

from our viewpoint...

## Judging success of council's first year

The Sherman County Economic Development office has been open for nearly a year, and the county Economic Development Council plans a public meeting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Elks Lodge to cover results and plans for the next year.

The meeting will include a review the first year, a look at goals for the upcoming year and nominations for the council for the coming year.

At the last council meeting, Economic Development Director Carolyn Applegate reported that over the past year, a total of 31 businesses changed owners, opened or expanded while seven closed. She did not attempt to take credit for all of this, but there was support from the development office for several new businesses and expansions.

The office helped the Mexican restaurant El Reynaldo's move to a new location, allowing the firm to expand while taking over an existing site where the owner was trying to sell. El Reynaldo's was the first business that qualified for a micro loan from the county's revolving fund to help with the relocation.

This is the type of response and willingness to help that was lacking in the past few years, and the reason a group of people gathered at Gambino's over a 18 months ago to look for a better option. Out of that effort came the organization of the council, and in October last year they hired Applegate as director. The office opened in November.

In the economic development effort, having a place and a person out front gives people a way to ask for help if they are looking to relocate, and gives the business community someone to turn to with ideas of what might be done to help existing business and recruit new ones.

The success of an economic development effort is not easily measured, but indications of success are the number of new jobs in the community — whether they stem directly from the director's work or not — and the number of jobs that are retained. Looking at the results of the first year, there is a sense the economic development office is working to help those who are in business now, and to help those who want to bring new businesses to the county.

Another new business this year is a pallet recycling firm that started after a visit by Applegate to an similar existing business in northeast Kansas. The pallet business was planned for Kanorado or Edson, but ended up in Goodland, and has had a quite start.

Applegate has been working with corporations looking at Goodland as a possible place to relocate, and last week attended a manufacturers convention in Wichita with the help of Aquila, the city's gas supplier. This is an effort to sell Sherman County as a good place for small manufacturers to relocate or expand. It's important to bring as many jobs as possible to northwest Kansas, and it's a win for the whole area when a company makes a commitment.

Looking at the future, probably the highest priority is to continue the effort to work with the existing business community and to help anyone in Sherman County who wants to open a business. These homegrown entrepreneurs are the best answer to business expansion because they do not have to be sold on how good it is to be in Goodland. They already know.

The downtown revitalization effort, which has been supported by Applegate, is a excellent way to continue the effort to improve the central business district and draw attention to the beauty of its historic brick streets. This project will begin rebuilding the Main Street corridor and with continued effort, it will truly be the Main Street Mile when completed. The three blocks are a beginning. It is worth it. — *Tom Betz*

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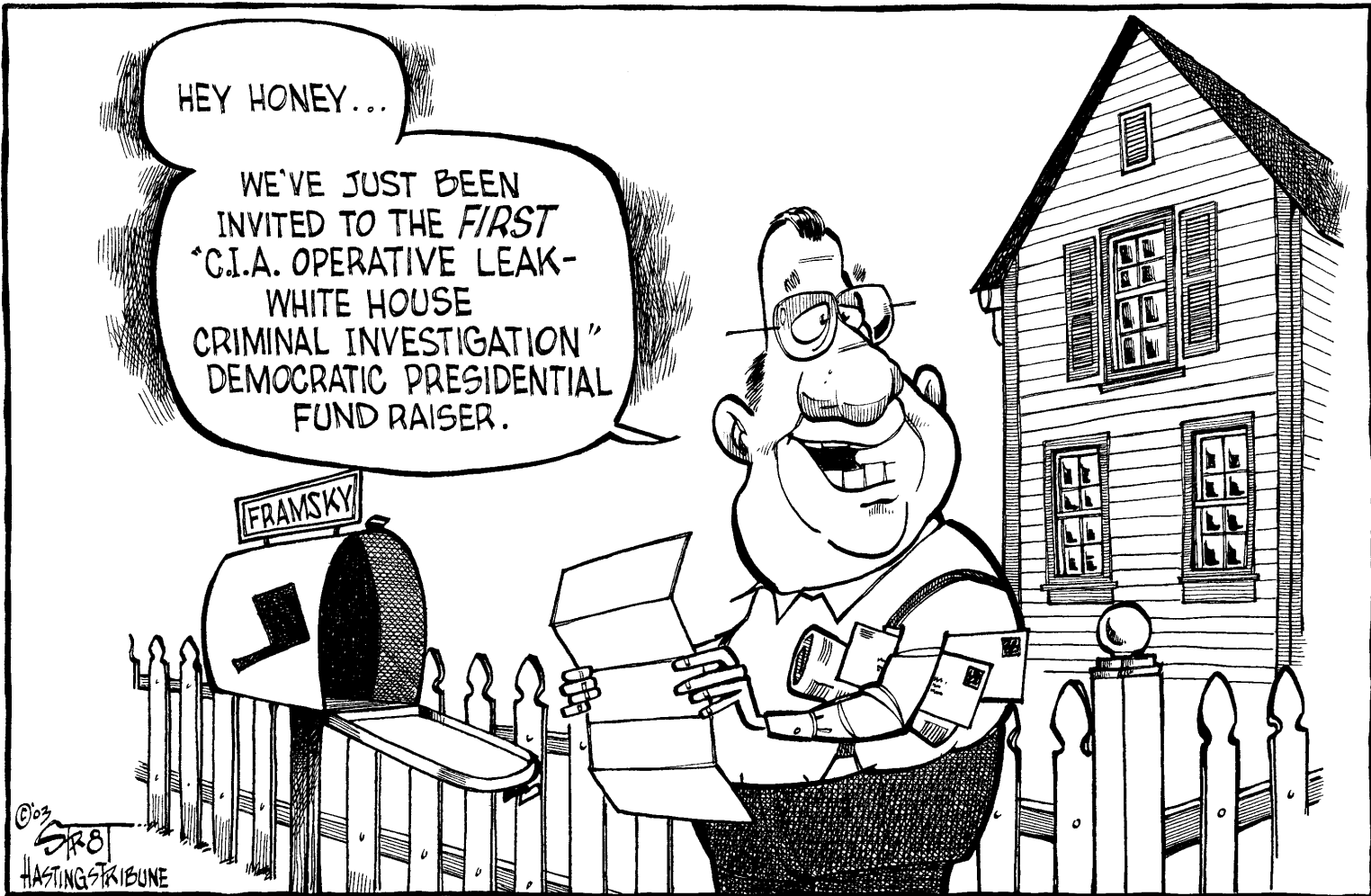
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## Time to stop paying our kids to leave home

