

commentary

from other pens...

Natural gas profits aren't all about prices

The Topeka Capital-Journal on natural gas profits:
ONEOK Inc., the Tulsa, Okla., owner of Kansas Gas Service, shouldn't go around bragging about its 36 percent profit increase.
Thirty-six percent? Why, that's nothing. A lot of customers' heating bills went up by a lot more than that! You want to talk percentages? There's some senior citizens on fixed incomes around these parts that'll talk percentages.
Seriously, the ONEOK performance isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially for stockholders. Indeed, the stock has risen from \$24 a year ago to about \$44 now.
And a lot of it is just good management: In fiscal year 2000, ONEOK achieved a 411 percent increase in operating income from its gathering and processing operations after buying 12 processing plants along with some transmission pipeline.
Still, bulging profits at natural gas companies are bound to be a topic of both attention and derision this year, after consumers were socked with out-of-sight heating bills.
"Unconscionable" is how one consumer termed the profits.
Well, again, that may not be totally fair. A company shouldn't be criticized for being managed well.
But some of the profits have been due to higher natural gas prices. And some people's backs are bowed from the weight of it. So it may not be something to crow about.
One person's profits can be another person's losses.

The Garden City Telegram on cities appearing before regulators:
A measure offered by Garden City's Ward Loyd permitting city governments to represent their constituents before state utility regulators should find approval.
The 123rd District representative says the measure cleans a loophole that prevents local governments from acting on behalf of their citizenry in utility rate cases deliberated by the Kansas Corporation Commission.
Cities can currently intervene, but they need KCC permission to do so on behalf of citizens. Otherwise, city officials can only speak to how a rate case impacts a city's bottom line.
Loyd's proposal...would expand the current process that calls on the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board's consumer counsel to represent citizens in regulatory hearings.
CURB officials say they're limited by budgetary constraints on which cases they get involved with. And some argue that the state lobbying group can't effectively represent citizens in some issues because one community's concern could be different from another. And they can't argue for both.
Nothing precludes individuals from having their voices heard. They can still petition to state a case for or against a utility company's rate-change request.
But the collective voice of a community...has an inherent level of trust that the community's best interests are being served.
Permitting cities to lobby on behalf of their citizens makes sense. It's grass roots, and that's where the most effective governing takes place.

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It's economics 101. Do the fancy guys get it?

Is it time to saddle up and ride the gasohol subsidy when corn is \$7.50 a bushel?
The trouble is it isn't \$7.50 a bushel it's \$2.00. If it was that high they would think a chicken had eaten the little red hen.
For the last four years farm prices have been sicker than the day-after-alcoholic. Since the world wide currency crisis it has made Alexander Hamilton out of everyone but farmers. All it did was to make them the American house boy, who may use human dung when fertilizer costs \$450 a ton.
This big government got it's beginning when our first Secretary of the Treasury held that only the well bred and rich would have a voice in government. Does that sound like America?
Remember when the meat packers said, "Join our consortium you don't know how to run your business you don't have the education to make it in this cyberspace world." Maybe or maybe not.
Just as sure as there was another bill Alexander Hamilton hoodwinked the states into paying the costs of moving the nation's capital city from Philadelphia to a piece of mosquito-infested swampland on the banks of the Potomac River.
Wonder if the enviros would use the takings law, and give it back to Chief Tecumseh. Yup it still is a infested swampland along the Potomac, and it still is the lower people, as he called them, who have little or nothing to say about who gets the money.
It was the beginning of "the revenuers are coming" too. The whiskey rebellion was about a tax



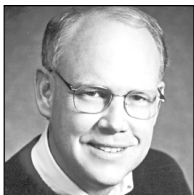
wayne gattshall

- wayne's world

on farmers corn. He said just tax the hard stuff, but don't touch the wine and oil. Does that sound familiar taxes on the little guy? It was the beginning of "we will take your guns, and you better pay your taxes." Bet he was for trigger locks too.
However, before we had the Internal Revenue Service we used tariffs as a source of taxation. My..the more things change the more they are the same.
While we import everyone else's surpluses we still collect tariffs. The only difference is the old protective tariffs went to the federal treasury but now we have a government agency called the United State Foreign Sales Corporation.
While farmers would need a pardon to sell his grain the same old relics of the past collects import fees and the money goes to the same old economy dinosaurs.
You know big steel may have something there why not use import duties to fund Freedom to Farm?
On the other hand it is nothing but an earned income tax credit for some money bags corporation.
Bet those fancy guy, free traders will declare

