

\$10 trillion national debt likely to grow next year

One thing that seems certain, no matter who becomes president, is that the national debt will continue to grow over the next couple of years.

That's a frightening prospect, with the debt now estimated at \$10.3 trillion and growing at a rate of \$3.45 billion a day. That's nearly \$34,000 for each American, man, woman and child — and growing at more than \$11 a day.

While both major parties will give lip service to balancing the federal budget, the deficit for this year is estimated at \$438 billion. That's likely to grow next year for a couple of reasons.

One, the Democrats will have control, maybe even "veto-proof" control, of the House and Senate. The temptation to pass pet spending bills and "economic relief" projects will be just too much to resist.

And two, both parties will be running scared of the economy. They will pass any bill aimed at rescuing us from disaster, whatever it takes. And witness the recent bailout bill, which grew from \$400 billion the government didn't have to nearly \$600 billion the government didn't have.

A round of vetoes isn't likely. Neither Sen. John McCain or Sen. Barack Obama will veto any spending bills next year. Priorities in Washington favor spending over thrift, since spending for a member's own state or district, or for a member's backers, is what earns approval and keeps congressmen in office.

Many go to Washington with a fine set of ideals, but few can resist the allure of spending, either pork-barrel project for the home folks or big programs to rescue the economy, help the poor and the downtrodden — or corporate America.

Spending is the quickest route to a campaign

war chest these days, and for most congressmen, staying in Washington becomes the main, sometimes the only, goal.

Money is the fuel that corrupts the system, and it gets worse every year. It's not likely to change soon.

For one thing, few in Washington see a problem. Members' interest is mostly in staying there, not in reforming the system.

Until Americans wake up and realize what we are doing to ourselves, that won't change. Until we give the president a line-item veto so he or she can excise the worst spending excesses, Congress will keep passing bills loaded with pork, using untouchable "earmarks" to get money for everything from bridges to corporate tax breaks.

Until we start caring about the deficit and the debt, Congress will assume things are just fine. It would be easy to argue that at \$10 trillion, the debt is so huge it's beyond our comprehension already.

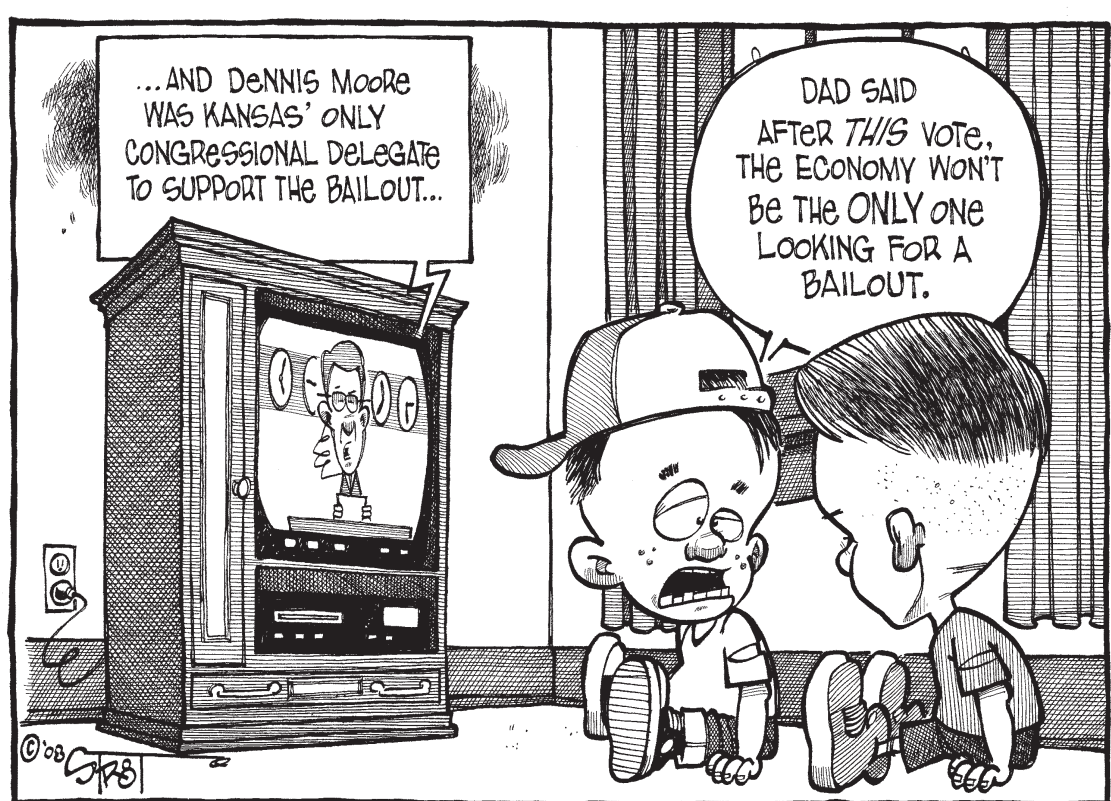
But in tough economic times, the lure of pumping up the economy may trump fiscal responsibility anyway. Who's going to vote against a better economy?

