



Letter from Topeka

By State Sen. Stan Clark
sclark@ink.org

Legislature did quite a bit in '04

Editor's Note: This is part of a column was written by the late Stan Clark just days before his death in a dust-induced traffic accident on I-70, rounding up accomplishments of the Kansas Legislature.

What did the Kansas Legislature accomplished this year? Here are some of the highlights:

Economic Development

The Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship was established within the Department of Commerce. Its purpose is to increase seed capital for entrepreneurs, especially in distressed and rural communities; work with the Board of Regents and Board of Education to create training and course work in entrepreneurship; and be a resource center, clearing house and referral source.

Most area bankers will tell you that 75 percent of the deposits are held by people 65 years of age or over. For several generations, when our grandparents died and their assets were distributed, most of the money left the area. In an attempt to turn this tide, the Legislature authorized the creation of seven regional foundations. Every donation to these foundations can receive a 50 percent tax credit. The goal is that each foundation will have \$2 million within 3 years to invest in new businesses in rural Kansas.

Commercial buildings that have been approved by local city or county officials and the Secretary of Commerce will be eligible for a rebate of property tax on improvements. The idea is that if you take a building that currently has a tax value of \$25,000, fix it up and the new tax value is \$100,000, for five years you will receive a rebate on the increased value, and then for years six through 10, you will pay increased property taxes on an additional 20 percent of the increased value. At the end of 10 years, the entire building is in the tax roll.

An "accredited angel investor" can invest in a rural business, and receive a 50 percent tax credit not to exceed \$50,000 on each business for up to five businesses. The goal is to encourage business investment in rural Kansas instead of investing in Wall Street. The investor hopefully not only will have a financial stake in the business but will also serve as an advisor.

Reduced the franchise tax from \$2 per \$1,000 in assets to \$1.25. This will lower taxes for 31,000 small businesses. This change is revenue neutral because the former cap was raised to apply to a greater percentage of the assets of larger corporations.

Delayed implementation of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project until January 2005.

Now is the time to crystallize your dream, pool our resources, unravel the tangled mess of wool and truly bring new life to our communities. Besides the "enterprise facilitation" program that is available in several counties in my district, your local economic development organization, local utilities and WKREDA (Western Kansas Rural Economic Development) will be more than happy to assist you.

Insurance

Health Savings Accounts will be available in Kansas within the next six weeks. Health Savings Accounts are similar to Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA's) except that the

money is used for medical expenses rather than retirement.

An individual can put \$2,600 tax free every year and a family \$5,150 into these accounts. All unused amounts can be carried forward. At retirement age, any amount due the employee from unused vacation or sick leave can be placed in this account tax free and used to pay Medicare premiums. Money in this account will be used to pay medical expenses and can be used to pay long-term care insurance premiums.

Everyone who opens an HSA has to also have a health plan with an annual deductible of at least \$1,000 for individual coverage and at least \$2,000 for family coverage.

Public Safety

Provided an approval process and funding mechanism so that our local emergency dispatch centers will have the equipment to locate where an emergency cell phone call is coming from. Each cell phone will pay 50 cents per month to pay for this equipment; one-half of this fee will go directly to the dispatch center and the other half will be grants awarded to rural dispatch centers.

Another bill would allow local emergency radios to use the Kansas Department of Transportation's communication towers and help agencies move to the 800 megahertz communication channels.

