

from our viewpoint...

Money is ingredient needed for progress

Welcome flags will wave in greeting to visitors this week along the Main Avenue Mile for the combination of Goodland’s homecoming and the Flatlander Fall Festival. This joint project between the Goodland Chamber of Commerce, Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Sherman County Economic Development Council and the City of Goodland is an example of what can be done when we all work together. The project took about seven months to move from an idea to ready for the display this week, and the cost was held to under \$2,000.

There are many other areas where improvements are needed, and the cost will not be as low nor will they be accomplished in such a short time. The largest need is the repair of the city streets, which in many areas would mean ripping out the old layers of oil and putting in a good road base with asphalt. It’s expensive.

Besides the streets, the city faces federal regulation which will force it to upgrade or replace the sewer treatment plant, and over half the water lines need to be replaced.

None of the major projects are cheap, but there are not a lot of options to raise the money. The city can raise sewer rates to help pay for the plant replacement, and the water rates can be raised to cover the cost of new lines and new wells. Depending on the cost of each project, citizens will face higher monthly bills more or less forever.

When it comes to the streets, however, there is no a built-in way to finance the project. The City Commission is faced with raising property taxes or asking the citizens to approve a sales tax to raise the money.

Sherman County used a sales tax to improve old U.S. 24 across the county. The one-quarter pf 1 percent sales tax gave the county a way to repair parts of the highway and to chip seal the 33 miles, keeping the surface in drivable condition.

It would take a larger sales tax, and for a longer period of time, to handle the city street improvements. Estimates to replace the nine blocks of Main and the intersections are nearly \$1.5 million. Just paying for that would take a minimum increase in property tax of 8 mills or a one-quarter percent sales tax over 10 years.

The city commission is talking about asking the voters in April to consider such a street project, but the specifics and the size have not been decided. In the next few months, we citizens have the opportunity to help decide how big a project it should be, and how much we are willing to pay to drive on better streets.

The size of the project will depend on the options of raising the property tax or a sales tax, and to what level citizens feel they can handle. A one-quarter percent sales tax would raise about \$187,000 a year while a 1 percent tax would raise about \$750,000 a year.

While we enjoy the nice look of the welcome flags this week and the influx of people for the Flatlander Fall Festival, it would be a good time to start planning on what is the best option to improve the streets we are welcoming the visitors to walk and drive on. — *Tom Betz*

