

from our viewpoint...

## New sheriff getting fast start

Being sheriff is not an easy job, and within days of taking over the job, Kevin Butts was in the thick of things.

His office is investigating a shooting south of Goodland where someone fired a shotgun at Tony O’Neal in the fog. The victim is lucky to be alive, and Butts and his deputies are questioning people to try to solve this attempted murder.

At the same time, the sheriff approached the anniversary of the disappearance of Jimmy McClelland with a new perspective. He believes there are people who can give him information to help solve the case, and he’s asked the public for help.

Sheriff Butts has answered many questions about the case, giving a clearer picture of the events the night McClelland disappeared.

Former Sheriff Doug Whitson believes McClelland left the Peden farm on foot that night, but does not have idea where the man might be today. Some claim Whitson didn’t do everything that could be done in the first day of the disappearance, but there was no evidence of a killing, just a missing person report. Most observers believe he covered the area pretty thoroughly without finding McClelland.

Sheriff Butts, who was undersheriff then, says everyone expected McClelland to show up that night or the next morning, but now it is his case, and he is looking at it more closely.

He talked to Jan McClelland, Jimmy’s mother, and told her he would try to find out what happened to her son.

After a year, McClelland qualifies as a cold case, and it will take new leads to help the sheriff find some answers.

Getting the missing man’s photo and name before the public again, and providing additional details of the disappearance, have helped.

Since a story was published last Tuesday, Butts said he has had several calls from people who may be able to provide additional details.

He hopes all the publicity which the story generates will stir up a lead that will solve the mystery and give the family closure.

McClelland’s disappearance was part of a busy year for the sheriff’s office that included the murder of Kerrie Bevington by her husband Lanny on Dec. 28.

On Sept. 15, Lanny Bevington was found guilty of murder in the second degree and aggravated kidnapping. In October, he was sent off to the Department of Corrections, and on Nov. 9, he was transferred to the medium security facility in Hutchison, the old state reformatory. He will spend the first of many Christmases behind bars, where he should be until at least Jan. 2020.

Whether Jimmy McClelland was murdered, died an accidental death or is in hiding, Sheriff Butts wants an answer. Every lead is being followed. Anyone who has any information is urged to called Sheriff Butts at 899-4835. — *Tom Betz*

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## Learning Quest, tool to help your children

Happy holidays! Our homes are packed with family, our refrigerators are overflowing with tasty treats and our bank accounts are on fire!

Many of us are occupied with celebrating the holidays but after all the merriment is complete and life is back on schedule, we will soon realize that tax time is just a couple months away.

But I have good news! Please do not miss the opportunity to lower your tax bill while raising the aspirations of the children in your life. Invest in a Learning Quest account before Dec. 31, to enjoy a sizable tax deduction for this year. It only costs \$25 a month or a lump sum of \$500 to open an account if you live in Kansas. There is no enrollment fee and absolutely no annual fee for Kansans.

Learning Quest is the Kansas, 529-college savings program established by the State of Kansas, administered by the Kansas State Treasurer’s office and professionally managed by American Century Investments.

Learning Quest is a comprehensive education savings program with some of the most competitive features in the nation. It allows you to make contributions to invest for higher education and offers important advantages.



lynn  
jenkins

• state treasurer

Kansas taxpayers can receive a state adjusted gross income deduction of up to \$2,000 per child for this year (\$4,000 if married filing jointly) on contributions to Learning Quest.

This benefit is in addition to the federal and state tax benefits of tax-deferred growth and tax-free withdrawals for qualified educational expenses. Beginning January 1, the amount you can deduct increases to \$3,000 per child per year (\$6,000 if married filing jointly).

In addition to the tax benefits, 529 plans offer advantages over other college savings tools. For instance, the account owner, not the beneficiary, maintains control over the assets in the account. Additionally, there are no income limits, and the contribution maximums are high (\$235,000 per beneficiary for Learning Quest).

## Time to restate function, purpose of bureau

To the Editor:  
In several recent articles in *The Goodland Star News*, comments about the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau have appeared and perhaps now is a good time to refresh everybody’s knowledge about the function and purpose of the bureau.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau was formed many years ago for the purpose of levying a transient guest tax on those who stay overnight in lodging facilities in Sherman County. This tax of 3 percent is to be used to encourage others to stay overnight in Sherman County. In the industry, this is referred to “putting heads on beds.” This tax is collected by the lodging facilities and sent on a regular basis to the state. The state then returns the county’s portion.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau board is comprised of 10 individuals, with the majority of the members from the lodging industry if possible. The remaining members are from various backgrounds with the focus on tourism.

