

from our viewpoint...

People make progress possible

Thanks to the city and the people who live here, the Pioneer Park project is getting closer to reality. Mayor Rick Billinger spoke for all those present when he said last Monday it was more than just a drainage project that needed to be completed.

With the help of the city staff, donations from First National Bank and from many other people, a money gap was cut to a manageable level to allow the city to get on with the construction process.

The Rev. Gene Tromble and his helpers did a good job of getting people to open their checkbooks and help push the park toward success.

Whether the city can negotiate with the low bidder, Miller Construction, to make it happen is the next step, and everyone hopes that will be successful so the project can begin next month.

When completed later this year, Pioneer Park will stand as a symbol of the strength and perseverance of the people of this community.

It is a constant struggle to push projects ahead to bring about progress. The Pioneer Park project goes back to a strategic planning session in the 1980s, when one of the junctions connecting U.S. 24 to Cherry Ave. Civic leaders saw the need for a better entrance to downtown than the swampy old wye.

Those who were involved in that planning session should have a sense of satisfaction when the final phase of the basic project is completed this year. That will not be the end of the improvements at the park, but it will signal the end of the first phase.

There are a lot of things that can happen as the project moves forward, and there are sure to be some small hitches as the work begins. However, that is part of the march of progress. It is not a smooth path, but rather the path less traveled, rougher and sometimes fraught with trouble.

The city and county have been through a lot over the 117 years since the first settlers arrived, and there is a deep spirit that keeps pushing ahead.

Suggestions that the city will become a ghost town are heard when we need to spend money to move a project forward. It is easy to be against something, not wanting spend money. But ensuring that progress happens is what we elect representatives for, and we expect them to look at the best options and make tough decisions.

The City Commission did that last Monday with the help of the city staff and those who made donations to help make Pioneer Park happen.

At the same time, the commissioners were congratulating the city staff for installing new playground equipment at Gulick Park. Whatever people think about the number of parks in the city, they should have been around when the crew took down the barriers and the kids swarmed onto the new equipment.

Many cities would like to have the beautiful parks available in Goodland. As the effort at Gulick has shown over the past year, parks are important and more heavily used than may appear to the casual observer.

Pioneer Park will not a neighborhood park like Gulick, Chambers, Rosewood or Topside, but it will be a tremendous addition to dress up the entrance to our city.

Hooray!— *Tom Betz*

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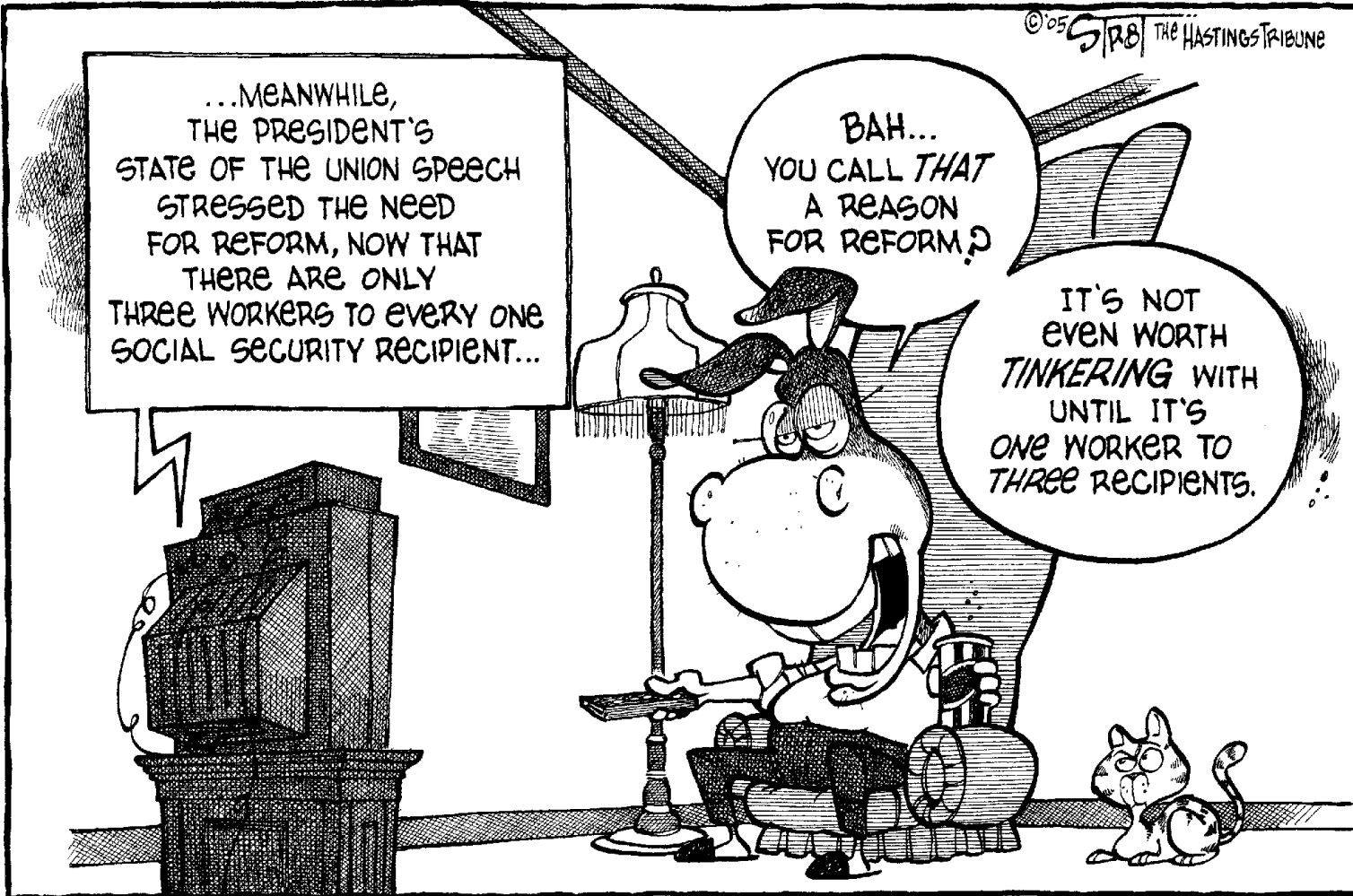
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Finessing Social Security