This nation is digging its own grave. We're spending our grandchildren's income and our great-grandchildren's while borrowing to finance our need for foreign oil. We're sending what's left of our wealth and our jobs abroad to fill SUVs and run air conditioners.

It's not just Congress that's bought into this corrupt and debilitating system. It's all of us. And until the American people demand better, things are liable to continue this way.

There's little to show that who wins and who loses in next month's elections will make much difference in what happens, for neither party has an answer or a plan.

— Steve Haynes



We set a new building record

It was a whirlwind trip to Mexico. And, this time, we set some kind of speed record, completing the house in two days, instead of the usual 2 1/2.

It worked out great to hook up with the team from Silver City, N.M. Each team brought strengths to the table that complimented the other. So now, Eddie, Robert, Marcia, Dave, Bob, Dennis, Kim, Steve and Adeliso are our new best friends.

The Kansas contingent was great, too. Phil worried that he wouldn't be able to do anything, but he soon learned that there were lots of "little" jobs he could take on. John brought his "mucking" boots and waded into the wet concrete when the truck arrived. Bob and Deanna pitched in like old pros, and Jim did his usual with the framing. I did something new this year and helped with the insulation. Hard work, yes, but the most fun you'll ever have.

The family we built for was thankful. The timing couldn't have been better because Maria and Efren are expecting their third child, a girl this time, in November. Their new home will be a warm, safe and secure place to bring their new baby to.

The house was completed by the end of the second day, with a few decorative touches to add the third morning.

After the dedication, Maria served us lunch. She called the dish "flautas". She took a small amount



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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of seasoned hamburger and placed it along one side of a corn tortilla. She rolled it up very tightly, then dropped it into hot oil where she fried it until crisp. The flautas were served with fresh, homemade guacamole, lettuce, tomatoes and, of course, hot sauce. Delicious!

When we go back in March, we will check in on the family and see the new baby. What a great feeling to know we helped better the lives of this young family.

— ob —

Months ago, I promised my friend Vicki that I would help with her daughter's wedding. At that time, Angela had not set the date. But, sometime after we set the date for the Mexico trip, Angela picked out the weekend right after our scheduled return. With me coming back just the day before, it was going to be a tight schedule.

I'm not really a "plan ahead" kind of girl, but this time, I had to get organized. I actually had the mints, chocolate candies and meat balls all prepared before the Mexico trip. On

wedding day, everything went like clockwork. The bride's father sang a touching song about how he had loved her first. It brought tears to my eyes. Jim admitted later that it made him cry, too.

I took lots of pictures. It was a lovely wedding and the young couple have a beautiful life ahead of them.

— ob —

Dig out your apple recipes. I have two bushels of apples Jim picked Saturday sitting on the back porch, another bushel that fell off the trees and more still to be picked. I haven't been able to give any away. Everyone who has an apple tree says the same thing: "I've got more apples than I know what to do with." It's a bumper year, apparently.

Jim bit into one and he said they are still pretty green. Are apples like tomatoes? Will they continue to ripen after they are picked? I sure hope so, or I'm going to be making some mighty tart pies.

Hit the mud, but not the ditch

"It's on a state highway, so you shouldn't have any trouble," my husband said.

Boy, talk about your famous last words. You'd think that after 40 years my husband would know me better.

It seemed like a good idea to go to the church social, and maybe get a couple of pictures for the paper.

But, the church was in a small town, which can be reached by going down a nice paved state highway. Or, you can turn too soon and take the dirt shortcut.

I wasn't trying to take a shortcut. I just thought that was my turn. In my defense, it was paved for the first 100 yards or so. After that it was a dirt track.

Of course, I noticed that the pavement ended, but I was moving along real well. I'd probably have to wash my car when I got home.

Yeah, that was a good thought. Not smart, but comforting.

