

from our viewpoint...

Tax plan, budget stirring up trouble

There is much wailing and gnashing of teeth over the state budget, centered on a flawed tax-cut plan that no one expected to actually pass.

The result could be a \$2 billion hole in state revenues down the line if something isn't done.

This is not Gov. Sam Brownback's tax-cut plan, though the basic idea came from the governor and he did sign the bill. The governor presented a carefully crafted package of tax cuts and changes that would not have created such a problem.

The governor's plan, however, was pure in theory and practice. He proposed ending many popular tax breaks, starting with the one for home mortgages, that could have caused a rebellion among voters.

This plan stayed true to the theory of a low, flat, fair income tax that many conservative economists have touted for decades, but it wasn't about to fly that way.

The Legislature stripped most of the income-raising ideas out of the tax plan, leaving mostly the cuts. The House and Senate passed different versions, the House bill containing the most drastic tax cuts.

Late in the session, the Senate passed the House bill with changes senators thought would send it to a conference committee, where the issues could be worked out in a compromise between houses. Instead, the House passed the Senate-amended version as is.

Ideas differ on whether that was a double cross of the Senate or just good parliamentary maneuvering. Whatever you call it, though, the House slam-dunk left the state with budget issues. The carefully preserved 6.5 percent ending ballot in the state budget could disappear as quickly as it was created, leaving the state facing drastic cuts.

That's not likely to happen, though, since neither the Senate nor many House members, not even the governor, wanted the big cuts without any matching changes in to stabilize revenue.

Hard-core conservatives may actually want to force more cuts in state programs and agencies, and there probably is room in some areas. For all the cutting of recent years, few agencies actually have disappeared. Programs seem to have a life of their own; witness the resurrection of state money for an arts program.

But the truth is, there's already been a lot of cutting. This governor and this legislature have taken control of the budget and actually turned it around. State spending will go down this year for the first time in decades; most "cuts" in previous years were from proposed budgets, not from actual spending.

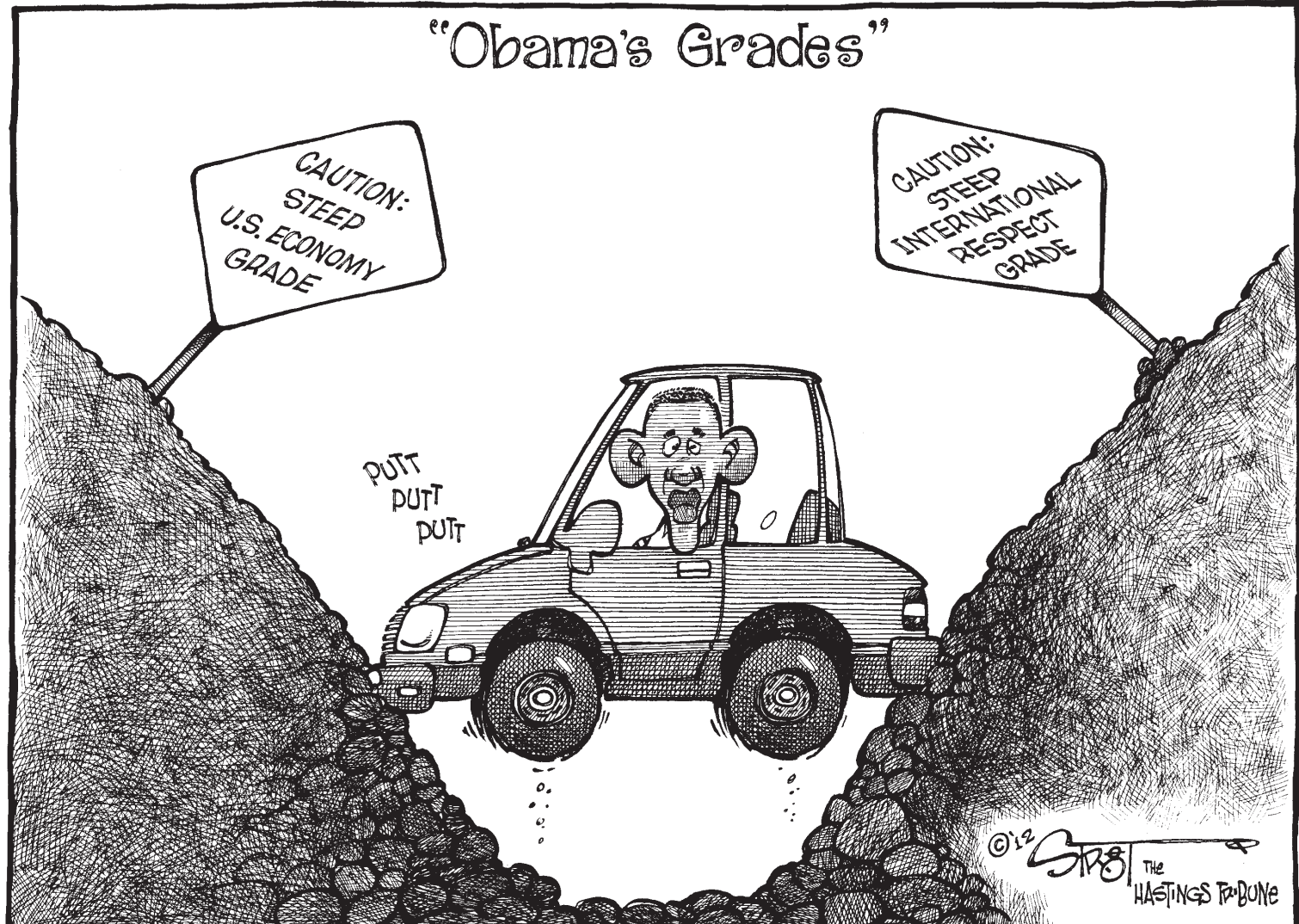
And that is at the root of much of the wailing. The spenders, the big-government forces, are no longer in control in Topeka. Government is shrinking, and they don't like it.