Oil, Gas & Electricity

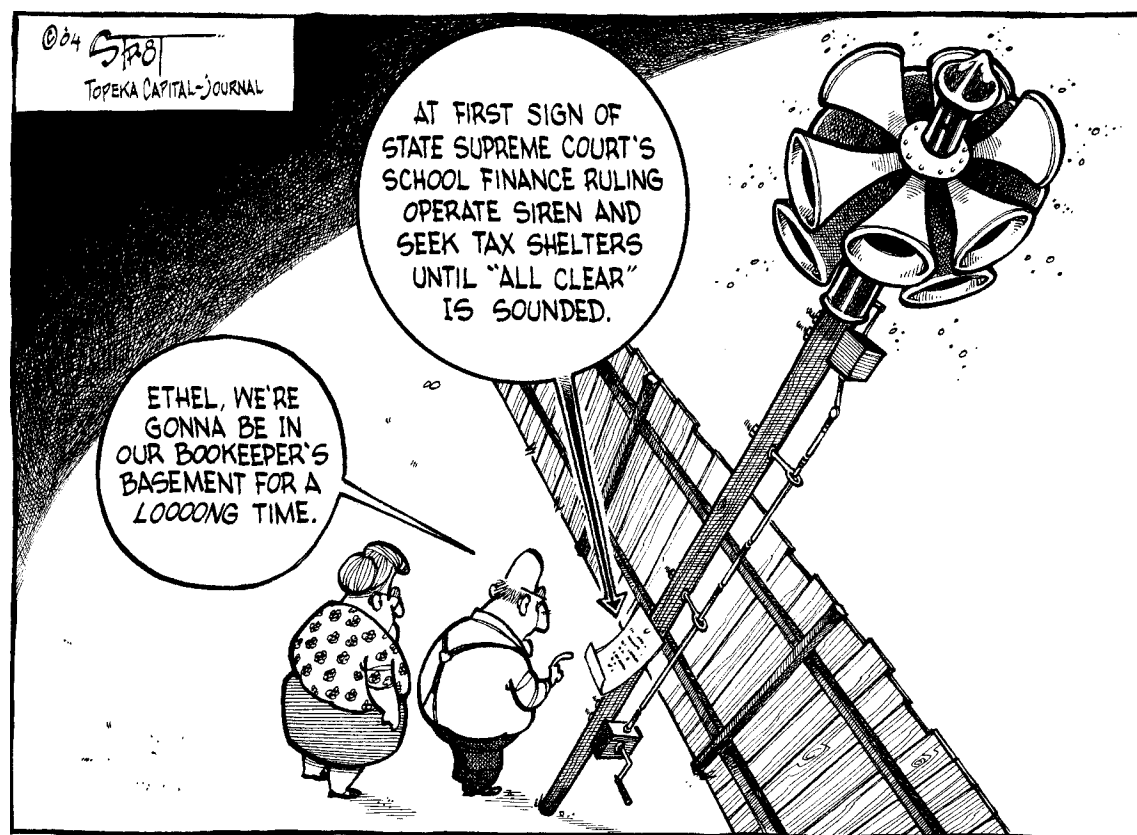
Kansas entered the competition with a number of other states for a \$1 billion experimental, emission-free, coal-fired electric generation facility. Our central location, national rail lines and existing oil fields make us a viable candidate. The site selection criteria is still being developed by the U.S. Department of Energy but at least one location in my district looks like it meets the preliminary site criteria. I am a member of the Kansas site selection committee.

Established wind lease filing criteria for the county registers of deeds. This change will allow future owners, title examiners and lenders to fulfill their responsibilities.

Provide a remedy to clear titles that were clouded by other parties filing "Mineral & Royalty Deeds" on land they had no legal interest in. The legislation requires the offending party to clear the titles within 30 days of notice by the owner. If that doesn't happen, they are subject to the court awarding up to \$10,000 in damages plus attorney fees. There are over 60 such deeds filed in Rooks County and several hundred are known in 10 additional western Kansas counties.

There are a number of challenges remaining, chief among them writing a constitutional school funding formula. It has been rewarding to serve the citizens of Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Graham, Greeley, Logan, Norton, Rawlins, Scott, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, Trego, Wallace and Wichita counties in the Kansas Senate the past 10 years and I look forward to continuing this service. The district expands to also include Lane, Ness and Rooks counties.

Really appreciate the newspapers that print my articles and the broadcast media that allows me time to explain issues before the legislature. There is a direct correlation between this coverage and the involvement of the citizens. Thank you, editors and newscasters!



Auxiliary leader glad for help

Letters to the Editor:
As I complete three years of being president of the Oberlin American Legion Auxiliary, I have many rewarding memories because of the support from fellow members, the Legion and the community.

Our recent Memorial Day service is just one special memory that will be with me forever. It couldn't have been possible without the help of everyone working together as a team. Our service is to let all veterans know we appreciate them, also our servicemen and women. The World War II veterans were honored especially this year because of the dedication of the Memorial in Washington. All posts around the nation were asked to do this for those who couldn't go to the dedication.

Seeing those 57 World War II veterans, some in uniform, some who made a special effort to be there, couldn't help but bring many memories back to all of us. You didn't rate the front page of our local newspaper but you know who you are, so give yourself a pat on the back. Maybe there was a reason to be at the bottom of the sports page. You are the greatest sports of all. The picture said, Compliments of *The Oberlin Herald*. Well, the picture was taken by Cindy Lincoln. I supplied the names; the paper printed it.