Which is how I got about a mile and a half down the road before I got stuck. The car just started to go slower and slower and finally, it wouldn't go forward any more.

I tried rocking it — putting it in reverse then drive quickly. But it did no good. I was stuck in the middle of the road.

Still, I had to do what I hated the



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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most. Call Steve for help.

Of course, he was 30 miles away and it would take awhile for him to arrive and he warned me, he wasn't sure he could maneuver on that road even in his four-wheel drive.

I was only a hundred yards or so from the pavement when he got there, and together we pushed, pulled and dug the car back onto the blacktop.

Steve suggested I go to the car wash while he went home to fix dinner, since we weren't going to make that church supper.

Good idea, but the automatic car wash was out of order. The manual one had one bay closed and one bay busy. While I was waiting, I checked my purse for quarters. I had two, plus three dollar bills.

The clean car rolled away and I discovered the coin changer was broken. The wash took five quarters for each round.

I called Steve again. He had two

quarters and two ones. He suggested I go to the office and trade my bills in for quarters from the pop fund.

The pop fund had three quarters and the cash drawer another dozen. I bought them all.

Back at the car wash, I washed twice and rinsed once, using all the quarters I had scrounged at the office then I drove home.

When I got out on the highway, though, the front end wobbled like crazy. Steve said I probably had mud stuck to the wheels, unbalancing the tires.

I ended up taking the car to the shop to beg the guy who does my service work to de-mud the underside so I could drive at more than 45 miles an hour.

My children say they are getting me a global positioning system for Christmas. But then, they've only known me for 30 years.

Steve's getting me about 10 rolls of quarters.

Bottom line is cost savings

To the Editor:

In response to the article in the Oct. 15 *Oberlin Herald*, Sunflower Wind wishes to correct some of the statements made at the Oberlin City Council meeting on Oct. 9.

First of all, Sunflower Wind will not be selling the power generated from our turbines to the city. Sunflower Wind is not trying to find a back door into the Oberlin electrical grid. It was not until the Oberlin School District was presented a wind option by Johnson Controls that Sunflower presented any small wind options for Decatur County.

Any excess power produced by our turbines does have to be bought back by the power company, provided the utility is not already buying four percent of its peak capacity from small wind systems. While our systems do provide an environmentally friendly way of producing power, the bottom line is a cost savings for everyone involved. Oberlin does have higher electrical cost than most northwest Kansas communities, which makes the economics of renewable systems much more attractive.

Kansas law provides that all electric utilities, including municipal utilities such as Oberlin's, must allow customers to connect renewable generation units to their systems, using proper safeguards, and pay for any power produced in excess of the customer's needs. This includes wind generation units. (See KSA 66-1, 184, last amended in 2007).

The law clearly says that the

Letters to the Editor

power companies must buy back excess power. This clears the way for residential customers to benefit from a small wind system.

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about Sunflower Wind's 100-kilowatt turbine:

- All power supply costs are passed directly to Oberlin electric consumers. City of Oberlin customers, regardless of source, want the lowest possible cost. The installation of turbines produced by Sunflower Wind provides safe power to consumers, and, in some cases, enough power to be sold back to the electrical grid. While the 100-kilowatt wind turbines will provide very little additional power to the city, the power will be purchased at a significantly cheaper price than existing contracts the city may hold with utilities. The turbines will help taxpaying consumers as well as government entities reduce their cost of operation.

- The Sunflower Wind 100-kilowatt turbine uses a UL-certified parallel generator hookup that protects both the customers and the utility company. The system constantly reads power on both sides of the circuit breaker. If the local power system fails, the turbine will automatically be disconnected from the system.

The formula for the price paid for energy from wind machines no

larger than 25 kilowatts (residential) and 200 kilowatts (commercial) is established by the same state law and is contained in a Parallel Service tariff approved by the Kansas Corporation Commission. (www.mwenergy.com/PDFs/PS.pdf) In 2006, it resulted in an average "buy-back" rate of 4.243 cents per kilowatt hours, while the 2007 buy-back rate was 4.023 cents per kilowatt hours.

- Under the law, the generator must be appropriately sized for the customer's electric load, and the Sunflower Wind turbines are appropriately sized.

In these uncertain financial times, we all deserve the chance to save as much money as possible. And we also have a responsibility to work towards energy independence and freedom from foreign oil.

If you have any questions about anything related to Sunflower Wind, please contact me.

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From the Bible

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.
Matthew 7:1-5

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