

Do we really need plan with signs, costs, issues?

County officials persist in a misbegotten and expensive plan to name and number all the rural roads. No one seems to care so far as the plan unfolds in slow motion, but plenty of people should.

Taxpayers should care because, though the county has grants to pay for new computers and phone hookups at the dispatch office, so far officials have no way to pay for more than \$200,000 worth of signs needed to mark the roads.

Guess who'll get that bill? Rural residents should care, because virtually all of them will wind up with a new address. That means changing phone listings, checks, address stickers, who knows what else, and who knows the cost, let alone the aggravation.

This cost won't be counted when the county makes its decision, but it's real. Once the county adopts an addressing system, the Postal Service will require people to use the new address on all their mail. The old route-and-box addresses will be out, and after a year, the post office will start sending mail with those addresses back.

If you've ever moved, you know how much trouble this can be.

The enhanced 911 system the county wants to install will be a great addition. It can give dispatchers the name and address of a landline caller and show their location on new maps developed from aerial views of the county. The mapping is covered by a grant the county hopes to get, and grant money, of course, is free.

Most emergency calls today come from cell phones, and the computer will be able to ask a phone its location using Global Positioning System (GPS) capability built into new phones.

That alone should speed response to emer-

gency calls, especially for people who may not know exactly where they are. Their phone should know.

All this will be paid for by either grants or the existing 75-cents-per-line 911 fee charged on all phones. It's a great program.

Then there's the addressing. Rumor has it new addresses are "required" or may be required "someday soon" by federal or state regulations. So far, though, no one can show any law or regulation that requires addressing. It may be "nice," and it might help dispatchers, but it's not required as far as anybody knows.

Despite the cost of the signs, the cost of maintaining the signs and the disruption making every rural resident change their address might cause, the county seems determined to push through with this change.

Maybe no one cares. More likely, people will care when their mail starts to be returned to sender and they find out what the signs cost. Then, it will be too late.

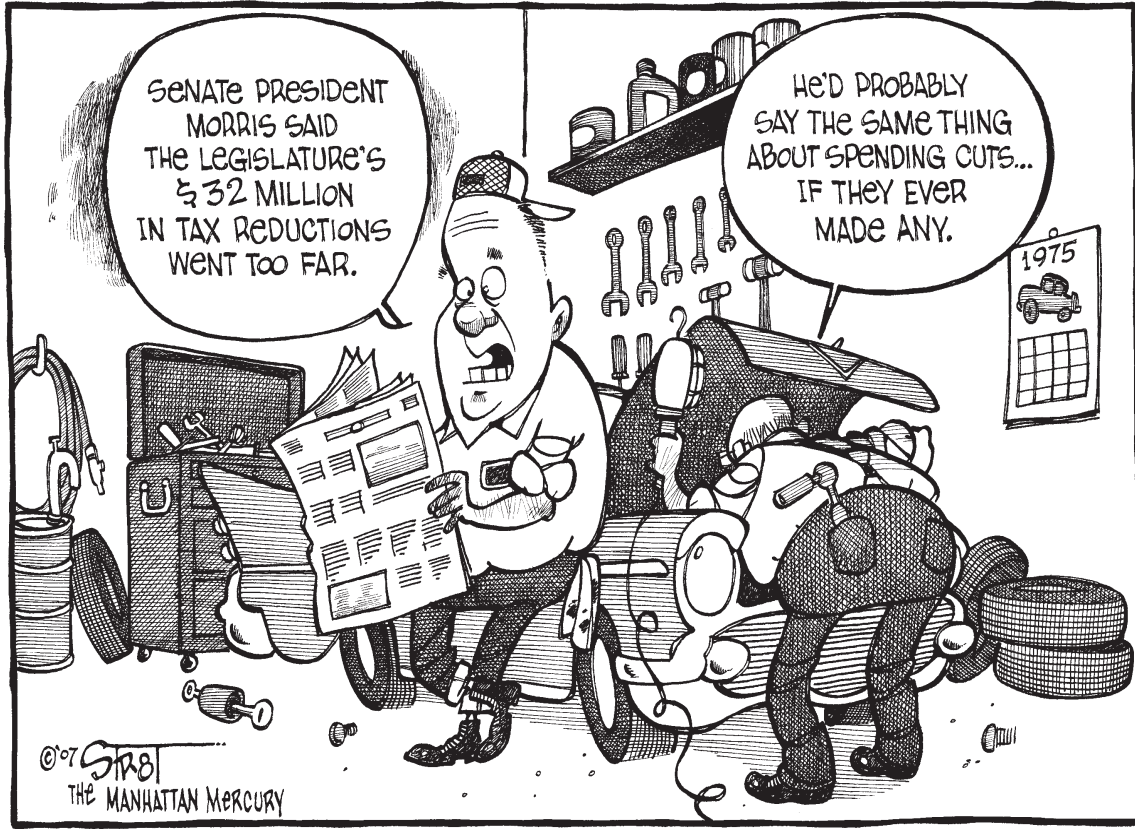
The county commissioners, usually a frugal lot, don't seem to count the cost to citizens. They may sing a different tune if people get hep to what is going on.