When I became president, there was much talk of the Legion closing. I have worked with two commanders who have put many hours in keeping the post going. Thank you, Gary and Walt. I am happy to say it is still going and moving forward. The Sons of the Legion have been trying to get organized and have been a success. There has been a lot of community support.

Many people think that the American Legion is only a social club. Some of the things they do are to have either an Honor Guard or

Letters to the Editor

Color Guard when needed, sometimes in bad weather, and sometimes on short notice, but they are there. They also help veterans in need and supply a meeting place for any group wanting a place to gather. They give scholarships and send boys to Boys State. The auxiliary is there to help them along with having a Poppy Day where poppies that are made by veterans for veterans' benefits are distributed.

This month, we gave a program to the sixth grade, letting them know why we have Poppy Day and we help many with many community projects or people in need.

I couldn't begin to thank everyone who helped on those windy days of Memorial weekend. You know who you are, especially the young people who helped with the flags, also the poppy girls who are our junior members, and the community. I am sure you will always remember your contribution.

As our auxiliary moves forward with a new president, Laurene Dempewolf, I will give her my support as well as all the members. We invite all members to be involved.

In closing, don't forget to say a

prayer for our troops who are serving our country today. God Bless America.

Phyllis Metcalf, past president
American Legion Auxiliary

Jail escape a great read

Letters to the Editor:

This past week's story about the jail escape was great, with lots of details. I have read it twice so far. It had a great picture, too.

I like the large pictures, "From the Record," and "Opinion Page," also Mary Lou's (the people) column. I don't always read the country columns because I don't know the people.

I was wondering why divorces are no longer listed in "From the Record"?

Mary Smith
Oberlin



Kerry is Osama's enemy

To the Editor:

My response to the May 5 editorial, "Would vote against Bush make Osama the winner?", is late since I receive the paper later here in California. As an independent voter, I must say that I completely disagree with you.

When America is spending most of its manpower, resources, and money for "Operation Iraqi Freedom," what's a better way to distract our focus on catching Osama bin Laden and the real terrorists who threaten our country? I would think that Osama is quite delighted with the Bush administration.

Our country was led into the war with Iraq under false pretenses. Iraq was neither a threat to us nor did Iraq have any links in sponsoring international terrorism.

Prior to the war, we had Saddam Hussein contained with all of the sanctions that were being imposed upon him. Today, terrorists freely cross the Iraqi border since there is not enough manpower to secure the borders. This must make Osama a happy guy.

In my opinion, misleading our nation into war is unforgivable and certain people must be held accountable.

Would a vote for Kerry make Osama a loser? In the world's opinion, the answer would be yes.

Lyle E. Black
Los Angeles

Reader likes Yesteryear

Letters to the Editor:

Our favorite features in *The Oberlin Herald* include Events of Yesteryear, obituaries, Out Back (Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts), People in Our Community and news from surrounding communities, especially Rexford News. NO complaints.

We love *The Oberlin Herald!* Keep up the good work!

Cleo Bastin
Elby and Edie (Bastin)
Adamson
Clay Center

WANTED

3 HOMES THAT NEED PAINTING

Norton or Oberlin

Three homeowners in Norton or Oberlin area will be given the opportunity to have the new Heartland maintenance free siding, or new replacement windows applied to their home, both, at a very low cost. These amazing new products have captured the interest of homeowners throughout the United States, who are fed up with constant painting and other maintenance costs. They will last a lifetime, and provide great insulation both summer and winter. This product comes in 10 beautiful colors and is now going to be introduced to the Norton or Oberlin market. What a great way to upgrade the value of your property! Your home can be a showplace in your own neighborhood, and we will make it worth your while if we can use your home.

1-800-673-1240

Call Toll-Free or write in.
Heritage Better Homes
5936 S. Walden CT.
Aurora, CO 80016

Samway Floor Covering
3x10.5
ad sent to GDN
oh/adv

Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember

that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in *The Herald* are available for 50 cents each, first come, first served. Special-order laser prints of photos will be available at \$3 each for about two weeks after publication.

We can take passport photos if you provide a roll of color film. ASA 200, 12 exposure works fine. The charge is \$8.50 per person.