

from our viewpoint...

Tight money means hue and cry in state

There is a hue and cry rising across Kansas. The spenders want more money. They want a tax increase so they can get it out of your pocket. Everywhere, there are stories of hardship and woe, from social services to schools to higher education. In newspapers and on the wire, these stories stand out because they seldom, if ever, deal with economic reality. Only the “needs” of the disabled, the schools, state agencies and other clients are mentioned. The state’s financial crisis comes up only as an afterthought, if at all.

One reason for this is that it’s hard to be against welfare clients, the disabled and kids. It just doesn’t look good. Politicians always promise to help. They know that when the crunch comes, and there is no money, there won’t be much they can do. But these promises sound good.

Another reason is that these needs are real. No one is imagining the plight of the blind, the wheel-chair-bound, the poor or the hungry. No one thinks that schools couldn’t use more money or that Kansas universities don’t need to keep their standing.

No one wants to be against education or helping the poor. But someone has stand up and say, “enough.” The state doesn’t have any money, and it can’t increase spending for schools, social services or much of anything else unless it cuts back on some other programs.

Face facts: The economy isn’t getting any better, so state revenues aren’t likely to rise much.

And there is absolutely zero chance of a tax increase in this state in an election year. It’s just not going to happen.

The propaganda machine is cranked up anyway. Check out the sob stories from the Harris News Service about Kansans who depend on state services that didn’t even exist a decade or two ago.

Check out speeches by Ed Hammond of Fort Hays State University and other college presidents. Hammond says Kansas should be ashamed that its schools’ rankings have slipped, but he has no suggestions for raising more money.

In a state where businesses are still hurting, where drought lingers and fall crops have failed again, where thousands have lost their jobs and thousands more are looking for one, we just can’t afford to raise taxes.

It wouldn’t be right to add to the burden of taxpayers already beset by recession and high unemployment. And the Legislature isn’t going to pass a tax increase, regardless of how many sob stories there are out there.

But you won’t see much in print or on the air about these facts. The negative side here is just too hard to argue. It’s real, and it will prevail. But nobody is going to stick their neck out too far, not in an election year.

Need or not, state agencies, like all of us, are going to have to get used to the situation and live with what they have. They must tighten their belts like Kansans on unemployment, Kansas businesses and Kansas farmers have been doing the last few years.

Until times get better for all of us, some of these needs will just have to go unmet. That may sound hard-hearted, but it’s true. — *Steve Haynes*

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HASTINGS TRIBUNE

We had to pickup the potatoes on our last trip

It was the last trip to the mountains. Time to close the house and bring home potatoes.

We have a house in the Colorado mountains. It was the home we built and where we raised our children before moving to western Kansas.

When it was time to move, we couldn’t sell the place. We rented it for years and eventually decided to just keep it as a second home. When we needed the money, we couldn’t sell it, and now that the kids are grown and mostly out of college, we’re glad we have it.

But, there is a catch. While it is possible to live there all year around — we did that for many years — it isn’t practical to keep it open in the wintertime.

One or the other of our two younger children spend the summer there. Our daughter is a teacher and our son a student. They have summers off.

But once school starts, the place is vacant except for an occasional visit from us or our friends.

By the end of October, it is time to shut things down. The weather is starting to turn up there. The aspen have lost their leaves and it’s freezing almost every night.

The house is heated with a wood stove, so it wouldn’t be practical to keep the heat on all winter. Even with electricity or propane, when



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

the temperature falls to 40 below, things get pretty dicey.

So we drain the pipes, turn off the electricity and take everything liquid out of the house and haul it back to Kansas to use or store for next year.

We also go potato shopping at a warehouse in the Valley.

The Valley is the San Luis Valley, the largest mountain park in Colorado. It is a big potato-growing area. The other big crop is barley. Coors grows much of its malting barley in the Valley.

