

from our viewpoint...

Prairie dog control a countywide effort

There were more points of agreement during the public discussion about prairie dogs on Thursday than there were disagreements, as Sherman County commissioners listened to more than 30 citizens voice a need to control the critters.

If there was anyone there who feels the prairie dog is in danger of extinction, they certainly kept quiet. It appeared that those present were unanimous in feeling the prairie dogs are a problem, and their numbers should be reduced across the county.

There was agreement that the ultimate responsibility lays with the landowner to pay for controlling the rodents. The group discussed how the money should be raised to run a program to reduce the number of prairie dogs.

Several of those present said they believe the county should be up front and establish a countywide plan to eliminate the animals. They agreed that the landowners should help pay for the program, but a couple suggested there should be a countywide property tax similar to the system for roads. The argument was that the people in the city and business owners are losing money because the rural people are spending money to control the prairie dogs rather than spend it in town on other goods or services.

No matter what method is used, there was a clear message that in a cooperative effort, the county and the landowners are going to deal with the problem. The plan will be presented at the next commission meeting on Thursday.

It is likely to include a method of providing bait to kill the prairie dogs, and there will be a timetable for the landowners to voluntarily handle the problem on their lands. Beyond that point, there will be a deadline after which, if a landowner has not made an effort to control the prairie dogs, the county would step in to control the prairie dogs on these lands.

Authority for that is in a county resolution approved in 1980. If the county has to step in and control the prairie dogs, a landowner will be notified in writing and within 30 days, if action has not been taken, the county will go on the land and spread the poison. The cost will be billed to the landowner and if not paid, it will become a lien against the property.

One suggestion was that if there are more landowners who do not voluntarily make the effort to control their prairie dogs, the county might hire a commercial firm and that cost would be divided among landowners whose land is treated.

No one at the meeting believes the countywide effort will eliminate all the prairie dogs in the county, everyone felt that such a cooperative and sustained effort can bring the numbers down to a manageable level.

Maybe after the numbers are reduced, someone said, it would be possible for hunters who seem to enjoy shooting these rodents to help keep them in control.

There are several pieces of information about prairie dogs that add to the concern. One is that the large number of prairie dog towns increases the number of rattlesnakes. Another is a claim that the prairie dogs tend to migrate, running up to 10 miles from home to start a new town. Add this to the possibility of them carrying plague, and there are more reasons to keep the numbers in check. This effort will not reduce the numbers as fast as some people wish, but with the continued effort by all those involved, it should work.

Hunters probably cannot handle the problem at the current level, but in a couple of years, after the cooperative effort has had a positive impact, it would be worth looking into as a means of keeping them under control. — *Tom Betz*

