

from our viewpoint...

Communications key to good relations

While we agreed with the Goodland City Commission decision to give Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. a couple more months to get production going at its new plant, we wonder why it came to this.

With the \$500,000 the city has sunk into the plant so far, it just makes sense to keep trying to make things work. But why was the city manger frustrated and ready to recommend that the city give the firm the boot?

Why was the only information about the plant rumors on the street?

Maybe we all need to be talking more.

The company promised to be training some workers last week and have production going by the end of the year. If that happens, we'll all be winners.

If not, well, the city can start looking for another tenant. What had been a burned-out shell is now an attractive manufacturing facility.

Economic development is always a gamble. Many a community has sunk money into a plant that never made a widget, a call center that never saw a phone, a railroad that never was built.

But we keep trying, because we like jobs and need growth and prosperity.

Aircraft Seal and Gasket sounded like a dream come true. The firm wanted to get away from high-priced, high-taxed California and establish itself in the midlands. It promised to bring 30 jobs here this year, with the hope for 100 in the future.

Enthusiasm was high when the plant was dedicated in February, but since then, the few employees the firm did have drifted away, the insurance on the building has not been paid, and the plant has sat idle.

From the start, founder Herb Menold said he needed \$800,000 to get things going. It was clear the firm needed a refinancing, but state securities regulators nixed a plan to form an investment pool. They said it amounted to selling stock without jumping through the regulator hoops.

That left Menold in a fix, one he says he's getting figured out.

Menold needs to realize, though, that he sometimes has been his own worst enemy in dealing with the city and with the people of Goodland. He's made promises and set dates he's not been able to meet.

People here are pretty understanding, but they can see when things aren't happening. Having taken the community's money and support, the firm needs to keep people informed.

Good, honest, open communication could have avoided some of the hard feeling and suspicion surrounding the firm's failure to get things going when promised.

That hasn't always been the case. Menold can be hard to find. Answers sometimes are hard to come by.

It's embarrassing to talk when things go wrong, but necessary. Aircraft Seal needs to keep the city and the rest of us fully informed if the firm wants our continued support.

With luck, the company will get things going and all this will fade away. Whatever happens, though, good communications will ensure good relations.

And that won't cost the company anything. — *Steve Haynes*

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Member: Kansas Press Association
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e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com

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nwkanssas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkanssas.com)

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

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Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST, 2004

Why do hotels insist on 40 watt light bulbs?

What's with hotels and light bulbs? Don't they believe in them?

I like light and I need it to read.

I think I strained my eyes when I was a pre-teen reading science fiction magazines under the covers with a flashlight when I was supposed to be asleep.

Whatever the reason, I really need a good, strong light to read.

So we stay in a hotel with a nice comfy overstuffed chair and ottoman and a reading lamp. You turn on the lamp only to find that it has a 40-watt bulb. Since the only other light in the room comes from two more 40-watt bulbs at the head of the bed, you need to remember to bring your miner's hat with the little lamp on top to read at night.

We went on vacation recently and the lack of light nearly drove me over the edge, as did the lack of light bulbs.

In Santa Fe we stayed at a nice — not top of the line, but nice hotel. It was near the plaza and oozed old-world charm. It did not, however, ooze customer service.

After finding the desk light had a dead bulb, I walked back to the front desk where a 20-



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

something sweet young thing was flirting with a 20-something young man. Since they were both behind the counter and had neat little name tags, I assumed they both worked at the hotel. I was the only one at the counter.

I told them that there was a light out on the lamp at my desk. The young man asked me if I would like a light bulb. On getting an affirmative, he handed me a 40 watter.

For what I was paying for that room, I should have received a 200 watter and someone to run right down and put it in for me.

Last week, at a convention in Denver, I came up with the same problem on the light over the bed — dead bulb.

In the morning, I called down to maintenance and was told that someone would be "right up" to fix the bulb. I left for meetings and that night, I found I still had a dead bulb.



**steve
haynes**

• along the sappa

would list prairie dogs as an endangered species on her watch, and sure enough, that issue has gone away.

I knew her already, a passing acquaintance anyway, because she was attorney general in Colorado when we lived there. She's bright, lively and intelligent, well-spoken and never beats around the bush. No pun intended.

I don't see how she can survive long in Washington, but she seems to manage. I'd vote for her; in fact, I have.

I haven't met Dick Cheney, supposedly the evil influence behind the crown. Some friends from Wyoming, where he was a congressman,

got in to talk with him at his office, before the days that it was an undisclosed location.

From what they said, he was a pretty nice guy for an evil genius.

And then there's Sen. John Edwards, the vice-presidential candidate from South Carolina. He's a trial lawyer with a big, toothy grin.

But then, my dad was a lawyer. Let's leave the jokes there.

Anyway, I haven't met Edwards, either. Don't think I can vote for him.

I remember in 1968, I saw or met all the candidates, Republican, Democrat, Hubert Humphrey, Dick Nixon, Nelson Rockefeller, even George Wallace. I took their pictures, listened to their speeches, talked with some of them.

I'm not sure that's possible today, even with a press pass.

I didn't vote for Wallace, either, but that's another story.

garfield

