

# State discussing tax reforms for future

**By Kevin Bottrell**  
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 Everything is on the table, Kansas Secretary of Revenue Nick Jordan said to a small group of Colby residents on Tuesday.

Jordan was asked by Larry Barrett whether programs that rely on tax credits would be impacted by the tax reform the state is now discussing. He specifically referenced NetWork Kansas, a program that helps new and expanding small businesses. Jordan said when he was a state legislator he was instrumental in forming NetWork Kansas and would like to see it and other programs remain viable.

"Everything is on the table," he said, "but nothing is decided yet." Things have been looking up for Kansas lately. The state has had six straight months of revenue growth, he said. However, the state took in

\$4 million less in taxes than it had expected to in October. Jordan said revenue collections were actually higher than projected, but the state had to pay tax refunds to several companies.

"We've had seven months of growth," he said, "but we're still very fragile. I don't want people thinking we're in a bull market yet."

Revenue collection has been up and down this year, he said, but the state is still up by \$69.1 million for the fiscal year.

Jordan said he couldn't go into a lot of specifics about the new tax proposals, but he wanted to give people a general sense of what the state government is doing and hear their concerns and comments. To do this, he is doing a listening tour of western Kansas, which began Tuesday with visits to Great Bend, Garden City and Colby.

Jordan said Gov. Sam Brownback has put economic growth as a high priority. To do this, he put together a growth committee that includes Jordan and the secretaries of commerce, agriculture, transportation and labor. Jordan said that when they looked at the states that are seeing growth right now, they found these states had either low income taxes or none at all.

In the past, he said, Kansas has given a lot of tax breaks for large corporations, but has done little for small businesses. Of the 221,000 businesses in the state, about 191,000 qualify as small businesses — fewer than 500 workers.

Jordan said the state wants to increase the net income of families and small businesses and increase the net capital flow in Kansas. One of the things the committee is looking at, Jordan said, is looking at lowering the marginal rates — the

tax rate on the last dollar of the tax base.

Jordan said the end result of any changes would be to broaden the tax base, rather than cut more out of the budget.

One thing it won't affect, he said, is property tax rates or farm valuation. Jordan said the committee is focusing on state-level taxes, rather than anything that affects local taxes.

When making a tax policy proposal, Jordan said the committee will look at a lot of different information.

The Consensus Revenue Estimating Group, made up of representatives from the Division of Budget, Department of Revenue, Legislative Research Department and consulting economists from the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and Wichita State University, meet twice a year to

make budget estimates.

Jordan said the group will meet next week to put together the fall estimate. Once they do, the governor will create his budget proposals from that, which he will then send to the legislature.

Jordan said his department has several types of software able to project how the state economy will do based on a given tax policy. The state has enlisted the aid of Dr. Arthur Laffer, who was the principal economic advisor to President Ronald Reagan.

"We're using all that to come to the proposal we'll put on the table," Jordan said.

The committee is hoping to have their proposal done before the legislative session in January, he said, so it can undergo plenty of public scrutiny.

Barrett asked Jordan if the state has looked at any of the sales tax ex-

emptions. Jordan said they haven't yet, and those exemptions are a touchy subject. The biggest exemptions on the books now are for residential utilities and farm equipment, he said, and very few would want to see those changed.

Jordan said he would like to change the process for determining exemptions, because legislators have a hard time saying no. He said there should be a commission to look at proposed exemptions and then make a recommendation to the Legislature.

Barrett asked why there is no easy way to figure out if you're eligible for the Rural Opportunity Zone, which provides an income tax exemption for anyone moving to a low-population county from out of state. Jordan said there should be a way to establish eligibility online, and he would look into it.

## Van Gogh interpretations



Danielle Becbar, 10, (lower right) was one of the people who visited the High Plains Museum on Saturday and did their own interpretation of the sunflower painting by Van Gogh on a T-shirt. Audrey Sheeley, 6, (far left) with her mother Juli Sheeley holding Oliver Sheeley, 3, did T-shirts. Becbar was visiting her friend Kaylee Willems. There were also activities at Carnegie Arts Center and the Goodland Public Library.