By Dick Morris

Tread softly. Step lightly. Glance over options. Don't get stuck. That's how President Bush needs to handle Social Security reform, and it is exactly how he managed it in his State of the Union speech.

The key to reforming Social Security — and politically living to tell about it — is to offer choices to Congress and to the American people without getting locked in or trapped on particular point.

By posing options — cuts in the cost-of-living increases, a higher retirement age, private investment — and by ruling out any change fpr those over 55 (full disclosure: I'm 57), Bush skated over the difficult decisions. Hopefully, he'll never have to make them.

The fact is that private investment of Social Security funds by individuals will solve the system's long-term problems. Over the long run, the American economy — and the stock market in particular — grows at a rapid enough rate to solve any shortfall that the Baby Boomer generation's retirement will cause in the Social Security system. Anything that investment doesn't solve, an influx of younger immigrant workers — legal and illegal — will take care of.

But you can't say that: Voters don't believe that private investment will solve the Social



from other pens

- commentary

Security problem. They favor it, but don't see its full potential. So if the president falls into the trap of basing his proposals on the probable outcome of investment decisions by individuals, he'll be vulnerable to Democratic charges that he's selling a pie-in-the-sky scheme that will bankrupt the system. On the other hand, if he locks himself into a rigid proposal to raise the retirement age or to lower cost of living increases, he will run afoul of those who oppose any cuts.

The answer is not to try to jam a program down the throats of Congress or the voters. Rather, offer choices in the final legislative product that lead them in the right direction without coercion and without duress.

Bush should offer alternatives: Later retirement, slower benefit growth and private investment should be options offered to every beneficiary.

The president understands the need to let a consensus develop from within Congress based on choices and options rather than hew

Park will be built thanks to people, city

To the Editor:

My heart is filled with gratitude as the City Commission approved Commissioner John Garcia's motion, seconded by Commissioner Dave Daniels, to move forward on building Pioneer Park.

I want to thank so many individuals, families, and businesses who gave encouragement, finances and pride in our city that Pioneer Park may be built.

Beautiful Pioneer Park, at the south entrance to our city, will welcome visitors to Goodland with a pretty view replacing the ugly lagoon in the old unsightly wye. Beauty replacing ugliness; what an improvement for Goodland. Pioneer Park lets our city put it's "best face" forward to people entering from Interstate 70 and highways 24 and 27.

We citizens of Goodland have so much to enjoy and to share with northwest Kansas and the Tri-State area.

Our blessings include an excellent school



from our readers

- to the editor

system for our children, Max Jones Fieldhouse for sports events and other community activities, the Vocational College where young persons come from many states to gain skills for lifelong careers, a business district where you can buy everything you need, including get well and birthday cards, cosmetics, quality clothing, furniture, cars and much more, a regional medical center with staff and doctors who treat our aches and pains and try to keep us healthy, and churches whose pastors and fellowship help us strengthen our relationship with God and care for the less fortunate in our community through the Ministerial Alliance and Genesis. Pioneer Park, honoring our ancestors who



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