Neighboring Norton County shelled out thousands to mark its road grid with numbers north-south and letters east-west. The county put up nice signs; it's a lot easier to find your way around now.

But when it came time to force the issue on addresses, the commissioners blinked and tabled the plan, leaving the signs up but addressing not required. Last time we checked, the signs were still up and the addresses still were not in force.

This is real money involved here, and a real pack of trouble. If anyone cares, best get to complaining now, before it's too late.

— Steve Haynes



City did great job on limbs

While other towns still have piles of limbs waiting to be hauled off, Oberlin has pretty much cleaned up.

In fact, the limbs would have been gone a lot sooner if it hadn't been for the two feet of snow that came right on the heels of the ice storm. Even if you had your limbs at the curb — and a lot of us did — they were buried.

There was no way with the snow on the ground to haul off the limbs, and besides, the city crew had a lot of better things to do. Keeping the power on, plowing, moving snow, stuff like that.

But when the snow did melt, the crew made short work of the limbs, hauling them off and burning them in less than two weeks.

Not much left to say except thanks, guys. Good job.

It's a pleasure to live in a town where things go that well.

There are some issues the city needs to face. One of them is signs.

The city did buy some new stop signs a few years ago, and it replaced the old, rusty street signs. Those moves solved some problems.

Now the city needs to dig down for the bucks to replace most of the no-U-turn signs downtown. The red circles have washed away and the signs themselves are getting pretty ragged.

I know the sign supplier blames 3M for making red signs that don't



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
schaynes@nwkans.com

hold up, but facts are facts. Those signs have seen better days.

The same goes for many of the school-zone and school-crossing signs. Except for the sets out on U.S. 83 posted by the state, signs marking school zones are nonstandard, faded, too small and hard to see. They should be replaced with modern signs that meet today's standards for school crossings.

Our children's safety is too precious to compromise.

The Oberlin School Board is looking for a new superintendent, following the formula it used five years ago after Duane Steele retired. It's hard to argue with the board's success that time, and we hope the process works as well this time.

The board has tried to keep things open, and that's good. If everyone has a say and everyone knows what's going on, then everyone can have confidence in the decision.

The board is using pretty much the same schedule and the same consultants it had last time. That went

well. Kelly Glodt has been a good superintendent, a guy who got things done people had talked about for years.

Thanks partly to him — and to the efforts of staff, teachers and volunteers — many capital projects got done. Schools got new windows, new roofs and best of all, air conditioning.

True, it's not the central air plant envisioned in a bond plan a few years back, but the small units the district put in are good enough to cover the few days when the schools really need them.

They allowed the district to run on a regular schedule this year despite the heat in August, and that may have saved their bacon when snows forced day after day of cancellations this winter.

Besides that, Mr. Glodt and his wife Sue and their kids are good people.

The family has been an asset to the town, and we'll miss them. We can only wish them well back in South Dakota.

Phew! The snow went south

Looks like we dodged a bullet on that last snow storm.

Thursday, everyone was canceling Friday events for what was forecast as one of the biggest snows of the season — 10 to 12 inches. School was called off, dinner parties rescheduled, dances postponed. Even bingo was canceled, for Pete's sake.

And for what? Oh, sure. Better safe than sorry, and all that. Now (here it comes) when I was a kid ... let's see, did I walk to school (uphill both ways) in a blizzard, or did we have to hand-shovel our way through the drifts?

Probably should check statistics from the National Weather Service, but it really does seem like we used to have more severe winters than we do now. Not necessarily the cold part. Believe me, I thought it was plenty cold this past winter.

But in terms of snow, it seemed like we used to get lots more. It could just be that "kid thing" and my perception was skewed because I was little and everything else looked so big. Maybe someone will research that and let me know.

In fact, write to me about anything. I would love to hear from you. Just make sure you put "OutBack" on the subject line. Other-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
cplotts@nwkans.com

erwise, I might think it is one of the hundreds of e-mail "spam" I get on my computer, and I'll delete it. My home e-mail is bad, but nothing like my work address.

Most of them are for get-rich-quick schemes, finding long-lost schoolmates or male "enhancement" products. I try not to even open them. If you do, the spammer has the link to you.

