

from our viewpoint...

County steps up to help chamber

The warm Fourth of July night would not be the same without gathering around the Sherman County fairgrounds every year to watch in wonder and amazement at the aerial display to celebrate the nation's birthday.

This July, the fireworks went off a day late because of the arrival of some much-needed rain, but it was a spectacular show all the same.

However, the rains and lightning dampened the Goodland Chamber of Commerce's fund-raising activities, making it all but impossible for the Chamber to shoulder all of the cost of the Freedom Fest.

With an outstanding bill of \$3,500 from this year's show, the Chamber board has been going to the city and county to try to put the annual event on a more solid budget. The plan is to spread the cost out a bit, and have the money for next year in the bank in March when a contract for fireworks is set.

Planning ahead is a good idea, and we believe the Sherman County commissioners did the right thing when they stepped up with \$2,500, their one-third of the cost.

In the past, money for the fireworks came from sending bills to the Chamber members, and seeking donations where possible. A few years ago, the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau made an annual contriution to both the Freedom Fest and Flatlander Fall Festival, but since the two offices split, the visitors bureau has cut its support to Chamber programs.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he thought the visitors bureau should be helping with these programs, which are designed to bring people to the city.

Ken Clouse, president of Northwest Kansas Technical College and a member of the Chamber board, said there were three options for the fireworks show, but no one wanted to eliminate it.

The city was not as forthcoming when the Chamber made a presentation. City Manager Ron Pickman said the budget for next year had \$500 for the fireworks, and he noted that money is tight. When the Chamber was making its presentation, it appeared the city budget was going to be very slim and the commission had voted to raise the property taxes by 5 mills and to raise water and sewer rates to balance the bottom line.

Since then, the county's assessed valuation has increased by over \$7 million, which meant the property tax for city residents go up just half a mill. At the same time, there was a dramatic jump in sales tax collections for the past two months, which means an increase in revenue of about \$126,000 for the city.

The Chamber plans to go bakc and ask the city to increase its budget a bit, but that will leave the fireworks program about half-way to its goal. Clouse said the Chamber would be asking others to contribute to the program and to make it an annual commitment to put the Freedom Fest on a solid foundation, build up a reserve and keep the event sound.

There is much to be said about getting a wide base of donations, and we feel the 110 members of the Chamber should not shoulder all the burden. However, as the Chamber plans for the upcoming year, we feel it would be good leadership to add about \$20 to each dues statement to cover the Freedom Fest.

Sharing the cost and expanding the ownership of the event can help keep it the largest Fourth of July celebration between Hays and Denver. — *Tom Betz*

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We save in some small, strange ways

As I was trying to squeeze the last drop of toothpaste out of the tube the other day, it occurred to me how saving we can be.

In this land of Styrofoam cups and paper towels, where every pill we take comes in an individual plastic holder, and even screws at the hardware come in unopenable cardboard-and-plastic packages, we are really cheap. We save in small, strange ways.

Who can throw away a shampoo or conditioner bottle without adding water and shaking it to get the last little bit out of the bottom?

When was the last time you saw someone use half of a packet of sugar or artificial sweetener and throw the other half away?

How about those little things of liquid creamer?

Do you throw the bar of soap away when it gets so thin it breaks in two, or do you put the two halves one on top of the other and keep scrubbing for another week?

Who throws away the crusts on bread, even when they don't like the crusts and leave them to the end?

Do you change the bag on your vacuum on a



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

schedule, or when it gets so stuffed that the machine won't suck up one more speck of dust?

Do you try to empty that disposable bag and reuse it?

Were you the one who jumped up and down on the trash to get a little more in because trash day is tomorrow, and you didn't want to waste another bag?

Do you try to use those last two sheets of toilet paper on the roll, even when you know it's not enough to do the job?

Are you the one saving used dryer sheets, paper towel and toilet paper cylinders, empty thread spools and old newspapers because you just know you'll have a use for them sometime?

Do you try to straighten bent paper clips and

My truck has a new satellite connection

I have a new toy.

No, not a new truck. Just a new radio.

My truck came from my uncle, who died a couple of years ago.

He bought it new in 1997, and when I got it, it had just 23,000 miles on it. He didn't drive much.

The only thing wrong with the truck, a nice black Ford Explorer, was the back bumper.

Uncle was a pretty careful driver in his final years. He drove to and from the country club to have lunch with his old golfing buddies. But apparently they had some wicked steel posts along the parking lot there, and he kept backing into them.

Both sides of the bumper are bent and pushed in. My friends, when they finally notice the bumper, always ask me what I hit.

I just blame my uncle.

So there's the bumper. And the radio.

It's the worst radio I ever have had in a car.

Most cars have good radios. They all pick up AM and FM stations with great range and reception.

Most cars.

This truck had a terrible radio. I could hardly pick up ballgames, day or night, and you know how I love to listen to the Rockies.

So after fighting declining reception and last-inning fades all summer, I threw in the towel and went to get a new radio.

It was a good idea. I get nearly-clear reception on stations 200 miles away and I'll never have to strain my ears to hear a game again. It's the best reception I've ever had in a car.

While I was buying the radio, the salesman mentioned that they had a special on satellite receivers. He had me when he mentioned that next season, they'll have all the baseball games.

I was hooked, even if I'll hardly use the NFL package, which is free with the regular monthly service.

These people have so many channels, they don't just broadcast a game. They offer a choice, home or away announcers, for *each* game.

The same thing applies to college football. The next Saturday, I listened to the KU broadcast, but I could have had the Iowa State announcers.



**steve
haynes**

• along the sappa

Might have been better, too.

Music comes through loud and clear. The only thing that stops the signal is the metal roof of the garage.

The sound is worth cranking up, though the unit has enough power to blow my speakers clean



garfield

