

from our viewpoint...

Sherman citizens miss census mark

Those who mailed their U.S. Census forms helped the city, county, state and country to comply with the U.S. Constitution to count the population every decade.

Checking the national map on Sunday the return percentages of each county showed Sherman County had reached the 63 percent level. That is 2 percent below what was turned in 10 years ago.

The national return rate has matched what came in 10 years ago at 72 percent, and Kansas as a whole is ahead of the national average at 74 percent.

In northwest Kansas Rawlins County and Decatur County are below Sherman County while all the other surrounding counties are ahead, and a few are even higher than the state rate of return.

The lagging figures for Sherman County are a disaster that will have a rippling effect beginning with the redistricting of the legislative districts in the next two years. The Census estimates already put Sherman County's population lower than it was in the last Census. That will mean the county will become a smaller part of a larger representative district and state senate district that will reduce the representation of those who live in Sherman County on a regional and state level.

Those who attended the Tea Party event at Gulick Park heard a lot about adhering to the U. S. Constitution and how we have gotten away from following what the founding fathers intention was when they created this living document.

The requirement to "count the population" is included in the writing of Article II, and is specific that the representation of the House of Representatives will be based on the numbers from that count to be made every 10 years.

For those who feel the government does not need to know who is living in a home the refusal to abide by the Constitution will cost in the long run.

The figures from the Census count are what is used at more levels than for deciding representations in Congress or the state legislature.

The numbers are what are used by subdivisions of the federal government and state government anytime they are looking to help with programs, and what level of money the communities or county are eligible for in any program.

Of course, many conservatives will say this is what makes the government wrong, and all these programs are what is causing the problems.

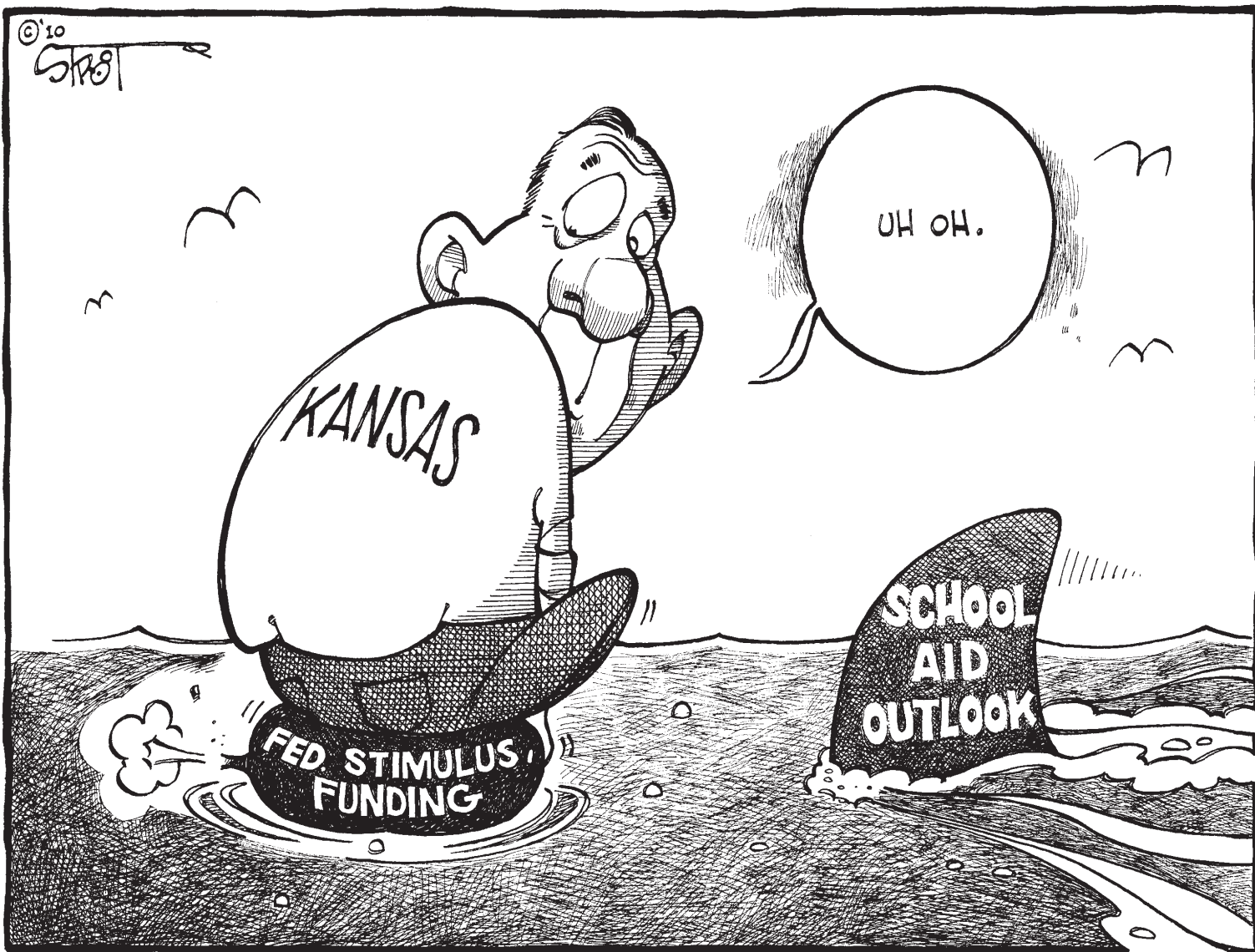
Answering the Census does not change that, and refusing to answer will not change that. What is true is that without the proper population figures the state and federal programs will find it easier to work with those places that have done a better job of complying with the constitutional provision.

