

from our viewpoint...

Postal service needs to study real impact of facility closures

If the U.S. Postal Service decides to ship our mail to Denver for sorting, sending it back a couple of days later, it'll be a huge mistake for several reasons, but most of all because the service has not taken into account either the weather or where our mail goes.

The service claims it will save a whopping \$14,000 by hauling mail from the Colby postal area to Denver, where it would be routed through massive machines, sorted down to delivery "walk sequence" and sent back out, ready for carriers to take on their routes.

The paltry amount is mostly because our mail is being sorted in Salina already, or most of it. Today, postal workers at each office are supposed to separate the "local" mail, for their town and for the 677 ZIP code area, before sending the rest off.

In-town and area mail is kept here and delivered overnight, according to postal custom. Under the new plan, though, the service wants to send every letter to Denver for sorting. That will cut out the cost of separating the mail, get carriers out of the office an hour or two earlier so they can deliver to more homes and end the traditions of next-day service for letter mail.

There's real money in eventually reducing the number of carriers, of course, but the real driver for this change is the chance for the service to use its expensive sorting machines up to 20 hours a day, rather than five or six.

Today, these machines must be run on the overnight shift, just six or seven hours a night. They start up as trucks bring mail in during the evening and must finish in time for trucks to go out and carriers to get their mail in early morning. If the service gives up the goal of overnight delivery, though, the machines can run day and night.

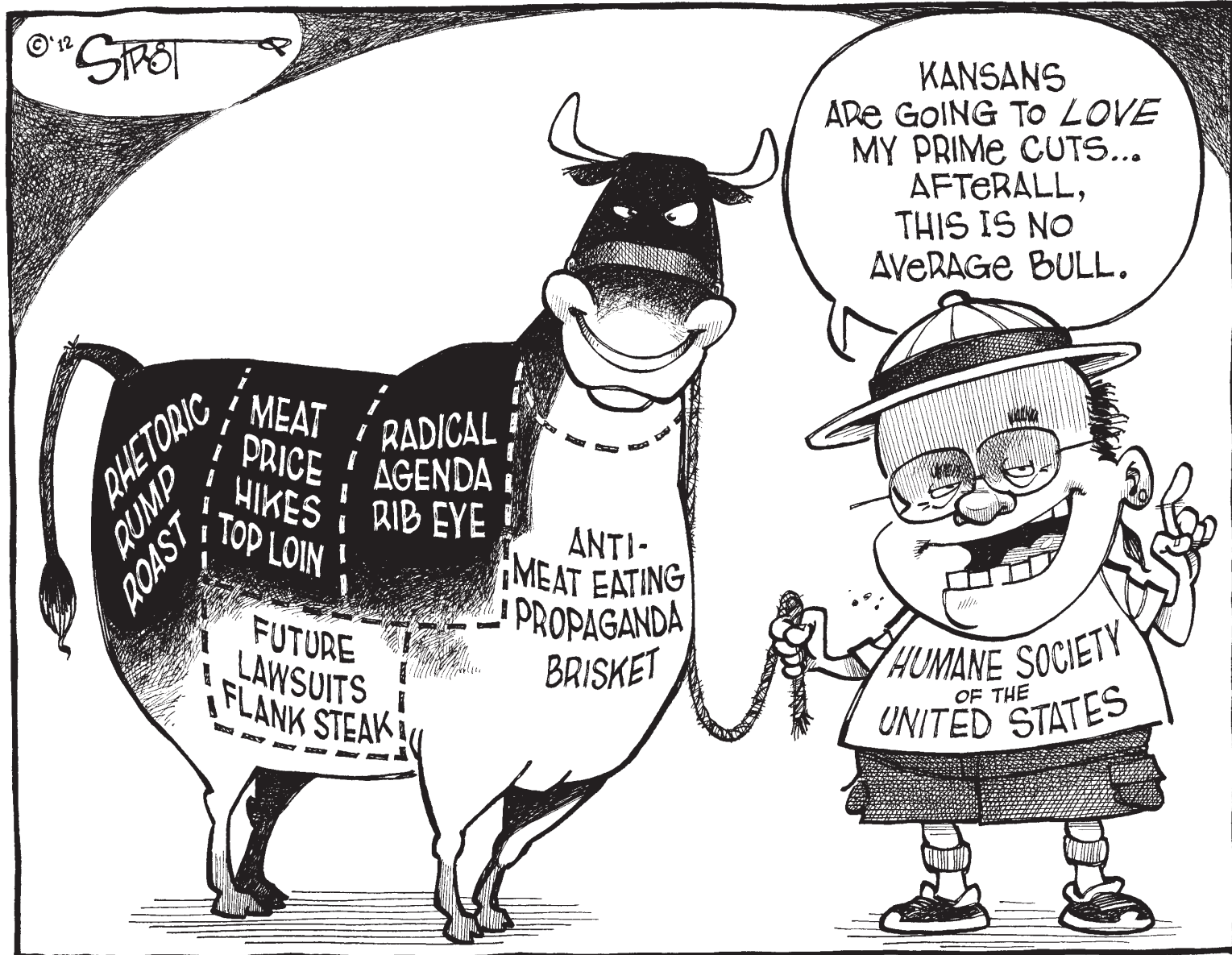
Whether that is a good idea is another thing. Most people who've heard this plan believe the service is shooting itself in the foot by lowering service standards. The loss of business could easily exceed the savings as banks and other businesses flee the mails for internet billing and payment. The Postal Service seems to feel that business will be lost anyway.

Sending in-town mail out for sorting defies logic, though. It's mostly collected in separate bins, so the cost of sorting it shouldn't be much. Nor should the cost of sorting it out to routes. The price in lost goodwill could be much more.