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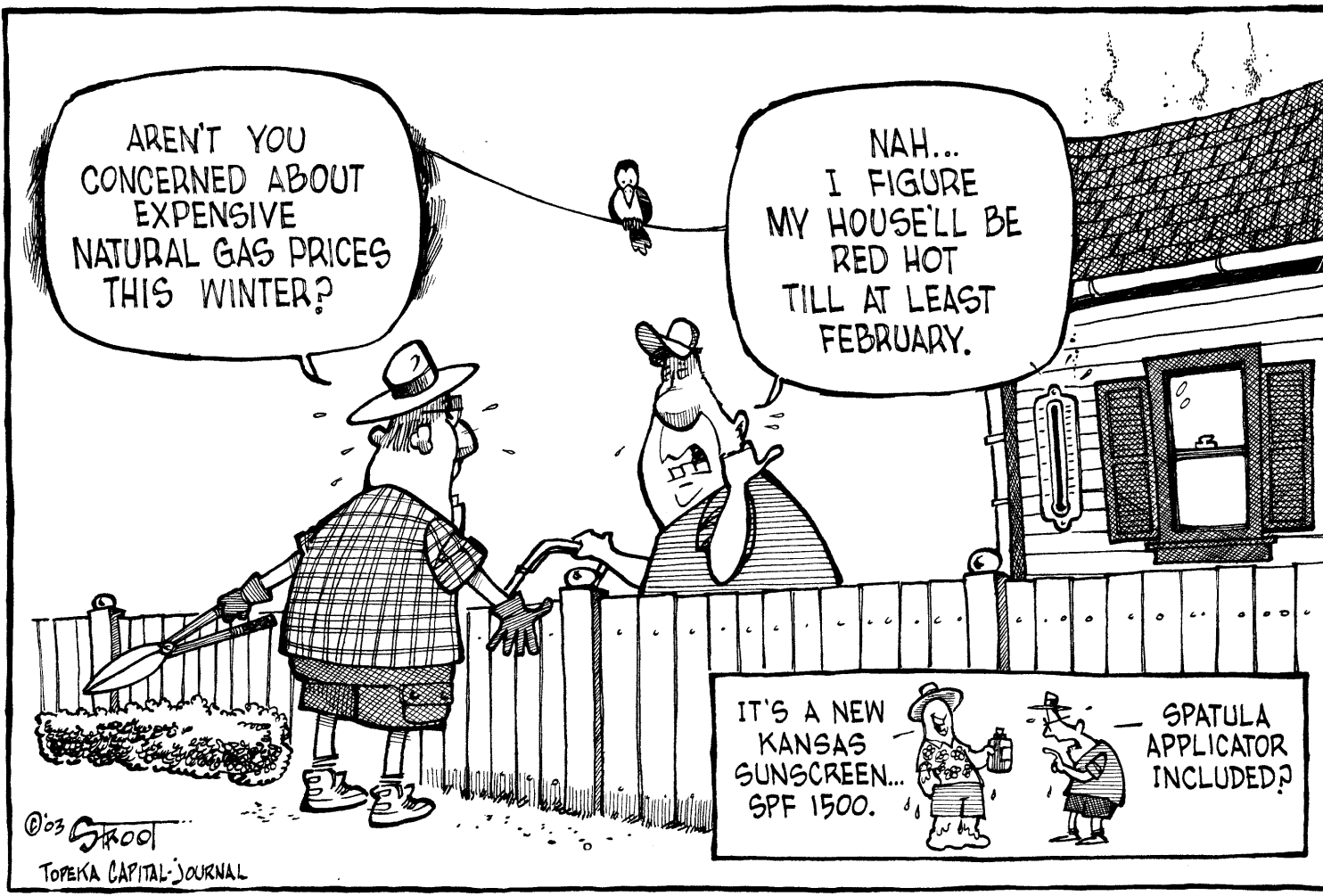
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Places, things to see are close to home

There are lots of places and things to see and do close to home, but so often, however, we just don't know about them.

For instance, I had no idea there was a national cemetery less than two hours away, outside North Platte, Neb.

I could probably have gone on in ignorance of this national treasure on my doorstep except for the Iraq war and the death of an American soldier.

Marine Capt. Travis Allen Ford was killed on April 4, when his helicopter crashed in Iraq. He has been, and hopeful will be, the only Nebraskan killed in this war.

On Saturday, Steve and I were in North Platte at the summer meeting of the Nebraska Press Convention. One of the things we did was attend a ceremony honoring Capt. Ford at the Fort McPherson National Cemetery, in the Platte River Valley about 30 minutes from downtown North Platte.

The cemetery, like all national cemeteries, has hundreds and hundreds of plain white markers. Any U.S. service person and their spouse and dependent children have the right to be buried there. Each person is buried in the next available grave and spouses are buried in the same space, unless both served in the military.

The ceremony for Capt. Ford wasn't very long, but it was impressive. The adjutant general for Nebraska, Roger Lempke, swooped down by helicopter as the press association members stood with Josie Ford, the late captain's mother, his three brothers and vari-



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haynes**

• open season

ous nieces and nephews.

The short service included talks by the adjutant general, an Air Force two-star, the press association president and Capt. Ford's younger brother Matt. Taps were blown and America was sung. Even those of us who hadn't known Travis Ford had tears in our eyes as we looked over the white markers and dozens of American flags flapping in the light breeze.

After the ceremony, the children went over to look at the helicopter and the rest of use walked back along the line of markers.

Some were very simple — L. Jenkins, one read. Some had only death dates, many had birth and death dates and many newer ones had short inscriptions. Capt. Ford's said "Always Watching Semper Fidelis".