People who have not answered the Census can expect to hear a knock on the door beginning the end of this week, and several times over the next two months as workers try to get more of the forms filled out.

The goal is to get the return rate higher than it was 10 years ago, and higher than the state rate of 74 percent.

For those who want to take the government back, the first step is to follow the provisions of the U.S. Constitution and get your friends and neighbors to fill out that Census form. When a Census worker knocks on the door be helpful and accept their help to fill out the 10 questions.

The Census has worked hard to make counting people as painless as possible, and we will be better citizens when we help Sherman County reach a higher goal. — Tom Bet



What a difference a few miles make

Boy, what a difference a distance of a few hundred miles make!

Son Todd and I were driving back to Goodland Saturday from Topeka. We left the capital city around 10 a.m. (Mountain Time), and the temperature was close to 70 (I think it was 68). One must remember that traveling west across Kansas from a place like Topeka, you will climb a couple thousand feet.

When this happens you will notice all sorts of climate changes. By the time we reached Goodland, around 3 p.m., the temperature gauge inside the car showed the outside temperature to be 44. Not just that, but the winds were blowing around 35 and guests were up and sometimes over 50 miles per hour. Prior to arriving in Goodland, we ran into wind-driven rain under threatening cloud cover.

Not only does the drive from Topeka to Goodland provide the motorist with some really interesting terrain, it also provides the motorist with weather changes, sometimes drastic, as we experienced.

I think there is something misplaced, however. Isn't Topeka our capital? Aren't politicians blowing hot air from the capitol's hallways? Shouldn't that be the windiest place in the state?

It took us five hours to cover the 355-mile drive. If I was behind the wheel, it would probably have been seven hours.

-td-

Thumbs Up to...



tom dreiling

• time out with td

"All of those beautiful gals and handsome guys in the Goodland promenade."-(e-mail); "Cody Brock, for letting the community see your photographic talent. The beauty of Alaska shines through!"-(e-mail); "Alan Townsend, on that wonderful in depth story on your pinto bean operation."-(telephone); "Whomever... why not demolish that creepy looking building at 17th and Broadway, and turn that entire area into a beautiful lawn and flower garden, and place outdoor chairs around for the public to relax and enjoy the scenery."-(e-mail).

