

from our viewpoint...

City, county right to work together

In recent weeks we have seen the Goodland and Sherman County governments come together in a way you might not have thought possible after the fire department consolidation fiasco, and this spirit of cooperation can only mean good things.

It began simply enough, with city and county commissioners speaking informally about the possibility of converting the old IGA building into a fire station. This idea had been floated several times over the years, but the city had resisted. We can't really blame them for that. It would have been great to have a business housed in that building, especially a supermarket, but that deal fell through so now is the right time to find some sort of use for that building, rather than leave it empty.

The special meeting where the topic was first broached started off a little tense, and it wasn't until about an hour in that County Clerk Janet Rumpel floated an idea that got everyone interested. The city contributes the building, the county pays for the remodel and the rural fire district makes a contribution as well. Further meetings have only sweetened the deal.

We've been to look at the building several times now, and it makes sense as a fire/ambulance station. It's the right size, is centrally located, has access to a new water main on 10th Street, has good electrical service.

Putting the fire departments under one roof has the added bonus of accomplishing what consolidation would have. The city and rural departments already have one chief, and putting them under one roof will allow them to all have the same training and integrate even further.

Mayor Garcia had it right when he called it a win-win.

We'll know within a couple weeks if it will be cost-effective to make a fire station out of the old IGA building. If it isn't, if it will make more sense for the county to build a new building, we believe the citizens of the city and county should hold their governments blameless. They have tried, and both sides have been very willing to create a deal that would work to everyone's advantage. If the numbers don't add up, they don't add up.

What we hope our elected officials will take away from this is a renewed attitude of cooperation. Problems between city and county governments are very common, and Sherman County has had its fair share, but surely everyone can recognize that there are ways to work together that leave everyone satisfied. —Kevin Bottrell



Part of group that read health care bill

To the Editor,

If I may, I would like to add my thoughts on Obamacare. I refuse to call it the "Affordable Health Care Act," as it is anything but!

A little bit of history on my part. Since August 2008, I have been a member of Team Sarah. This is an online group of Sarah Palin supporters who came together under founders Jane Abraham, Gerry Thompson, Marjorie Dannenfelser and others. For those of you don't know Gov. Palin's record as Governor of Alaska and the truthful reason she resigned, may I suggest you read "Going Rogue."

The call was put out to our group for volunteers to read this bill, as the Democrats in Congress, in secret, were putting the final touches on this horrendous 2500 page bill. There were almost 500 volunteers from across the nation and from all walks of life that came forward — including me. We were each assigned 15-20 pages to read, digest, and give our feedback on. The moderator of this group then posted all our critiques online. The section I was assigned had to do with the setting up of the "exchanges." I know that not only I, but many others in our group, later went on to read the bill.

I agree with Goodland Star-News editor, Kevin Bottrell, that one should not depend solely on the political faction pundits and so-called experts to tell us — the American people — what is in this bill. I can state, because I have read it, that Obamacare is not about health care. It is the largest tax increase on the American people that has ever been perpetrated — in secret. I also believe that Justice Roberts squarely laid the responsibility of whether or not this bill stands back on the American people, and it is up to us to make sure that it is repealed in its entirety.



from our readers

to the editor

As the person at my place of business with the responsibility to negotiate and finalize our employee group insurance, plus the fact that I deal with the government insurance programs on a daily basis, I know exactly what I am talking about when it comes to government programs and health care.

While many in the "lame stream media" get their kicks at denigrating Sarah Palin and her statement that this bill contains "death panels," I can think of no better way to describe that section than to agree with her analysis. How many of us would tolerate a bureaucratic panel in Washington D.C. getting together to decide whether or not we qualify for certain medical procedures? How many of us want the extension of the IRS having the ability to be able to access our bank accounts to pay for health care that we do not wish to be part of? And folks, it is true what Joe Wilson stated: Medicare is being drastically cut to pay for illegal aliens being added to "free" health care.

Of note: how many health insurance policies do you know of where you pay your premiums for 45 years or so before you actually use the policy? If I hear the word "entitlement" one more time referencing Social Security and Medicare, I will strangle that person! This is only scratching the surface. I applaud the Republican governors who have the "cajones" to stand up to D.C. and say — No Thanks, we are not going to participate in this fiasco!