The tax bill will have to be changed, yes, but it's unlikely the direction of state government will turn around any time soon. The die has been cast for a smaller budget, and most Kansans probably approve.

The forces behind higher spending — mostly those who benefit, state and school employees, patrons of state programs and "entitlements," people who believe that government can and should solve every problem — won't like that but it's a done deal now.

We'll be lucky to avert a budget disaster from this tax bill, but the next Legislature has time to handle that. And perhaps, though many don't believe, some of the economic growth the governor promises will come along in time to save the day.

He might be right, you know. — *Steve Haynes*



The family farm is a rare breed

People outside of agriculture routinely try to define the family farm. These same folks have a tendency to question corporate farming whether family owned or not. Farm organizations often fall under the same scrutiny.

Let's take a look at the family farm. In Kansas, farm and ranch families grow up with the feel of the prairie earth beneath their feet, the wide-open sky overhead and the rhythm of the seasons in their blood.

Throughout their lifetime, these farms and ranches remain their pride and joy. They love, care and respect the land entrusted to them. Ag producers adhere to an ethic that enlarges the boundaries of our community to include soils, waters, plants and animals - collectively - the land.

This entity known as the family farm is based on owner operation. This means the rights and responsibilities of ownership are vested in an entrepreneur who works the farm for a living.

Another key ingredient of the family farm system is independence. Independence means financing from within its own resources using family labor, management and intellect to build equity and cash flow that will retire the mortgage, preferably in the lifetime of the owner.



Insight this week

• john schlageck

Economic dispersion is another integral part of the family farm. Economic dispersion includes large numbers of efficient-sized farms operating with equal access to competitive markets worldwide.

No family farm would be complete without the family core. This family centered operation must have a family that lives its life in harmony within the workplace. All family members share responsibilities and the children learn the vocation of their parents.

At an early age, these young men and women learn to work with their dads and moms on the family farm. Here, they develop self-reliance and initiative. They often rise with the sun and finish work when it sets. Yet, they rarely take this place called home for granted.

The ideal family farm is commercially diversified. Productions of diversified commodities help reduce price risks and maximize the use of farm resources to produce crops and livestock that in turn provide greater self-sufficiency.

One final attribute necessary in defining today's family farm would be the acceptance and use of innovative technology. This would not only enhance farm labor but also help boost production.

Family farming carries with it a commitment to specific, independent values. These values become part of the community and include conservation, frugality, responsibility, honesty, dignity in work, neighborly, self-reliance and concern and care for future generations.

While it's rare indeed that one particular family farm may possess all of these attributes, together they have created a system of agriculture that has been a part of our rural culture since this nation's beginning.

Today, detractors of this profession are making it increasingly difficult for this vital industry to progress and prosper. Maybe they should tend to their own business and let farmers and ranchers continue doing what they do best - responsibly producing the healthiest, safest in the world.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Retiring Senator had illustrious career

Earlier this month, Indiana Republican primary voters retired six-term U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar.