In any event, northwest Kansas mail should not be sent to Denver. If it has to be sorted someplace, send it east to Wichita. It's nearly 50 miles farther, yes, but the weather is much better. Interstate 70 is closed several times each winter west of Goodland - sometimes for days - but rarely east of there.

Add to that the fact that most of us do a lot more business between here and Kansas City than in Denver, and it's easy to see sending the mail east would be more efficient.

We'd rather see the Postal Service re-evaluate this whole scheme, which is now on a six-month hold to give Congress time to help the service avoid bankruptcy. But if something has to be done, let's hope our letters will move east, not out into the howling blizzards of the plains west of here. - Steve Haynes



Simple task becomes a crime caper

It seemed such a simple little task. What could go wrong? How hard could it be?

Mother died in June, but we kept a small account open in case we needed to pay any more bills for several months after that.

In late November, I went to Concordia and had lunch with my sister. We exchanged Christmas gifts and she asked me if I thought it was time to close the account.

There is only 99 cents in it, she explained, and there hadn't been any bills for several months. She thought everything had been paid, and no money was expected to come into the account.

I agreed. It was time to close this last bit of our mother's financial life.

I just didn't realize that she was going to go over to the bank right away, before going back to work.

I was picking up a few pairs of a brand of socks that Steve likes and I can't find back home when I got the call.

"You should have come with me," she said. "You like adventure."

"How can a visit to the bank be much of an



cynthia haynes
• open season

adventure?" I was wondering.

"I was at the counter," she said, "and this young, nice-looking clerk - gee he looked about 18 - was helping me fill out the forms when these men with guns walked in."

"I thought they were from a company that moves money like Brinks"

"Oh Lordy," I thought. "The bank was robbed right there in broad daylight."

But no, that wasn't it.

The men walked in the front door, she said, made a right-turn and went into a little side office.

"Pretty soon, they came out and went up to the clerk helping me and arrested him. They were from the FBI!"

Well, that part made sense. Banks are federally insured, and if there is a serious problem with the money, the Federal Bureau of Investi-

gation would probably handle the case. But, in Concordia? What the heck was going on?

My sister said that after the teller had been handcuffed and marched off, another came over to help her finish the transaction. She said the woman was shaking so bad she could hardly write.

I made some enquiries, and my colleagues at *The Concordia Blade-Empire* were able to help.

The young man, Landon Hedstrom, 18, of Belleville, was arrested at the Citizens National Bank in Concordia on Nov. 17 by the FBI and charged with solicitation of another man to commit bank robbery. Concordia officers assisted the federal agents.

Hedstrom has been indicted by a grand jury and is set to face a jury trial on Tuesday, Jan. 24, in Topeka. The other man is identified in the indictment only as "R.H." What a start in crime for an 18-year-old.

Anyway, I'm sure glad my sister closed that account. I would have hated to lose all that money in a bank robbery.

Do we want a Constitutional reset?

President Obama is correct when he accuses Congress of gridlock. More so, his trashing of the balance of power between the Executive and Legislative branches by "ruling" with executive order, secret appointments and the like is actually helping him keep his campaign promise to "fundamentally change America".

Obama often reminds us he was a Constitutional scholar and so we need not worry.

He certainly did study the Constitution but not in the way your family physician studied anatomy. Your physician studied anatomy to learn how to keep the human body alive and healthy. Obama studied the Constitution more like a Karate expert studied anatomy - an elbow to the throat or a kick to the groin to neutralize the body. Obama, and many more like him, study the Constitution with the intent of neutralizing it so it can be replaced with another, yet to be revealed system of laws.

Recently our Constitution has been taking some serious elbows to the throat and even a few groin kicks by Obama et al.

Don't be deceived; Obama's path is NOT of American roots. Our Constitution was designed to restrict government to the role of referee.

Can you imagine if a football game were run like America is today? The referees would not only be charged with enforcing the rules of the game but would also be players on the field! This new type of football is perfectly summed



guest columnist
• ken klemm

up by Jeffrey Immelt, CEO of GE and Obama appointee when he declared, "The interaction between government and business will change forever. In a reset economy, the government will be a regulator; and also, an industry policy champion, a financier, and a key partner." There's a job to be had!

To make way for more "Obama Change" the Constitution MUST be trashed as it was founded on the principles of liberty, free enterprise and the limited role of government. Our historical, legal and moral foundations do not provide our government the power to dictate what you are allowed to buy or what you must buy (Obamacare).

A government with the power to provide everything to everyone must take power from the people first. Big governments make for small people.

Centrally planned governments have always failed. Only the elite few prosper while it's poverty and submission for the rest. (The Occupy folks got this part right.)

Centrally planned nations, by their very nature, require power to be confined to as few people as possible. How else can rulings as

numerous as the stars be made? This is why President Obama hasn't kept his promise of posting bills on the internet before they are voted on, or of allowing C-Span into meetings. You can't compel people if they know what your intentions are. When too many people are involved, the process grinds to a halt (think of our present day Congress).

For Obama to succeed in our land of Constitutional checks and balances he must ram changes through. The only way to ram changes through is to consolidate power in as few people as possible - think Super-Committees. Of course, the most effective way to run a centrally planned economy is to vest all the power in one person (aka a tyrant). On Dec. 31, Josh Earnest, White House deputy press secretary said, "The President will have a larger playing field. If that includes Congress, all the better." But, he added, "That's no longer a requirement." Mr. Earnest makes a wonderful spokesperson for our "Budding Tyrant" and delivered a nice groin kick right from the White House.

America is at a crossroads. Do we want to "reset" America to a land of limited freedom and unlimited government or do we want to restore our Nation to a land of maximum freedom and limited government? I think I'll start reading up on the anatomy of "Liberal Progressives".

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The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansas.com. The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day; (call for a price).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

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