To render a salute, simply e-mail tad1@st-tel.net, call 899-2338 or 890-2475, drop your salute in the Star-News drop box or bring it inside the office. Thanks, no charge.)

-td-

The final week of April is here. May awaits its turn to take the stage. The three big events are Mother's Day, high school graduations and Memorial Day services. Hopefully, the weather will have settled down by the time of the Memorial Day services, although sometimes Memorial Day itself can be unfriendly. My hope for May is more, lots more sunshine and warmer, much warmer temperatures. It's nearing T-shirt/shorts/flip-flop time. Hurry!

Our side



Insight this week

• john schlageck

Every story has two sides. Sometimes more.

On Wednesday, May 5, Kansans will have an opportunity to see and hear about the care, dedication and passion family farmers and ranchers have for producing safe and affordable food.

On this date at 9 p.m. (Central Time), public television stations in Kansas will air a panel discussion called, "Taking Stock: Perspectives on Food Production in Kansas." Panelists include various leaders on the subject of food product in Kansas including Kansas Farm Bureau President Steve Baccus, a grain farmer from Ottawa County.

This panel discussion program is a response to the April 21, airing by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) of the controversial documentary, Food Inc. The film is critical of the American food production system and garnered new attention when nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary.

The general theme of the film is: The food industry doesn't want you to know the truth about what you are eating because if you knew, you wouldn't eat it. The documentary paints an unfair and incomplete picture of the American food system, including farmers and ranchers. It provides one filmmaker's point of view and one that does not represent most farmers, ranchers and the folks who live in rural communities across Kansas.

where to write

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; web e-mail address — brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me

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It won't be long and another sign of the approaching summer will be here: the opening of the Steever Water Park. That's good news for the splash-splashes, young and old. And you still have a little bit of time to shed a few more pounds, for those among us who are swimsuit conscious. Fun in the sun shouldn't be predicated on one's love for lots of food. Right? Right!

-td-

I was down to 182.6 pounds on the doctor's scale this past week. When I first saw my new doctor when I moved to town, I tipped the scales at 189.9 pounds. I'm staying with it and have convinced myself I can get down to 175. I don't eat snacks after the evening meal. It's tough to stay away from them, but weight conscious people will tell you it's what you eat AFTER the evening meal that begins packing on the weight. So, you now know the packing problem and how to get rid of it. When I think I might like a piece of pie or cake, or a couple of cookies while watching television, I now take a couple of watermelon squares or pineapple squares out of the fridge and make them do. And they do, do. Try it, after a while you'll like it. Guaranteed.

-td-

Have a good evening! And take care of yourself. And those you love. Feedback always appreciated. Send to me at tad1@st-tel.net. Have a good week!

stewardship. These innovations allow farmers to harvest larger yields from fewer acres, in harmony with their environment.

At the same time, farmers and ranchers adhere to sound principles of animal husbandry and provide the best care for their livestock. They look after their animals first thing in the morning and the last thing in the evening.

Today's animal husbandry is no accident. Farmers and ranchers go beyond their role of humane guardians and show devoted concern for their animals health and safety.

They work hard, long hours to care for and nurture their livestock. Farmers and ranchers are neither cruel nor naive.

They want to produce healthy animals that will one day feed others. In fact, they feed their own families from the livestock and crops they produce.

Today, many consumers are unaware of a farmer and rancher's relationship with the crops they grow and the animals they care for. They don't know how meat, milk, eggs, wheat, vegetables and other food products wind up on their dinner table. Few know all that goes into caring, feeding and nurturing of livestock and crops that goes on across Kansas.

Farmers and ranchers continue to adapt and change to meet the needs of consumers today. Crop and livestock producers, including Baccus, will tell you consumers drive this whole food picture today.

"On my farm, I change what I plant based on what consumers want," he says. "It's all about giving the people what they want. Our entire food industry has changed to meet consumer demand."

That said, today's consumers should continue to regard the profession of farming and ranching highly, and embrace a quality, abundant food source they value second to none.

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.

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