

from our viewpoint...

City takes giant step to clean up town

Kudos to the city staff and crews who spent the week traversing the town to pick up piles of trash, furniture and tires in an effort to improve the looks of our community.

The total figure is not known at press time, but with an estimate of nearly 2,000 tires collected the total tonnage will be amazing we are sure.

City Manager Doug Gerber said he was amazed at the stuff the crews found on the curbs and in the alleys as the crews worked their way back and forth across the city and from the north to south.

All of the city staff took their turn on the clean up crews during the week, and some were out every day helping pick up the piles.

One of the city employees said it was like an unending stream as people would put more trash out after the crew had gone down a street.

On Monday Phil Erickson, street crew supervisor, said he had a small crew out looking for piles that might have been missed on Friday.

We know the city had an almost constant stream of trucks hauling loads out to the transfer station all week with tons of tree limbs and yard waste in one line and construction and demolition debris in another.

The city made a deal with Randall Fixsen to take the electronics, and by Friday Fixsen said he was overwhelmed with how much electronic stuff was coming in from the clean up effort.

Cleaning up the city is an important part of improving the image the community portrays to those visiting and who might be looking to move here or bring a business to town.

The sense of pride shown by the city employees as they helped clean up the town hopefully will spread to the citizens as they commit to keeping the city clean.

Gerber told the city commission the clean up effort was the beginning of the effort to improve the city image.

In recent years the city commission has stepped up efforts to identify and bring to account homes and businesses that have been allowed to fall into disrepair and in some cases dangerous conditions. A number of these have been cited by the city and some have been demolished and some have been brought back up to livable conditions.

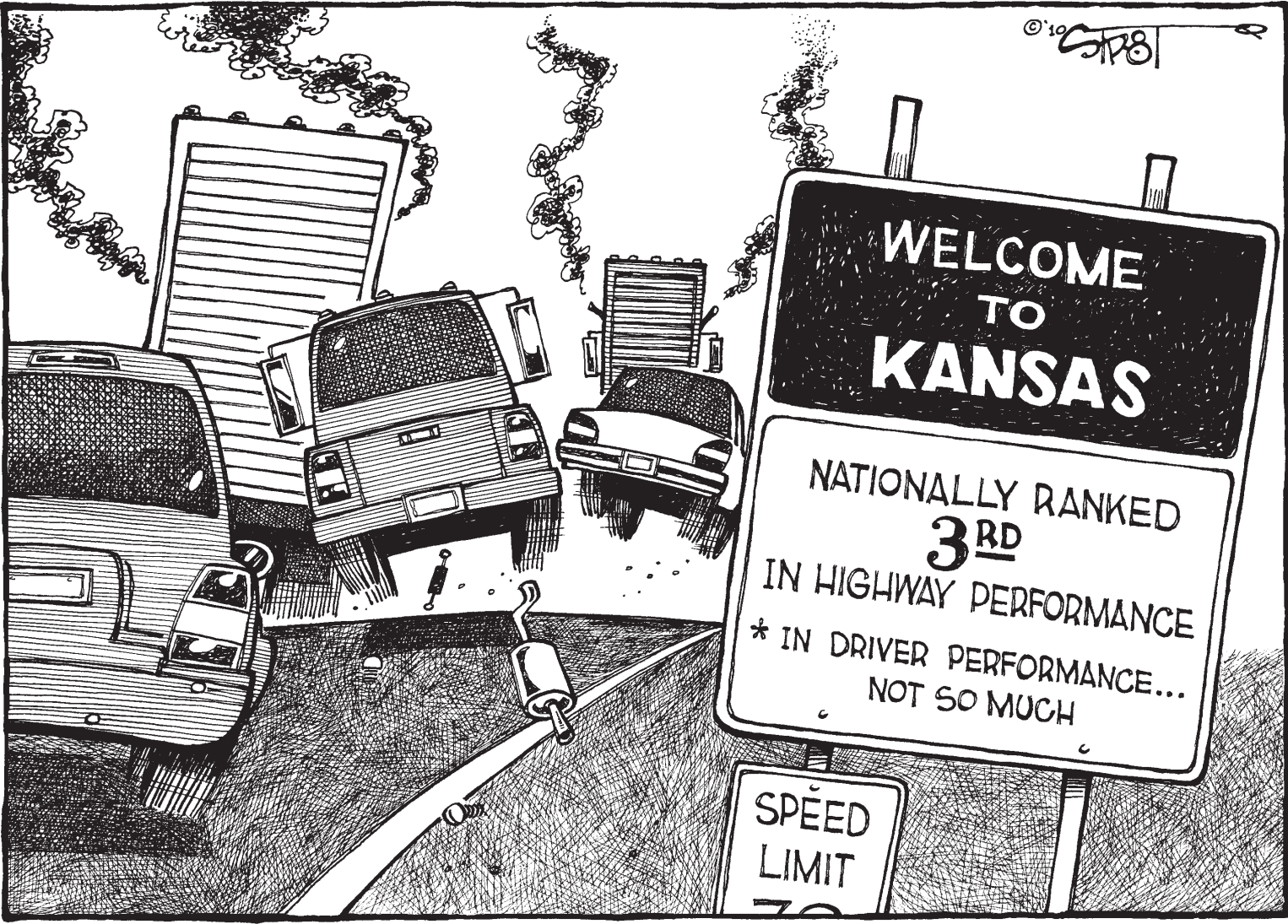
Gerber said the city will continue this effort, and will be looking for other ways to help keep the city cleaned up.