For many years, the visitors bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and economic development were housed under the same roof and shared some staffing. During this time the visitors bureau was spending over 40 percent of its total budget to the Chamber for rent, salaries and other office expenses. In 2002, the visitors bureau set up its own office on Main Avenue. This allowed the board to increase its marketing budget from 25 percent to 60 percent of the total budget.

Although the focus of the Convention and Visitors Bureau is for overnight lodging, these same overnight guests spend money for food, gas, souvenirs and other miscellaneous items. Using the state formula, these overnight guests add over \$6 million to Goodland’s economy. This number does not include those who stop



from our  
readers

• to the editor

for fuel, food, shopping, or vehicle repairs. The advertising the visitors bureau does includes attractions, events and other points of interest in an attempt to attract and get people from outside the area to stop. With around 150,000 vehicles per year stopping at the Travel Information Center west of Goodland, it’s a good guess many of these vehicles do stop in Goodland for any number of the services.

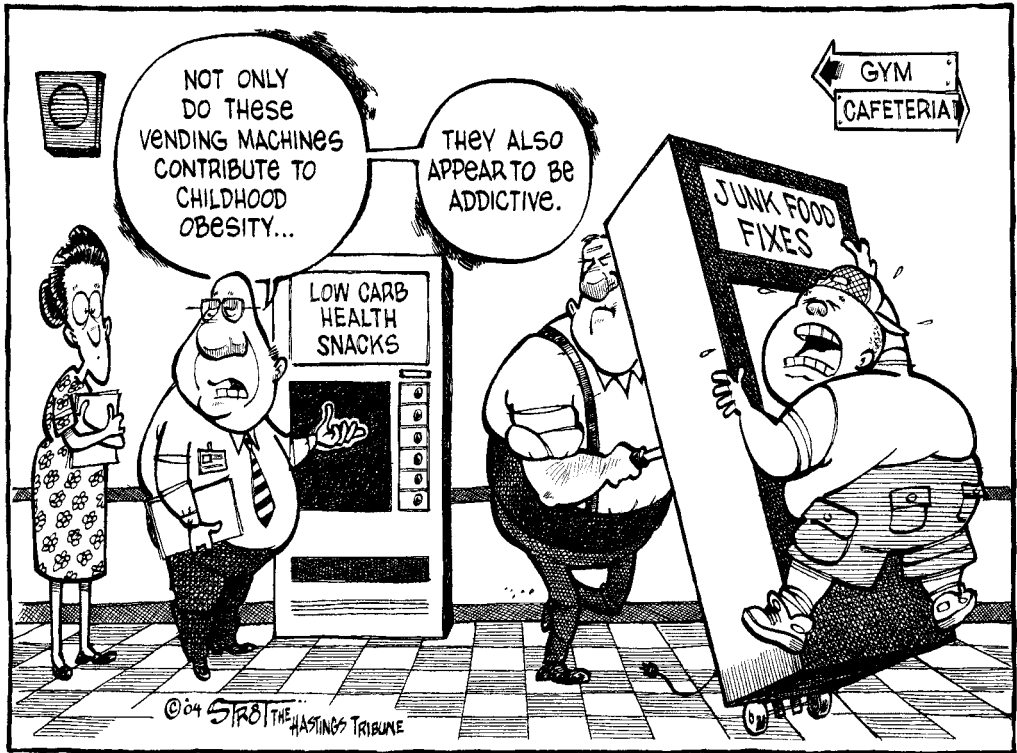
To entice the traveler to stop, the visitors

bureau pays for seven billboards; from Lawrence to the Colorado border.

Through its membership in various state and regional tourism groups, the bureau works to cover a large multi-state area to attract more people to Goodland and Sherman County. The board is proud of the work it has accomplished in bringing business to Goodland, Sherman County and northwest Kansas.

Dale Neill  
Goodland

**Editor’s Note:** Mr. Neill is chairman of the Convention and Visitors Bureau board, but says he wrote this letter as an individual and not in his official capacity, not as a representative of the board.



### garfield