Many gave the war the service person was in — Frank A Page, Co. E, 2 Nebr. Inf., Sp Am War.

Some told of a time when life was harder and, sometimes briefer — Edwin Pollack, son of Andrew and Anne Taylor, Died Ap 11, 1871, Aged 3 mos, 19 Dys.

Up front we found the grave of one of the cemetery's four Medal of Honor winners — Daniel H. Miller, Medal of Honor, Co. F, U.S.

What is a pyramid scheme?

Dear Attorney General Kline:

My wife wants to become an independent representative for a new company. When she sells goods, she will receive a portion of the profit, but so will the person who recruited her. If she recruits salespeople, she will get a portion of their profits as well. I told her that companies like this are pyramid schemes, but she says that it's a legal and legitimate company structure. Which of us is correct?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

The popularity of the multi-level marketing structure among smaller companies has made your question a popular and important one. While it is a felony to operate or promote a pyramid promotion in Kansas, it does not mean that companies which have pyramid-shaped organizational charts are illegal schemes. In order to recognize the difference, it is important to define what a pyramid scheme is and what separates it from a legitimate business opportunity.

Kansas Law defines a pyramid promotional scheme loosely as an operation where a person pays money for the opportunity to make money by recruiting others, rather than from the sale of goods. Some pyramid schemes may have a product that they purportedly sell, but the primary focus is on recruiting and adding layers to the pyramid and collecting money from those who join.

Since many legitimate companies also give bonuses for recruiting certain numbers of



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• attorney general

people, those people may have to pay fees to join, and they may have a pyramid-shaped payment structure, how does one tell the difference?

The way to recognize a scheme is to know what place the final product holds in the company. Remember, a legitimate company provides a legitimate product or service and will derive its money primarily from the sale of that product.

Asking the following questions of a recruiter will help you tell the difference between a legitimate opportunity and a felonious rip-off:

If I have to pay to join, where does the money go? If the money is being paid straight to another person for recruiting you, that may be an indication that the scheme is less than legitimate.

What do I get paid to do? If you are paid primarily for recruiting others, rather than from providing a product or service to customers, be very careful, especially if the income you receive is from the fees others pay for joining.

What does the company primarily provide? If the company makes the majority of its money through products or services, it is likely

Cav., Indian Wars, Oct. 6, 1877.

A cemetery brochure tells that two of the other winners were also in the Indian Wars, Sgt. Emanuel Stance and Sgt. George Jordon, both Buffalo Soldiers, were awarded their medals in 1870 and 1880.

The fourth winner was Pfc. James W. Fous, who on May 14, 1968, in Kien Hoa Province of Viet Nam smothered a hand grenade with his own body, saving the lives of the rest of his patrol.

There are almost 8,000 people buried in the cemetery, which was established as a frontier post in 1863, the order signed by Abraham Lincoln, and as a national cemetery in 1873.

As you walk around you see a lot of markers that say simply — Unknown U.S. soldier — no name, no date, no indication of where or how they died or lived On the frontier, it was common to bury the dead quickly, and often difficult to figure out who was who later.

Steve pointed out that we may never again have another unknown soldier. The remains in the memorial at Arlington National Cemetery will not be joined by anyone from future wars, nor will there be any more plain white markers in Fort McPherson National Cemetery that say, "Unknown U.S. Soldier."

It's a hard thing to learn that your child, brother, spouse or friend has been killed, but it is even worse to lose them and never know for sure what happened.

Thank you, Capt. Ford, and all service people for your sacrifices, and God Bless.

to provide a legitimate opportunity. If, on the other hand, you cannot figure out what the company does other than recruit people to join, that's a very good indication that you may be dealing with an illegal scheme.

Many reputable companies use a recruiting and payment structure that is shaped like a pyramid, but their income comes primarily from serving customers. The illegal pyramid scheme is the one that does not serve anyone but the person who starts it and cheats everyone else.

Attorney General Phill Kline offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints or questions. For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Phill Kline, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th Ave., 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310.

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The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be type-written, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: star-news@nwkanssas.com.

garfield