Cutting down dead trees is one area where Gerber feel the city needs to help. The city utility crews have been working in the alleys and streets cutting down trees that interfere with the power lines. However, Gerber feels the city needs to look at a wider tree program to help remove dead trees along the streets that are beyond the scope of the power lines.

The focus on cleaning up the community is a great way to remind everyone who lives here they have a stake in the future growth. Having a positive attitude and presenting a clean appearance have always been at the top of the list for economic success.

On several days last week the city crew faced piles of trash that seemed to grow faster than they could pick them up, but with perseverance the employees were able to win the battle.

Hats off to the city employees for their fine efforts, and may all of us follow their example and keep our city clean. — Tom Betz



We support at-large voting, oppose expansion

To the Editor:

Two issues concerning the Sherman County Commission is on our November ballot: 1) at-large elections for all commission candidates, and 2) increasing commissioners from 3 to 5.

In my opinion we should vote ‘Yes’ for at-large and vote ‘No’ to increase the number of county commissioners from 3 to 5.

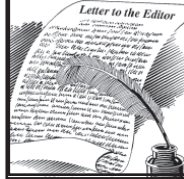
When I served on the Goodland (USD 352) school board we were successful in getting at-large elections on the ballot for all school board members. It passed by a wide margin.

Some feared all school board members would be elected from within the town of Goodland, but that didn’t happen. Half or more of all school board members were elected from rural residents of the county.

At-large elections is a smart move allowing all the people to chose the best candidate from all those seeking office without regard to where the candidate lives within the county.

Increasing county commissioners from 3 to 5 is unnecessary as demonstrated by 92 Kansas counties getting the job done with 3 county commissioners. Only 11 counties have increased their county commissioners from 3 to 5. Two other counties are exceptions: Wyandotte (Kansas City) has 10 and Greeley County (Tribune) combined their city and county commissioners into a single 5 member ‘board of supervisors.’

I am only pointing out for your reference



from our readers

• to the editor

what all 105 counties are doing. Some of the biggest counties in Kansas get the job done with 3 county commissioners including Reno (Hutchinson); Ellis (Hays); Riley (Manhattan); Shawnee (Topeka); McPherson (McPherson); Dickinson (Abilene); Geary (Junction City); Leavenworth (Leavenworth); Lyon (Emporia); Ford (Dodge City) and Saline (Salina).

Increasing commissioners from 3 to 5 could actually back fire on the public. There will be times when only a small number of candidates step forward to seek office, with multiple seats to fill. The problem is more pronounced as population decline with multiple boards and commissions to fill in a community; a contributing consideration to Greeley County consolidating city and county government.

