

# Let's celebrate Bill of Rights day

By DOUG ANSTAETT  
Kansas Press Association

It's not recognized as a national holiday.

We don't get the day off from work.

We don't see throngs of people carrying signs celebrating it — or denigrating it, for that matter.

And the day doesn't even show up on most calendars.

In fact, if Jay Leno went "Jay-walking" and asked the average American citizen what we celebrate on Dec. 15 each year, he likely would get nothing more than a blank stare.

Dec. 15? "I have no idea," would be the common answer. "I'm too busy shopping for Christmas presents."

Yet, on that day and virtually every other day of the year, Americans freely exercise the rights that came with the ratification of the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

- Freedom of speech.
- Freedom of religion.
- Freedom of assembly.

Freedom to petition government for a redress of grievances.

The right to due process.

The right to bear arms.

The right against self-incrimination.

The right to a jury trial.

And, lest I forget, freedom of the press.

Yes, 218 years ago, the founders accepted almost verbatim George Mason's "Virginia Declaration of Rights" as the bedrock statement of our individual rights as Americans.

George Mason isn't a household name, unless you're a huge sports fan, especially of college basketball.

While we should put our nation's founders on their own unique pedestal, we can't lose sight of the fact that had it not been for George Mason's dogged determination to get his "Declaration of Rights" accepted as the first amendments

to the new Constitution, we might not live in a country where we can speak out, hold opinions that others find objectionable or even abhorrent, be considered innocent until proven guilty, exercise our religious beliefs or choose not to believe and assemble for or against an issue without fear of recrimination.

George Mason held back his support of the new Constitution, saying that the blueprint for a new nation lacked the absolutely essential ingredients that would place the individual above the state in almost all circumstances.

Had he not done so, we might be living in a very different country today.

So, on Dec. 15, whoop it up a little in celebration of Bill of Rights Day.

And if you happen to go to a holiday party or two, you can impress your fellow guests with your knowledge of the history of the Bill

of Rights.

Someone once said they never discuss politics or religion.

What country are they from?

Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association. An award-winning editorialist, he is a former publisher of the Newton Kansan and editorial page editor of the Topeka Capital-Journal.

## Opinion

## Early Deadlines for the Holidays THE OBERLIN HERALD

will be closed Friday, Dec. 25 and Friday, Jan. 1 so our employees may enjoy the holidays.

The Country Advocate deadline for the Dec. 30 issue will be Noon on Wednesday, Dec. 23 and for the Jan. 6 issue the deadline will be noon Thursday, Dec. 31.

*Happy Holidays to all!*

**THE OBERLIN HERALD**

170 S. Penn Ave. 785-475-2206



## County residents want to vote

To the Editor:

My husband and I have been reading everything we could on the airport proposal so we would be able to make the right decision when it was time to vote. To our dismay, when I called the courthouse, I was told that because we live outside the city limits we cannot vote.

We do not think this is fair. The airport will affect everyone in Decatur County in one way or another, not just those who live in town. Does this mean that the airport will only be for those people who live in town?

Since I own a business downtown, whatever the outcome is will have a direct affect on my business, but evidently my opinion does not count. This happens every time the city makes a change; only those who live in town have a say — even if they have a business it will affect.

Anything that affects the county should be decided by everyone, not just those that live in town. If you own a business in town, no matter where you live, your vote should count. I know I am not the only one in this situation.

Karen and Robert Chambers  
Oberlin

**Editor's Note:** This is pretty much the way things are: city matters are settled by city voters; countywide matters go to a county vote. For some reason lost to history, most airports in this country are city-run.

The only way to change that would be to have the county take over the airport. City taxpayers might be willing to let that happen. But until then, they get to call the shots.

County residents might either move to town or ask to have their property annexed to the city. That way, they would get city services,

vote in city elections — and pay city taxes.

Or we might all decide to join forces and merge the city and county governments. Right now, though,

a decision on a city ordinance has to be made by city voters. It's the law.

— Steve Haynes

## Letter to the Editor

### MONA'S MARKET IN DRESDEN



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When Dad started having chest pain, I didn't realize how critical the first few minutes were to preventing damage to his heart. The Good Samaritan Hospital paramedics transported him to the Level II trauma center where the heart team opened his blocked artery in less than 30 minutes, preventing any damage. I guess time really is heart muscle, which is one reason why Good Samaritan was the first accredited Chest Pain Center in the state.

Our family is really blessed to have such skillful care close by. When seconds count, the best care from arrival to dismissal is...within reach.

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State of Kansas  
Amendment  
2009

### Notice of Budget Hearing for Amending the 2009 Budget

The governing body of  
Oberlin

will meet on the 31st day of December, 2009, at 7 p.m. at The Gateway Civic Center for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed amended use of funds.

Detailed budget information is available at the City Office at 475-2177, at [www.oberlinkansas.gov](http://www.oberlinkansas.gov), and will be available at this hearing.

### Summary of Amendments

Fund	2009 Adopted Budget			2009 Proposed Amended Expenditures
	Actual Tax Rate	Amount of Tax that was Levied	Expenditures	
General Fund		343,662	795,040	1,002,800
Community Growth			25,000	95,000
Gateway Civic Center			200,050	280,000
Water			367,203	457,203
Library		24,185	39,000	54,000
0			0	0

*André J. Kelly*  
Signature

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City Administrator's Notes:

- The General Fund amendment accounts for \$260,000 received in federal and state grants for the airport and \$220,000 in expenses for the airport. Previously, these revenues and expenditures were not reported in full. The amendment also corrects cost allocations for employee benefits and employer liabilities.
- The Community Growth Fund amendment accounts for about \$68,000 for the Sappa Lake restoration. City Council approved this expenditure in 2008 and had originally planned the expense in phases but altered it to allow for more efficient project management by Pheasants Forever, who is overseeing the project.
- The Gateway Civic Center Fund amendment accounts for capital improvement expenditures made possible by the Bremer Donation. The amendment also corrects cost allocations for personnel expenses.
- The Water Fund amendment accounts for debt service expenses that were not accommodated by the city's Bond and Interest Fund.
- The Library Fund amendment accounts for a procedural misallocation of about \$5,000 to the Library Fund that was intended for the Library Department of the General Fund.

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