

from other pens...

## Government job numbers growing

Need a job? Ask any level of government in the state of Kansas for one. They seem to be the only people hiring.

According to a report released by the state Department of Labor, Kansas government agencies had 6,000 more employees in November than they did in November 2005. That's about the entire population of Colby.

That's not good in so many ways.

For starters, it's gives the state a bad reputation. The state chapter of Americans for Prosperity ranks Kansas was 49th of the 50 states in private-sector job growth during that time.

Kansas residents will also wonder where their tax dollars are going. Sure, those dollars are used to maintain the day-to-day operations for the state, but not every operation of the state sees growth in a such a way to justify hiring more government employees.

Will Kansas taxes go up to pay those new employees? Western Kansas residents should get mad if they do. With a population loss, why should western Kansas pay more taxes for more government employees when western Kansas has a continuous population decline?

Logically, fewer people equates to fewer government employees, which should mean lower taxes. But government and logic don't always go together.

Having more government employees is not good politically. The Democrats are still smiling about their edge they have in Congress now. And, of course, the Democrat state governors are riding that bandwagon. Throughout this decade, the Democrats have pushed and shoved their ways into the headlines and radio microphones saying there is too much government and it needs to become more efficient.

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius is one of those Democrats. She still says Kansas is in a better financial position now than four years ago.

This is the Democrats' chance to put their money where their mouth is. Or will they be too busy posturing for November 2008?

Our state representative, Republican Jim Morrison, says he's aware of the government job growth. He said he expects that issue to be discussed and reviewed during the 2007 legislative session, but don't expect a solution soon.

— John Van Nostrand, publisher, Colby Free Press

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SIGNED BY 987 (AND COUNTING) ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVE AND GUARD PERSONNEL



## Here's something for our dog loving readers

Most people know that I'm more of a cat person than a dog person, but over the years, we've had three dogs, and we have Annie now.

So, for those dog lovers out there, I worked extra hard — and made Steve come up with a couple — and did a canine version of last week's column.

I even asked my sister-in-law Barb for her help. Barb does dog rescue and last time I visited her she had five dogs — three of her own, one rescued puppy and an older dog that no one would adopt.

Of course, since dogs are more varied than cats, this won't apply quiet as universally.

- So —
- You might be a dog if:
  - Your ears flap when you run.
  - There are two dozen tennis balls in your house but no rackets.
  - You eat it first and try to figure out what it was later.
  - You love to travel by car, preferably with your head out the window.



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

- Water is wonderful. You like to jump in it, then lay in it, then drink it, then shake it all over everyone.
- You are in love with the world. People are wonderful, dinner is wonderful, even the vet is great.
- You get to go (almost) everywhere with your two-legged friends.
- You're not sure why, but when you try to cross that spot in the yard, your neck hurts.
- If it's dead, roll in it; if it's a cat, annoy it; if it squeaks, go get it.
- If it runs, chase it. If it doesn't run, come to a screeching halt and look worried.
- People know where you are by listening to the jingle of your collar.

- You offer lots of kisses, but don't find a lot of takers.
  - People aren't being mean when they call you a bit\*\*.
  - You're the warmest thing around but your nose is cold.
  - You find your way home by smell.
  - Your place is in the back of the pickup.
  - Your bark is worse than your bite.
  - You warn the family of the approach of everyone — friend or foe.
  - If you can reach it, you lick it.
  - You head outside each morning and evening to do your "job."
  - If it has two legs, think about it. If it has four legs, it's fair game.
  - If it has fur, feathers or felt, it's a toy and it's yours.
- I'm sure there are plenty more and if I get enough good suggestions, I'll try to put together a dog and cat column from other people's ideas. Send them to me at cahaynes@nwkans.com

### Letter Policy

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## Ferrets won't stop prairie dogs

Another legislative session is underway in Topeka. As usual, many topics are slated for discussion.

Currently, there is debate in the 40th Senatorial District concerning the introduction of the black-footed ferret on property infested with prairie dogs.

Kansas Wildlife and Parks expert Michael LeValley admits that the ferret introduction is not intended to control the population of prairie dogs. The ferret needs a densely populated colony of prairie dogs for food.

I will begin my newspaper articles this year by sharing my views on the introduction of the black-footed ferret.

Please read this article, but do your own research concerning the introduction of the black-footed ferret to control established colonies of prairie dogs in Logan County.

My main concern is that we have a 100-year-old law in place to help control prairie rodents, and this law has worked quite well to protect adjacent landowners.

It is my opinion that none of us will live long enough to see the day when the prairie dog population will be completely eradicated. As I understand it, in order for the ferret species to survive, the prairie dog population will have to be kept at a dense level. I do think we agree that a "dense" level prairie dog population will



**ralph ostmeyer**

• state senator

allow a greater chance of these rodents spreading out to adjacent landowners.

We proudly live in a land where the majority has always ruled. We respect personal property rights, but also must respect our neighbors.

An elderly gentleman once told me that "good fences make good neighbors." I would extend this to say "controlling prairie dogs also makes good neighbors."

I admit that my knowledge of the black-footed ferret is limited.

I can only speak from my experience of how prairie dogs became a problem for me in the 1970s. In a matter of a few years, these rodents spread out over a 90 acre pasture that I own. Out of respect for my neighbors, I completely eradicated the two colonies that had made their home in my pasture. Just this last summer, 30 years later, I have located evidence of reinfestation.

My point being that we will never get rid of

this rodent because each landowner places a different level of priority in controlling them. I have found that eradication is time-consuming and expensive.

As long as Wildlife and Parks encourages and protects colonies of prairie dogs by introducing the black-footed ferret, neighbors will have a constant vigil to keep in order to control prairie dogs on their land.

Kansas Wildlife and Parks has mentioned that they will control adjacent property infestation using the boundary method. Will this treatment continue, or be just a one-time deal for neighbors of the properties on which they intend to release the black-footed ferret? Please consider the consequences to these neighbors, because they will be faced constantly with possible infestation of prairie dogs on their property.

I realize that my stand against this issue may seem one-sided, but this issue is important to the constituents of my district. We must respect the property rights of everyone, especially the people who are directly affected by this decision. We need to make sure the laws of Kansas protect the property rights of everyone, as well.

### where to write

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; web address — roberts-senate.gov

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