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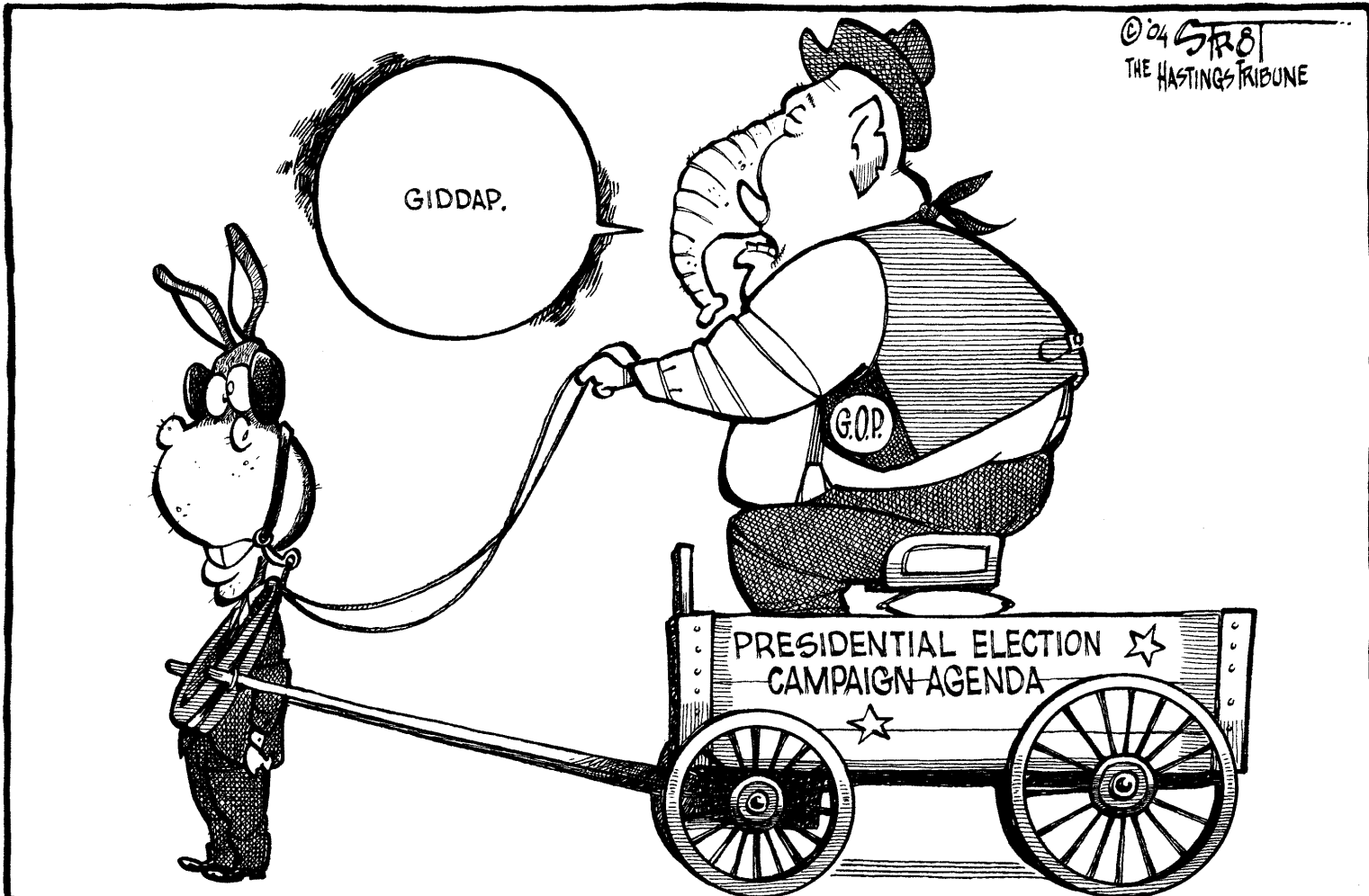
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Hike reminds us about changing weather

It was the last day of our Colorado vacation and Steve was determined to get up to Phoenix Park.

We had been taking walks most every day.

We had walked on the roads around the area, up the slight incline of the Forest Service trail on the other side of the river and up a steeper, but not too difficult trail, several miles away.

The one thing all those hikes had in common was they lasted no more than an hour from hopping out of the car to hopping back in.

Phoenix Park would be longer and steeper. We hadn’t hiked up that trail in several years. Now it was time to try it again.

We grabbed our pack, which contains waterproof matches, slickers, a mirror and a Forest Service map. We added lunch, water and our books.

We would walk up to the park, picnic, read for awhile and walk back.

The trail is steep, rocky and crosses several creeks. It took us an hour to go the four miles up to the park. On the way up we met some hikers from Texas. They said they had gone up to the 10-mile marker but were returning before



cynthia haynes

• open season

the weather set in.

Well, yes, there were clouds forming over the mountains. But then again, clouds form over the mountains every day. We had our pack. We hoped we were prepared.

By the time we reached the park, we both wished that we hadn’t chosen to wear shorts and T shirts. However, we had brought long-sleeved shirts as backups and soon put them on.

We picnicked in a grove of trees that gave us some protection from the wind but didn’t bother to get out the books. As soon as the last bite of sandwich was devoured and the last bit of trash stowed, we started back down.

It usually takes about the same amount of time to go down the mountain as up — in this case it was an hour’s trip up.