The majority of Americans do not want Obamacare. Period. We understand that there are a lot of things that need to be done — in the private sector — to correct numerous issues with our current health care system. Again, contrary to the "lame stream media" Republicans have actually put forth many good ideas — e.g., being able to purchase health care across State lines. I speak from experience. I can only offer our staff one of the limited plans that the state of Colorado approves, whether or not it would be less expensive for us to choose from a wide variety of plans from anywhere in the country that would better meet our needs.

Yes, this year is a very important election year. Because my candidate of choice, Newt Gingrich, gracefully bowed out of the primary, I am fully supporting Mitt Romney for president as does Speaker Gingrich. I do believe it is extremely important to put someone in the White House who has actual experience not only in government, but, more importantly, in the private sector. Government is not the solution — it's the problem — courtesy of President Reagan.

Phyllis Hadley
Kanorado

P.S. I've already e-mailed Gov. Romney with my recommendations for his cabinet. I wonder how many I will get correct? Paul Ryan — VP; Gingrich — Education; Bolton or possibly Liz Cheney — Secretary of State; Palin — Energy (read "Going Rogue" to see how she represented the people of Alaska in negotiations with the oil and gas companies.) Can't remember the rest right now!

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, 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@nwkans.com>.

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Are there local recycling options?

To the Editor,

I am writing to you concerning me, and perhaps others in the community: recycling.

I am a good recycler who includes old newspapers, cans both tin and aluminum, plastic bags, colored glass and number 1 plastics (clear), but that still leaves colored plastics, like lids from peanut butter jars, round cottage cheese and round margarine containers, plus those amber colored plastic vials we receive



from our readers

to the editor

from the pharmacies and clear glass -- just to name a few. is there any place we can recycle these or do they just go into the trash containers

in our alleys? Any help from other citizens in the community would be appreciated.

Thank you

Mrs. Clarice Martell
Goodland

P.S. Also cardboard and cardboard boxes seem to pile up.

Leaving the job half done

In the 1980s, a little over 40 percent of Kansas high school graduates went on to Kansas universities. Since 25 to 30 percent of Kansas high school students were college-able, most eventually graduated. Kansas subsidized student tuition at the rate of \$2 for every \$1 a student paid. Both home economics and shop counted as science credits, a practice Kansas Education Commissioner Droegemueller defended because a majority of Kansas students never went to college.

Today, the percentage of Kansas high school graduates attending tertiary institutions is approaching 80 percent. Spread across more students, state funding only covers 92 cents for every dollar of student tuition. Yet the ACT and other measures of student aptitude still show only 25 to 30 percent of Kansas high school students are college-able.

Therefore the governor's "tech ed" initiative — just about the only issue with some bipartisan agreement — comes at a critical time. Kansas needs auto mechanics, nursing assistants, and many other skilled workers and technicians.

Kansas and Kansan students are poorly served by schools where hallway banners assert that every student will succeed by going to college. The state standardization movement of the last decade, not to mention the one-size-fits-all national common core currently being



education frontlines

John Schrock

imposed, has pushed one single college-bound curriculum. The tech-ed initiative forces some policy-makers and educators to address the needs of both Kansas and Kansas students who desire another path. A prior chancellor of the University of Kansas convinced the Board of Regents to allow regent's institutions to abandon that formula and let each school keep its tuition. That began today's chase after every warm student body. Institutional growth has taken a front seat to educational quality. Pressure to retain and graduate more students threatens to lower standards and cheapen the value of a Kansas degree.

If more high school students have the option to go to technical school, and if Kansas universities are more selective, the result will be smaller Kansas universities, less tuition cost for our genuinely college-able students, and the preservation of academic rigor.

Brownback's plan is not new. The Kansas State Board of Education has developed Career and Technical Education pathways for nearly a decade with the hope of motivating younger students to take schoolwork seriously. However one stark statistic warns against channeling students into career paths too early. Nationwide nearly 60 percent of college students change their major at least once (one of several reasons the average college student takes five and a half years to graduate).

Technical schools across Kansas should be winners under this initiative. It is time that they got back to their job of training technical skills. Recently some tech schools have hired outside faculty to teach academic general education courses. Some even advertise they can deliver a three-credit academic course in a few weeks, making a farce of academic credit.

Nearly a decade ago, Kansas community colleges and technical schools were moved from under the authority of the Kansas State Board of Education to the Kansas Board of Regents for better coordination. Unfortunately the regents have failed to exert any substantial oversight of technical schools in Kansas.

This new promotion of "tech ed" should allow tech schools to return to their mission and faculty skills and leave academics to the community colleges and regents universities. If this does not occur, it may be time to transfer oversight back to the State Board of Education.