Ordinarily I don't mind when an octogenarian senator of either party is forced into retirement. The Founding Fathers didn't intend for elected federal office to be a lifetime job. But in the case of Sen. Lugar, I feel conflicted. It's worth taking a look at some of the highlights from his distinguished career.

I first became familiar with Sen. Lugar while working on Capitol Hill shortly after my college graduation. One of the preeminent foreign policy issues of the day was the drive to place economic sanctions on the apartheid government in South Africa.

I was particularly sensitive to the matter, having taken an undergraduate class from Dr. Peter Walsh, one of the country's leading African specialists at the time. Walsh had gained notoriety for his public efforts to push the Notre Dame administration to sell the university's investments in companies that did business in South Africa.

President Ronald Reagan consistently opposed economic sanctions on South Africa, and regarded Nelson Mandela and his banned African National Congress Party as nothing more than communist sympathizers.

Lugar, who then chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led the drive to pass the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which imposed economic and political sanctions on South Africa. The bill became law when Congress overrode President Reagan's veto. Prior to the override vote, Lugar issued a memorable statement pointing out the many times he had supported the president, and then explaining why he couldn't on that occasion.

During his first trip to the United States following his release from prison, Mandela



a voice of reason

• alan jilka

personally thanked Lugar for his work on the bill. In 2011, South African Ambassador to the U.S. Ebrahim Rasool presented Lugar with the Mandela Freedom Award for his "exceptional contribution to the struggle for the attainment of a nonracial, free and democratic South Africa."

Other highlights of his career are testaments to his ability and willingness to work across party lines. The Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (1992) established by a bill which came to be known as Nunn-Lugar, was the first post-Cold War measure that dealt with the need to control and reduce stockpiles of nuclear weapons. His Democratic partner, former Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, issued a statement following Lugar's defeat saying "There is no doubt that the world is a safer place thanks to Dick Lugar."

Other more recent examples of Lugar's willingness to work across the aisle include his support for auto bailouts and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that passed the Senate in December of 2010. It would be hard to argue that he frequently betrayed his conservative principals. The American Conservative Union gives him a 77 percent lifetime voting

record. Lugar's primary opponent, and Tea Party favorite, State Treasurer Richard Mourdock turned the senator's statesmanlike demeanor, friendship with President Obama and willingness to seek bi-partisan compromises into political liabilities.

After the primary results came in many commented on Lugar's remarkable career. Former Nebraska Republican Sen. Chuck Hagel, who served with him for 12 years in the Senate, was effusive in his praise.

"There is not one senator in the Republican Party today who is in Dick Lugar's universe..." Hagel said. "He's the kind of public servant and elected official the country expects and deserves."

Sen. Lugar made a gracious concession speech, but later issued a more pointed statement regarding his opponent. He said he hoped Mourdock would prove to be a good senator, but went on to say that to do so "will require him to revise his stated goal of bringing more partisanship to Washington."

I'm not in a position to give advice to residents of the Hoosier state for the upcoming general election. But surely a majority of Indiana voters don't agree with Mourdock that the answer to Washington's problems is more partisanship.

Alan Jilka of Salina is vice president of Jilka Furniture, former mayor of Salina and a one-time Democratic candidate for Congress in the Kansas 1st District.

The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Kevin Bottrell, Editor
Pat Schiefen, Society Editor
Advertising Department
Jessica Corbin and Jeff Dreiling
Sheila Smith, Circulation Manager



Nor'west Press

Richard Westfahl, General Manager

Jim Bowker, James Jackson,

Lana Westfahl, Kris McCool, Stacy Brashear, Tracy Traxel,

Gary Meyer, Judy McKnight



nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(nt.betz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be type-written, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters and letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: star.news@nwkansas.com.

where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; E-mail address — <http://roberts.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=EmailPat>

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, Russell Senate Office Building, Courtyard 4, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; Fax (202) 228-6966. E-mail address — <http://moran.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-jerry>

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 1st Congressional District, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C., 20575-1601. (202-225-2715) E-mail address — <https://huelskamp.house.gov/contact-me/email-me>

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking State Office Building Rm 724, Topeka, KS 66612. Phone (785) 296-7659, cell (785) 899-4770, home (785) 899-5824. E-mail rick.billinger@house.ks.gov.

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Rm. 225-E, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785-296-7399; e-mail address — ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us)

Kansas Attorney General, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767