This limited candidate pool may provide voters with just one good candidate and the remaining seats are filled by poor prospects who are elected by default. They go on to make poor choices affecting the public for years. However, 3 commissioners AND at-large elections with everyone voting for all candidate, voters can weed out of the poor prospects to select

the BEST candidate or candidates to represent them. We’ll have a better county commission composed of the best qualified and capable people. There are reasons why 3 commissioners are preferred in 92 Kansas counties.

Here’s a nightmare for you...commissioners increased from 3 to 5 passes...at-large elections fail because it has to pass on two separate votes (city) and (rural). That creates 5 separate voting districts within the county, all with small candidate pools and no way to vote at-large. Let’s hope not.

I believe our earlier vote to increase county commissioners to 5 occurred during a time of pent up voter frustration in not being given the chance to vote on the at-large election issue being stoned walled at the time. So finally when given an opportunity to vote on ‘something’ to effect change in the county commission a vote for 5 commissioners passed and was then challenged so we’re voting again.

This time the ‘choice is on the ballot’ that voters wanted the first time ‘at-large elections’.

So this time vote ‘Yes’ for at-large elections and ‘No’ to increase the number of commissioners. Remember 92 Kansas counties get the job done with 3 commissioners because it works.

Mike Campbell
Goodland

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Ending high income tax cuts right answer

A good friend and fellow businessman once told me, “Give me more customers and I’ll be forced to buy equipment and hire people to meet demand. Give me a tax break without more customers and I’ll just go to Aruba.”

Ending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest taxpayers is the right thing to do for small businesses. I’ll say that again: it’s the right move for small business. Let me explain.

I consider myself an example of an average small business owner in Nebraska. I have 30 employees. My business does \$2 million plus in annual sales. My personal income as the owner is less than \$85,000 a year.

It’s a comfortable living, but ending the Bush-era cuts on the top two brackets won’t come close to impacting me. And it won’t impact the other small business owners I know, either. The top brackets won’t kick in until your taxable income is over \$200,000/year for individuals and \$250,000/year for couples, and they’ll only apply to the portion of your income above those amounts, not below them. Less than 3 percent of taxpayers reporting any business income (not limited to small business income) earn enough to break into the top two brackets.

But that’s not all. That 3 percent figure includes Wall Street hedge fund managers and K Street lobbyists whose income is reported as business income on their personal tax returns. Not exactly what you’d think of as small businesses, or our nation’s job creators.

Last time I checked, Wall Street types and



from other pens

• commentary

their K Street friends had driven the economy into a ditch the size of the Grand Canyon and killed over 8 million jobs. Do they really deserve another tax giveaway to reward their efforts?

The idea that ending the Bush cuts for the top brackets will hamper small businesses’ ability to reinvest is a complete red herring. Any true small business that ends up with more than \$250,000 net profit flowing through to the owner at the end of the year needs to hire a better accountant and rethink its business plan.

Let’s use me as an example. I gross a lot in sales, sure, but I’m busy reinvesting that money back into my business – buying equipment, promoting my business and hiring more workers. The dollars I reinvest don’t pass through onto my personal tax return so I don’t care if that rate changes a little bit, and neither do the millions of other true small business owners in this country.

Despite all this, some politicians continue to recycle the tired old myth that a small change in the top brackets will hurt business owners’ ability to reinvest in our businesses. There are two possible explanations for this.

First, these politicians have never been

close enough to a small business to learn how our taxes actually work. We’ll call that an accidental sin of ignorance. A simple cure is to get out and meet some small business owners in their home states and hear about our day-to-day operations.

Second, some politicians are playing fast and loose with the facts. They know better, but they just don’t care. That’s intellectual dishonesty – a different kind of sin. Not much I can do to help there.

The bottom line is small businesses don’t need another tax giveaway. What we need are policies that restore our customer base by getting people back to work in our communities and putting money in their pockets to spend in our businesses.

Ending the high-end tax cuts would free up close to \$40 billion in 2011 and \$700 billion over the next 10 years to invest in job creation and rebuild our customer base. That’s what small businesses really need.

Poore is owner of Design Wear, Inc., a custom screen-printing business with 30 employees in Lincoln, Neb. He serves on the steering committee of the Nebraska Main Street Alliance.

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