

from our viewpoint...

## City water decision good for future

The city commissioners decision to use existing reserves to pay for the water collection and treatment plant and paying off the old loan will save citizens more than \$2 million in interest over the next 20 years.

Thanks should go to the previous commissioners over the years who worked to build up the reserves to give the city the ability to handle such an investment.

Using the existing reserves will allow the city to reduce the cost of the project plus take advantage of up to \$1.3 million of the federal stimulus money.

Commissioner Dave Daniels and Commissioner Rick Billinger deserve credit for suggesting paying off the earlier water loan, and this will save the city many thousands of dollars of interest that would be paid over the next 10 years.

Today the city investments are getting about .8 percent of interest, and the water loan would have cost about 4 percent plus the 4 percent being paid on the previous loan.

The commissioners are committed to paying the city reserves back over time to give the rebuild the reserves for future projects.

Paying off the existing loan the city will have about \$185,000 a year to use as part of the repayment to the city reserves, and reduce the money the city will need to cover the total package.

When the water project planning began the engineers suggested the water rates would have to increase between \$10 to \$20 a month to pay the loan back.

Using the city reserves up front reduces the water rate increase to \$5 a month. With this small increase the city can cover the repayment plus give the water fund money for maintenance and to operate the water treatment plant.

The city has been working on the water quality improvement project for more than a year, and city commissioners have found an option to make almost everyone pleased with the project and how it will be paid.

The city water project got a boost from President Obama's stimulus program, and was one of three projects the city had "shovel ready" to be eligible for the federal money. In this case having the project ready is that bids will be opened today, and the commissioners will meet at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday to approve the bids with work on the water project beginning in the next few months. The project is expected to take a year to complete.

The other two projects receiving stimulus money included the taxiway and intersection at Renner Field and an upcoming project to replace the asphalt from I-70 north on K-27 at least to the Walmart entrance.

The progressive efforts of the commissioners and staff are a good base, and as a citizen we can be proud of the good things happening in our community.

The economy will improve in the next year, and other opportunities will come down the road with chances for more economic development.

Getting the National Guard Armory can be a real opportunity, and the city is planning to appoint a committee including citizens to look at the options and give the commissioners a recommendation of what the best use could be.

A local attorney suggested a couple of years ago we need to remind ourselves every day why we live in Goodland, and to always be ready to say something good about the town. "Have you said something good about Goodland today?" — Tom Betz

## The Goodland Star-News

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## Make the most of meal-time



### Insight this week

• john schlageck

such as cell phones, video games and toys. Make the family the center of attention not a distraction.

Have each member of the family talk about an activity in his or her day and discuss it within the family. This initiates conversation and helps keep the family connected. By carving out a moment of peace in the day, you communicate that dinner is a special, family time.

Mark milestones at meals. Throw away the old rules of calendar holidays and make family dinner a time to remember. Use place mats and table decorations and easy themed meals to note special days including birthdays, test days and any other significant event worth highlighting. Remember it's about spending time with your family.

Include teamwork at the table. Everyone should play a part. This includes menu planning so children will have a voice. They can search for recipes in cookbooks and online as well as meal preparation such as setting the table, washing vegetable and clean up after the dinner meal is complete.

Packing the pantry is a key to dinner success.

This means having an assortment of condiments on hand including plenty of mustard, barbecue sauce, salad dressing, jams and jellies, herbs, spices, olives and garlic. These will all help pull a flavorful meal together. Today with all of the convenient ingredients available at our fingertips, this provides an easy way for children to participate in whipping up sauces and marinades.

Don't forget to create a bevy of flavors. This means adding variety to meals that also encourage youngsters to select and eat different foods. Remember to add color to the dinner table. By filling a plate with fruit and vegetables, colors like green, orange and red will ensure a meal that's rich in key vitamins and nutrients. Hopefully the kids will eat and enjoy these foods too.

No doubt there are plenty of other ideas and tips that will foster family togetherness through meal preparations, rituals and traditions. These are simply a handful that are tried and true. Come up with your own. Make them part of your own family's tradition. More importantly enjoy the food and time with your family.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

In today's harried world, seems like everyone's schedule is filled to the brim with activities. Both parents work, kids go to school and participate in student government, sports or any number of activities and events.

Seems families meet each other coming and going. Still, most parents believe it's more important than ever to dedicate the dinner hour to developing and nurturing relationships with family members.

While most of us are fortunate enough to eat every day, the abundance of food in our country is still something to be thankful for and not taken for granted. Farmers and ranchers provide us with the meat, vegetables, fruits, milk, juice and other items we eat each day.

Our food is safe and wholesome. It is also a real bargain with most families paying less than 11 percent of their annual income on food.

That said, it is important that time spent at the dinner table should also be something we as families look forward to and appreciate. It is a time to give thanks for the bounty we enjoy. Make each and every evening meal memorable with your family.

Carve out a few moments of peace and quiet for these family gatherings. It's important to limit distractions during mealtime. Turn off the television, radio or both.

Establish a quiet place for meals and make a habit of temporarily eliminating interruptions

## Jump Rope for Heart...a good jump, indeed



### tom dreiling

• time out with td

degrees in the midst of winter wouldn't be so bad after all. And too, if the scores went south, well....blame the weather.

"TD," an e-mailer writes, "bumper stickers? We can do better than that." "TD, the way the US Senate has been carrying on, they need to wear boxing shorts." "Wouldn't you fear that if the Senate and House members dressed down to look like they were working, even doing that might bring on chest pains." "We're with you on the 'dress down' thing." "Could your grandson maybe be a chip off the old block." If you care to comment, simply e-mail me at [tad1@st-tel.net](mailto:tad1@st-tel.net), or call me at either 890-2475



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