But we were interested in the potatoes, the best in the world in our humble opinion. Every year we load sacks of potatoes for each office. This was fine when we had *The Oberlin Herald*, *The Saint Francis Herald* and the *Bird City Times*. However, the number of offices has grown to five and the number of bags of potatoes has reached hernia proportions.

Still, if the crew is going to work while we

take four days off to “close the house,” we’d better bring them treats. Potatoes are the thing.

We loaded 750 pounds of potatoes in three boxes and twelve 50-pound bags this trip. Since we were leaving on Saturday, we had to pick up the potatoes on Thursday.

Did I mention that it freezes most nights up there?

We got to lug 12 50-pound bags and two boxes of potatoes into the house. (We had already given one box to some friends from Salida, Colo.)

Then on Saturday, we reloaded the potatoes along with the dog kennel (she likes traveling to Colorado), the cat (this one doesn’t mind the trip), our suitcases and everything with liquid, from the dish washing soap to the A1 sauce. We were stacked to the ceiling. We squeezed in the truck and headed east for home.

The forecast was for rain, ice, snow and wind. We saw all of those but the ice was minimal and the snow was 500 feet above us on the mountainside.

When we got home, the forecast was for a low in the 30s, but the thermometer read 34 degrees. We dragged the potatoes into the kitchen.

Now all we have to do is reload those spuds and deliver them to the hungry hordes. I think I’ve had my exercise for this week.

It is time to end sanctions against Cuba

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to the Oct. 31 editorial written by Steve Haynes. My family lived in the Florida Keys for 11 years and witnessed firsthand the desperation of the Cuban people to live in the United States. On a weekly basis bodies are found floating in the Florida Straits. These bodies are Cubans who were trying to cross a treacherous stretch of water in rafts, on inner tubes, or rickety old boats to a better way of life. A life where children over the age of nine can have all the milk that they want.

The embargo against Cuba is not just against Castro. It is against all of the Cuban people. Our current-day government sees this and is trying



from our
readers

• to the editor

to rectify it. The travel ban is a mere imposition — Americans can fly to Cuba from almost anywhere, other than the United States. On a regular basis, boaters from the Florida Keys go to Cuba. Granted, they have to fill out scads of paperwork and can not spend mighty American dollars, but they do go to fish in the tournaments and drink the fine Cuban rum and smoke the noble cigars.

Treasurer agrees not to sell military artifacts

Topeka — Friday, Kansas State Treasurer Lynn Jenkins, CPA, announced a major shift in unclaimed property policy.

Jenkins will no longer allow military medals, ribbons, certificates or artifacts (e.g. “dog tags”) earned in combat or military service to be sold at auction.

“I was alarmed when I discovered the state auctioned veterans, medals to the highest bidder. These symbols often represent those who served in the armed forces or paid the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom,” said Jenkins. “I could not sleep at night knowing that these medals could be lost forever just to make room in a vault. Each medal contains a memory and a story and I will make it a priority to see that they are preserved while we



**lynn
jenkins**

• state treasurer

search for the property owners or their heirs. It is simply the right thing to do.”

Jenkins partnered with the American Legion to announce this shift in policy.

“It is essential every American and every Kansan know the price that has been paid for our freedom. I appreciate Treasurer Jenkins looking after our veterans and their memories. War medals are not just pieces of metal, they are pieces of honor and bravery and we must

never forget the reasons why people received them,” said Wayne McReynolds, State Commander for the American Legion.

As administrator of unclaimed property in Kansas, the Treasurer’s office collects the contents of all abandoned safe deposit boxes. Every effort is made to find the rightful owner of unclaimed property but if the owner or heir cannot be located, the physical property is auctioned off and the value is returned to the unclaimed property fund where it is retained until it can be claimed. The new policy will no longer allow military and war items to be sold at auction.

In order to search for unclaimed property or medals please visit the web page at <http://kansascash.com> or visit the Treasurer’s site at <http://KansasStateTreasurer.com>.

garfield