victory and say isolation is dead in America, it's just free trade don't you know. Well it is not free trade nor victory! It was more like the Tet offensive, for most Americans.
Back in 1996 they began to say we have a great economy with no inflation and don't worry about those lower than a snake's belly farm prices that is as good as a tax cut for the people.
But this globalism in every pot is beginning to slip. The new Chief in the White Teepee says federal discretionary spending will be cut and agriculture will be no exception.
So where are our people in Washington? Gone AWOL (absent without leave)? Then there is our farm organizations, it would be nice if they would show up some time.
Since 1997 these fancy guys all knew there would be a farm recession and the only way out was to use something like the 416(b) Food for Progress, exports, and the quicker the better.
So it is true they do want farm surpluses. Perhaps it is a Joe got rocks for a brain idea, but the sad truth is there is a price to be paid for this notion that a flatter than a raw piece of rhubarb farm prices is a tax cut for the people.
What has happened to oil and natural gas prices could happen to food too, and if it does it only makes sense that it is a tax bracket creep on the people.
There is a lesson in economics in this somewhere, wonder if the fancy guys can find it?
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World view should be 'a search for truth'



stan clark

- newsletter

comfortable with the economic establishment and less concerned with ideology and social issues. Power and technical advancement form the altar where they worship, and reality is limited to what can be tested scientifically. They are generally labeled "modernists" or "western secularists."
Twenty-five per cent of the U.S. adult population believes that human nature is basically good, therefore, the solution to our problems is to create the right social or economic structure. Threats to human survival have nothing to do with moral failings. Pollution, war, and food and energy shortages result from technical incompetence. There is no source for moral truth and individuals are left to construct their own morality. Identity is found in race, class, gender or ethnic group. The perspective of the group guides their thinking with blacks, gays, women and environmentalists being four readily "identifiable groups." They are spiritually searching – holding nature sacred. Their goal is to lose the individual self and dissolve it into the Universal Spirit, just as a drop of water dissolves into the ocean.
The third worldview is held by 29 percent of the U.S. adult population. This group, of which I am one, believes that God spoke everything into existence out of nothing; that He brought the world into existence; that He has a plan and that we to protect God's creation are to be good stewards, to exercise dominion, and to fulfill both the Great Commission and a cultural commission – to redeem both souls and society. There is no dividing line between sacred and secular. Typical labels are traditionalists or Judeo Christians.
In the area of law and ethics, our worldview defines us. If we are creatures of a personal God and our laws are based on a transcendent moral order, then we believe that we do not make laws but we discover them. Calvin Coolidge said, "laws must rest on the eternal foundation of righteousness."
If Darwinism is true, that there is no divine law or transcendent moral order, or final, authoritative basis for law, then laws are merely a codification of political policies judged to be socially and economically advantageous. Law is a managerial skill used in the service of social engineering, a system of order, not a system of justice.
Virtually every other worldview draws the line separating good and evil between sets of people –

Jew and Gentile, Black and White. The group is more important than the individual; after all, if all we have to live for is our lifetime on earth, then the group is more important. But if we live forever, the line separating good and evil divides each human heart.
Our position on the issues of the day is defined by our worldviews. The final outcome of the issues is either a "will to power" or a "search for truth," just as Pilate asked Christ 2000 years ago.
Albert Schweitzer wrote 50 years ago: "The renewal of civilization has nothing to do with movements which bear the character of experiences of the crowd; these are never anything but reactions to external happenings. But civilization can only revive when there shall come into being in a number of individuals a tone of mind independent of the one prevalent among the crowd and in opposition to it, a tone of mind which will gradually win influence over the collective one, and in the end determine its character. It is only an ethical movement which can rescue us from the slough of barbarism, and the ethical comes into existence only in individuals."
May our thoughts, words and actions be in harmony and may we have the courage to boldly search for, defend and joyously live it out in every walk of life.

berry's world

