sent Tuesday to Senate Agriculture Chairman Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, who asked Stovall to review the merger.

Schmidt and legislators from both parties generally were pleased with Stovall's plans. The Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest agriculture group, also praised her.

"If there ever was a role for government to pay on behalf of production agriculture, this is it," said Farm Bureau President Stan Ahlerich.

HELP WANTED

Kit Carson County Department of Social Services has a Full Time Social Caseworker/Case Aid position available immediately. For an application packet, contact Kit Carson County Department of Social Services, 252 South 14th St. Burlington, CO 80807, phone 719-346-8732 or Fax 719-346-8066. Application deadline is February 2, 2001, 4:00 p.m. An equal opportunity affirmative action employer.



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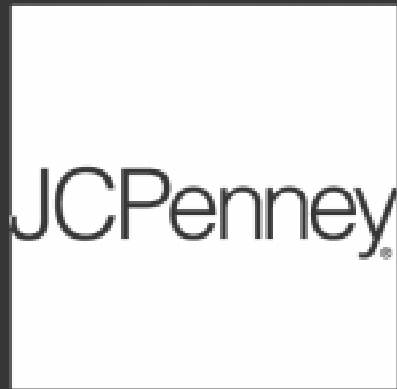


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