They call it the brain drain.

That's where we send our kids off to college, pay thousands of dollars to get them the best education we can buy, then see them take great jobs in some other state.

At best, they settle in Kansas City or Denver, some place where Grandma and Grandpa can go see the kids now and then.

Darned few of them ever come back to their home towns, or some other part of rural America.

It wasn't always this way. There was a time when young men went off to the university, fully expecting to come home and either join the family business or some other home-town firm. A young woman might go off to normal school, but few planned a career in the city.

The Great Depression, if anything, drove people home. It was a lot easier to be poor on the farm than in the city. But World War II changed the whole equation.

The war produced a generation of Americans with GI benefits and ambitions that weren't bound by home ties.

After the war, the country sprouted suburbs of GI Bill housing tracts. Trains gave way to highways and airports. Small towns began to shrink and cities began to swell.

Once Americans had seen the city, so it seemed, it was hard to get anybody to go back down to the farm. Or the small town.



**steve  
haynes**

- along the sappa

And so it is that today, we take our best and our brightest and send them off to college with little, if any, hope that they will return.

And, decent people that we are, we pass the hat and collect money to send them off.

Why do we keep doing that?

There is no law of man or God that says a community has to pay children to get a degree, move to Johnson County and make three times what people make out here.

We want our children to get an education. Rural America values education above all else.

Every civic club and business and organization, from the newspaper to the Rotary Club, raises money for scholarships.

But do we have to keep paying kids to become suburban yuppies?

Most of this money is given with no strings attached in the hope that these kids will go out and get their education and make the world a better place.

But unless you think the demise of rural

America will improve our country, is that all there is to it?

Our scholarship programs grew up in a different era, in a time when there were more people living out here. Maybe it's time we change our thinking.

If we want to raise money for scholarships, maybe we ought to focus on encouraging kids to live in the country. We need business leaders and professionals and educated people of all kinds here. Why not have scholarships for them?

That's not to say that many of our children won't dream of the bright lights and big times in the city. But do we have to *pay* them to leave?

Why not start paying them to get an education and come home? Scholarship programs, from the local women's club to the big foundations, could be reformulated.

Instead of giving hundreds or thousands of dollars to kids who will go on to the city, target the money to those who say they want to come back.

Let the others find a scholarship in the city.

This means changing the basic nature of scholarship programs, and it won't be easy. It won't be easy to make everyone live up to their promises, but it could be worked out.

If those of us who live here won't plan for the future of rural America, what kind of future will we have.?

## Credit card marketing: Stop the insanity

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to your mailbox, think again. They come in every color and many are named after precious metals. Then, they keep coming — day after day, rain, sleet or snow, somehow they make it through to your mailbox. More credit card offers.

But that's just the start. You grab a handful of mail and realize that you're pre-approved! They offer easy money, low introductory rates and no interest for the first six months! It all sounds too good to be true and often times is. Those once six-month, interest-free cards jump to 23 percent or higher and consumers are left holding the bag.

In today's fast-paced, technology driven world, credit cards are just another reality we must contend with — much like cell phones and computers. However, we should not despair, there are steps available to keep us from getting in over our heads with this "free money."

Not long ago Congress followed the lead of many states, including Kansas, and enacted a national no-call list. The no-call list was created to end unwanted calls by solicitors trying to sell various products. Often times, these calls would come in the middle of dinner.

However, since its inception it has also faced opposition from direct marketing trade groups who were able to successfully suspend the activation date for the list. As you can imagine, this did not sit well with the 50 million people who had signed up for the list. In response to this, Congress rushed through legislation that was signed by President Bush closing the loophole that had been created. So, for now, it looks as though the law will be upheld.

To register for the national no-call list call toll-free at 1-888-382-1222 or go online at



**lynn  
jenkins**

- state treasurer

<http://www.donotcall.gov>.

If you had previously signed up with the Kansas Attorney General's office for the Kansas no-call list then your name has already been placed on the federal list.

Over a half-million Kansans have signed up on for the no-call list and more than \$224,000 in fines have been levied against telemarketers who have violated the law.

Likewise, consumers now have a way to help stop or slow almost all pre-approved credit card advertisements that you receive in the mail by calling the Consumer Data Industry Association toll-free at 1-888-5-Optout. Additionally for a \$5 fee you can log on to the Direct Marketing Association's web page at <http://www.dmaconsumers.org> and be removed from the associations mailing lists. Or, you can send a postcard to DMA Mail Prefer-

### where to write

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