

from our viewpoint...

## Country air, water cleaner with regs

The Grand Old Party is harping we have more government regulations and they are the cause of our economic problems. Their answer is to cut or eliminate as many regulations they can get passed in Congress.

Looking back over the nearly 40 years of environmental regulations it an interesting note the Republicans in Congress and at least two Republican Presidents signed laws creating the regulatory authority for the federal government to be a big part of cleaning up the environmental concerns the country was facing with acid rain, dirty air and polluted rivers.

President Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency – cobbled together from parts of other federal agencies by executive order – to mark the beginning of a regulatory revolution. No other federal agency has ever been created in this fashion.

Nixon did try to veto the Clean Water Act on a concern about the \$24 billion “staggering, budget wrecking,” and hoped at least one third plus one of the members in one House would uphold his veto.

Veto override debates were conducted by the Senate and the House on Oct. 17 and 18, 1972. The Senate voted by 52-12 to override, with 36 Senators not voting. Of the 52 Senators who voted to override President Nixon’s veto, 39 were Democrats, 17 were Republicans, with one (Buckley-NY) independent “Conservative.”

The House voted after debate by a staggering 247-23 to override, with one Representative answering “present” and 160 Representatives not voting. Of the 247 Representatives who voted to override President Nixon’s veto, 96 were Republicans and 151 were Democrats.

In 1987 President Ronald Reagan vetoed a \$20 billion bill to clean up America’s waters, but Congress voted to override the veto with a vote of 86-14 in the Senate. Voting to override it were 54 Democrats and 32 Republicans. The House acted to override Reagan’s veto by a vote of 401 to 26.

Today the split power of Congress makes it much tougher to override a veto, let alone get a bill through both houses and to the President.

Jim DiPeso, a spokesman for the independent group Republicans for Environmental Protection, said “some of the more zealous tea partiers in Congress” wouldn’t go so far in environmental protection as even Ronald Reagan, who signed wilderness bills even though he, too, tried to roll back environmental regulation.

Republican doctrine wasn’t always so hostile to environmental protection, he said. The Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act of the 1970s had strong support from both parties. President Richard Nixon created the EPA and told Congress in 1973 America’s “irreplaceable heritage” had to be protected, arguing “the price of economic growth need not and will not be deterioration in the quality of our lives and our surroundings.”

Christine Todd Whitman, a former governor of New Jersey, was EPA administrator from 2001 to 2003 and William D. Ruckelshaus was administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from 1970 to 1973 and 1983 to 1985. Together they write, “the air across our country is appreciably cleaner and healthier as a result of EPA regulation of trucks, buses, automobiles and large industrial sources of air pollution.”

Whitman and Ruckelshaus warn, “It is easy to forget how far we have come in the past 40 years. We should take heart from all this progress and not, as some in Congress have suggested, seek to tear down the agency the President and Congress created to protect America’s health and environment.” – *Tom Betz*

## The Goodland Star-News

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## Great time in Colorado, but missed paper

I just returned from a trip to Colorado.

Vacation was great. The mornings were cool and the afternoons mostly warm.

We went for walks in the woods, enjoyed picnics and visited with old friends.

We even took our dog and two of the cats, so every morning I was greeted by several pairs of eyes and noses – all of which wanted to be fed.

But, I really missed one thing – The *Salina Journal*.

Does that sound strange?

I work for a newspaper. I get about a dozen weeklies and several dailies delivered to my home or office each week. I deal with more newspapers in a day than the average kennel owner.

You’d think that when I go on vacation, I’d like to get away from the paper.

But that’s not what happens.

I don’t miss the work of writing, editing or putting the paper together, especially since with the Internet, I usually end up doing all those things during a vacation.

What I really miss is sitting down every morning with a cup of coffee and reading the day’s paper.

The *Salina Journal* is my daily paper. The



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

carrier brings it to my door every day – rain or shine, weekdays, holidays even on Christmas.

My usual morning routine is to get up, get the paper off the doorstep, make the coffee and feed the cats.

While the cats seem to think that the routine should be turned around somewhat, it works for me.

Then I sit for about half an hour with my coffee and the paper. I peruse the front page, read a few columns and catch up on the funnies. It’s a wonderfully relaxing way to start the day and I always feel like I’m ready for whatever is out there.

I don’t get The *Salina Journal* in Colorado, and I really miss it.

Back in the ’80s, when I lived in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, I got three daily papers – *The Denver Post*, the *Rocky Mountain News*

and *The Pueblo Chieftain*. I never had time to read them all, but I took a few minutes each morning to check the headlines and read the comics, my favorite part of the paper.

When I moved back to Kansas, I tried keeping up my subscriptions by mail, but it didn’t work out, especially after the *Rocky* folded. I finally just got the Post delivered to our Goodland office and shipped to me in the company mailbag every couple of days. It wasn’t very satisfactory, and eventually, even that stopped when the *Post* cut its circulation area back to the core of Colorado.

The *Post* tried to sell me an on-line subscription. I turned it down for the same reason that I don’t get on the computer every morning while I’m in Colorado and read the *Journal*.

It’s not any fun.

There’s something about turning pages and hearing the rustling of the paper. Something about the smell of ink and newsprint that is as important to me as what is written on the pages.

You can put a book or paper or magazine on a computer, but somehow, it’s like eating fat-free ice cream. You can do it – but why the heck would anyone want to?

## Give the people what they want



**Insight this week**

• john schlageck

There’s an age-old adage in business and industry that says and I’m paraphrasing, “the customer is the most important part of business.” While this is a simple, straight-forward charge to live by, putting this into practice successfully is the difficult part.

For decades, U.S. businesses, including agriculture have strived to take care of the customer, to listen to their wishes and desires. It goes without saying that in order to remain viable, Kansas farmers and ranchers and every other segment of our economic society must adhere to this philosophy.

With the advent of each coming year, Kansas farmers and ranchers must once again look to the future with an open mind and the flexibility to develop new ways of marketing their products.

Customers and consumers are driven by changes in personal preferences and increasing income levels, although the last three years have marked a decline in income for many.

Still, give the consumer what he/she wants always rings true – even in economic downturns. It’s then consumers are even more diligent with their disposable income and will spend money on items they consider worth-

while and completely necessary. .

A fairly recent phenomenon is the return of the home-town markets. Here producers bring their locally grown produce and livestock products from the farm to the consumers in the city. In such markets across Kansas, people line up to buy their pot roasts, beef bratwursts and T-bone steaks.

What drives today’s consumers to forego the bargains and convenience of their favorite supermarkets is their desire to buy locally, from people who live in their community and producers whom they come to rely on for fresh food.

Today’s savvy shopper wants to buy a top quality product and know exactly who’s producing it. Consumers want to know all about the food they’re purchasing for their families.

They want to ask questions of the beef

producer. They can find out about the specific breed, how the cattle are being treated, what they’re being fed and how their being cared for – just about anything they want to know.

Consumers want to know more about the food they eat, where it comes from and who produces it today. The ability to touch and feel the products they’re buying and connect with the farmer/rancher who has produced this food makes for a more wholesome buying experience.

It brings that all important piece of the production chain, the consumer, face-to-face with the hard working farmer/stockman who produced the food for their family’s dinner.

Consumers believe strongly about buying locally and from people they know, trust and can visit with about the products they’re purchasing. And after all, the customer remains the most important part of any business.

*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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