But every now and then, one of them makes their message sound like it might be from someone I know. I'm curious, of course, and take a chance. Bam! Gotcha.

Once you open an e-mail, they've got you. And I think they sell your address to other spammers over and over again. I could change my e-mail address, but what a pain that is.

Besides, I shouldn't have to. The spammers are the ones invading my privacy. We're supposed to have fil-

ters on our computers, but right now I think it's more like a sieve.

Oh, listen to me complain, when some of the nicest things come to me across the Internet. The daughter of an old country preacher sent this:

There are three little words everyone wants to hear.

Some of the most significant messages people deliver to one another often come in just three little words.

When spoken, or conveyed, these statements have the power to forge new friendships, deepen old ones and restore those that have cooled.

Here they are: I'll be there; I miss you; I respect you; maybe you're right; please forgive me; I thank you; count on me; let me help; I understand you; and, go for it.

I saved the best one for last, the one you automatically think of: "I love you." These words are reserved for someone extra special.

Blooms press on despite freeze

It's hard to believe that I still have daffodils blooming out in the yard.

After getting hit by the freeze, many of my flowers curled up their petals and called it a year. Others kept a bloom on their stems and just laid low during the cold.

In fact, some of my tulips were practically trying to dig their way back into the ground.

I went out on Thursday night and cut a bunch of tulips and daffodils. All the tulips were lying on the ground but the daffodils were hiding among some lilies.

I read several years ago that if you plant daffodils among your lilies you increase the bloom time without increasing the space needed for your flowers. It works.

Since the lily bulbs form a circle, you can plant the daffodils in the spaces between them. The daffodils come up and bloom in the early spring just as the lily shoots are starting to emerge. By the time the lilies are fully leafed, the daffodils have stopped blooming and just blend into the foliage. Then in the summer, the lilies bloom.

This year, the daffodils did their thing and the lily leaves were emerging nicely when the freeze hit. I think



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
cahaynes@nwkans.com

the lily leaves protected some of the daffodils, because the flowers kept blooming even though the leaves all turned a sickly white. This means I'll probably have beautiful lily blossoms this summer and a really ugly border of lily greenery along the alley from April to November. Oh well.

As I said, I cut many of the tulips out front and a couple blooming on the side of the house. Over on the south side of the house, I have a couple of red tulips. Out front, everything is yellow.

Every year after the beautiful display of yellow daffodils along the walk, I dream of red tulips blooming beside the steps. And every year, the tulips there come up yellow.

When I tell Steve that I keep hoping for red, he just shakes his head.

We dug that bed up a couple of years ago and he was going to toss the tulips, but I stopped him. I should have gone out and gotten some red bulbs, but I didn't, so I guess I'll be looking out at the front steps and sighing every year.

The flowering pear tree by the back door took a hit from the weather but it will still have plenty of blossoms for us. It doesn't produce fruit anyway, so we don't care if we lost half our "crop."

Out back, we'll have to wait awhile longer to see how the spirea and the lilac fared. We may have flowers and we may just have a bunch of green bushes. Anyway, the irises will be in bloom pretty soon.

And even without all the usual display, summer is coming and I can't wait.

Moran says thanks for the tour

To the Editor:

I recently completed my 11th annual Big First Listening Tour, making community visits in each of the 69 counties of the 1st Congressional District. It is always a pleasure joining residents for a discussion about current issues and ways I can better serve the interests of Kansans in Washington.

Many of my tour stops came on the heels of the severe winter storms that swept the western part of the state. Despite the devastation, I was once again reminded of the strength and spirit of our communities and the values that make Kansas a great place to live, work and raise a family. I not only appreciated hearing Kansans express their views on national policy, but also talk about their successes and achievements. Our state will continue to thrive thanks to the work ethic and dedication of its citizens.

In our nation's capital, I continue

Letter to the Editor

to work on the issues important to our state. For a number of Kansans, the farm bill is the most important piece of legislation Congress will consider this year. In the coming months, I will also be working closely to improve No Child Left Behind. In bettering our education system, we should not take the joy and passion out of the teaching profession by overregulating the classroom. Finally, I appreciate the advice I received from Kansans about our country's course of action in Iraq, as well as their concerns for the well-being of our service members and veterans.

If there were any issues that we did not have the opportunity to discuss or if you were unable to attend my tour stop, you can always con-

tact me through my website at www.jerrymoran.house.gov.

It is an honor to represent Kansans in Congress. Please let me know how I can better serve you, as together we strive to make good things happen for Kansans.

Jerry Moran, Hays
U.S. Representative

From the Bible

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Proverbs 26: 22

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Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: oberlinherald@nwkans.com

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