Photos by Tom Betz  
 The Goodland Star-News

## Northwest Travel Council receives marketing award

The Northwest Kansas Travel Council received a Travel Industry Association of Kansas Marketing Award during the Kansas Tourism Conference held in Lawrence Oct. 17-19.

The award was for the Ultimate Guide to Northwest Kansas, a 44-page full color guide to the hunting, fishing, attractions, history, culture and recreation in Northwest Kansas.

Donna Price, director of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau was a member of the committee of five working on the Ultimate Guide. She said Roxie Yonkey of Red Brick Road Creation was the graphic designer,

provided some photos and some of the copy for the guide.

The Northwest Kansas Travel Council includes 18 counties in northwest Kansas including Sherman, Thomas, Cheyenne, Decatur, Norton and Wallace County.

The travel industry marketing awards program was created to recognize and honor those individuals and organizations that have made an impact on the development and expansion of the travel and tourism industry in Kansas.

Over the years the program has been expanded to further build pride among travel industry mem-

bers and to increase awareness of effective marketing programs and opportunities.

The three-day conference is the major event of the year for travel and tourism promoters in Kansas. It offers hoteliers and tourism professionals a variety of educational seminars and workshops. In addition, a trade show showcases goods and services available to the lodging and tourism industry.

The Travel Industry Association of Kansas is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and development of travel and tourism in Kansas.

## Salesperson added to advertising team

The newest salesperson for *The Goodland Star-News* Melissa Etrick is glad to be back in the western half of Kansas. Originally from Dodge City she had been living in Longmont, Colo.

She and her husband, Don Kintz, have lived on the edge of Edson for a couple of months and have three acres.

"The house is great," she said. "All we had to do to it was paint and re-carpet."



Etrick

Her husband owns Skyline Transportation, a trucking company. He also does construction, remodels and is an auto mechanic. They have a son, Joe, who is 21 and just came back from Afghanistan.

Etrick comes from a family of printers and had a printing and advertising business. She sold real estate in the Boulder area. Her mother, Paula Etrick, is a writer and plans to move to the area in the future. She also has a brother and

nephew in Seattle, Wash.

She attended Fort Hays State University at Hays and received her Bachelor of Science in communications. Etrick has her secondary education endorsement and completed her Masters of Science in speech and communications.

Etrick's sales area is the east side of town.

"I would love to stop by your business and help you with any advertising needs you may have," she said.

### corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please

call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors.

## College seeks comments for learning commission

Northwest Kansas Technical College invites the public to provide written comment to the Higher Learning Commission prior to the Feb. 27, accreditation visit.

The public may send comments to: Public Comment on Northwest Kansas Technical College, The Higher Learning Commission, 230

South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL. 60604-1411

The Commission will accept comments through their web site at <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-the-Public/third-party-comment.html>. Submit an electronic response using this "Third Party Comment" link.

**Classifieds work!**  
**899-2338**

**YOU KNOW YOU WANT SOME!**

**2nd Annual Sherman County Kansans for Life Pancake Feed**

**ATTENTION HUNTERS!!**

**WHEN: Saturday, November 12**

**TIME: 5-10 a.m. MT**

**WHERE: Rock House (6th & Caldwell)**

**FREE WILL DONATION**



### ATTENTION: HAVE TRUCK OWNERS

The Federal Government has made the 2290 form for Heavy Highway Vehicle Use Tax available to be mailed in. You can pick up a copy at the Sherman County Treasurer's Office. If you are an individual, you can no longer use your Social Security number, you must obtain an EIN. This form needs to be mailed to IRS, Cincinnati, Ohio 45999-0031 by November 30, 2011. There will be no charge completing this form by mail, as there was a charge to file online. You will need to bring a copy of the stamped/returned form to the Sherman County Treasurer's Office.

ENJOY A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!

**Courageous (PG-13)**

**Starts Friday 7 PM:**

**Puss in Boots 3D (PG)**

**Sherman**

1003 Main - Phone 899-2101

Tonight 7 PM

**Courageous (PG-13)**

**Starts Friday 7 PM:**

**Puss in Boots 3D (PG)**