However, we found that we went considerably faster downhill as the rain started to fall. It never got heavy enough to break out the slickers, which tend to be smelly and uncomfortable. But, it gave us a sense of urgency we don’t usually have.

It was the kind of storm that you hear about in the mountains. The kind of storm that drops a foot of snow on unprepared, short-and-T-shirt-wearing hikers.

We made it down the mountain in a little under 50 minutes and back to town before the rain started in earnest.

It never did snow, although later we found that the forecast called for possible flurries.

The next morning we found frost on the truck and ice on the dog’s water bowl.

My mother warned me about Colorado when she studied copies of the newspaper we were planning to buy.

“You don’t want to move there,” she said pointing to the weather column. “It freezes in July and August.”

Mother always did know best.

Setting the record straight on beer garden

To the Editor

The Flatlander Fall Festival is nearly upon us again and with a new twist, the controversial beer garden.

I thought it best to address concerns directly rather than let the rumor mill run its course.

I care about the Fall Festival and about Goodland as a citizen. As a businessman, I have financial interest in the success of both. While most of the feedback I have received regarding the Flatlander Beer Garden has been positive, some have voiced concern.

To those who are in favor, I say come to Flatlanders and enjoy yourself. If you so desire, buy a beer.

To those who are not in favor, I say come to Flatlanders and enjoy yourself, but don’t buy a beer.

The choice is that simple. This is not a question of morality, but one of personal choice.

I had no idea the simple act of selling beer at a celebration would be the cause of so much drama.

My desire has been and will continue to be the promotion of downtown Goodland. Rest assured that the beer garden will be run to the letter of the law. No beer will be allowed out of the designated area, and no underage persons will be allowed in.

I invite everyone to come to south Main and check it out for themselves. I would thank the commissioners for their foresight and integrity. Assuming things go as planned this year, I will apply again next year.

Greg Shores, president
Shores Bros. Auto Supply
Goodland

To The Editor:

In response to Rod Miller’s letter “To the Editor” in the Friday, Sept. 17, *Goodland Star-News*, regarding the beer garden during Flat-



from our readers

• to the editor

lander Fall Festival, we support his opinion 100 percent.

Hank Beeden
The Grain Bin Lounge
Goodland

To the Editor:

I was surprised at the hateful tone in a recent letter concerning the beer garden to be held at Flatlanders. I personally believe the city commissioners listened to valid reasons to try having a beer garden.

I found it insulting to call it drunkenness, if I choose to stop in the beer garden and drink a beer. This garden will be behind a fence, not in the middle of Main Street.

I do not believe any children are going to be traumatized by allowing someone to sit outside in this beer garden and drink a beer. It was insulting to claim that a child may be molested because someone wants to sit outside and enjoy a beer.

If Louie’s was still open, he had an outside beer garden and any member could have sat outside and had a drink any time they wanted.

The owner of this upcoming beer garden is not going to allow people to sit and get drunk and cause problems. It is just one more booth, so to speak, where the ones that choose to spend their money can enjoy something different during Flatlanders.

I’m sure there are many God fearing church members of this community who see nothing wrong in a simple beer garden. How many families have picnics, fishing trips, Super

Bowl parties and the like, where the parents may drink a beer and the children are not hurt?

The location of this garden is away from the children’s games and even if not, I doubt many kids would even notice or pay attention to adults sitting behind a fence drinking a beer! The kids are having too much fun with their own activities.

Saying a beer drinker will molest or injure a child for a reason not to have a beer garden is like saying a child shouldn’t go to church because in many published cases, church officials have molested children. The individual who wrote the letter has a right to his opinion, but drinking a beer at a fenced in beer garden is not public drunkenness.

I think all who see no problem with trying a beer garden this year should contact the City Commissioners and let them know they did the right thing. There should be no problem in allowing someone of age the right to sit outside in a fenced, controlled area and drink a beer if they choose.

Bonnie King
Goodland

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 will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. 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@nw-kansas.com>.

garfield

