

Turn around is here. Friday was the halfway mark in this year's legislative session, the time when bills must be passed out of their house of origin — or die.

The first two days of the week were filled with long committee meetings, trying to get all the bills worked before the deadlines. The last three days featured extended days of floor debate on all the House bills that had passed out of committees. The bills that pass out of the House this week will be sent to the Senate for consideration, and the Senate bills will now come to the House.

After "turn around," the process begins anew. Many bills that stirred the most controversy will not be discussed again this year. The bills that passed the House or Senate, however, now have more statewide attention because they are still alive. Bills will be assigned to committees; if they pass out of committee, the bills will be worked on the floor. And when a bill is passed by both houses, it still has to be signed by the governor.

I have been asked, "What is the importance of being a chairman?" Bills are assigned to my Education Budget Committee by the speaker of the House. Normally, they are related to education. I have had bills about school transportation, pharmacy loan forgiveness, the school finance formula, military pupil counts and many others. The chairman can decide whether or not the committee will hear a bill. "Hearing a bill" means that the bill will be read in committee and any proponent or



Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. Ward Cassidy
ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov

opponent may testify for or against it. The testimony has to be written, and copies are provided to each member of the committee.

"Working the bill" is the next step in the process. A committee chairman has the right to decide whether or not a bill will be worked. If I decide I want to work a bill, the committee members can comment on their desire to pass it to the floor for a vote of the full House, or to vote it down. Committee members can also make amendments to the bill to make it a stronger piece of legislation. After all committee members have had a chance to fully vet the bill, then I can bring it to a vote. The chairman only votes when there is a tie. My vote is the tiebreaker — yes, the bill goes on, or no, the bill dies.

In Education Budget, we were assigned 17 budgets to "hear" and then to "work." For each budget, there is an agency request and a recommendation from the governor for what he plans to put in his budget. Our committee listens to the agency one day and the next day makes recommendations or amendments. After we pass them out, the budgets go to the full Appropriations Com-

mittee. The most time-consuming and arduous task I have in the Legislature is presenting these budgets to Appropriations. The public schools budget is over \$3 billion, and I am expected to know where all that money goes. I do have the help of a legislative aide who does any research I request and who knows the budget inside out. I can refer to her whenever a question comes up that I am unsure of.

Two weeks ago, the six Regents colleges presented their budgets in my committee. It is so interesting to hear these college presidents discuss their budgets and their innovative programs.

Being a committee chair is a lot more work, but it gives me a better opportunity to discuss the issues important to northwest Kansas.

Ward Cassidy of St. Francis, a retired school principal and teacher, is the state representative for the 120th District, covering Decatur, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Wallace and Sherman counties and the northwest part of Thomas, including Colby. Send e-mails to ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov.

Senate to focus on House bills

Turnaround — Halfway Point

A real snowstorm and a blizzard of bills made the past two weeks very busy for the Senate. At least 32 pieces of legislation had been debated and voted on by Thursday evening, twice the usual amount.

Monday and Tuesday were to be devoted to clerical staff shifting legislation from one chamber to the other. Beginning today, the Senate will focus primarily on bills that have passed the House. The focus will continue on cutting the income tax and balancing the budget.

Major Pieces of Legislation

SB199 established the Midwest Stem Cell Therapy Center. Here are some highlights: research on cord blood, stem cell clinical trials, facilitate delivery of therapies, education training for physicians and keeping public informed of therapeutic options regarding stem cell advances. New money will attract federal grants, private money, gifts and other dollars covering the cost of the new facility, which will be governed by a 13-member board advised by the director of the facility, who will report to the Executive Vice Chancellor of the KU Medical Center. I supported this bill.

SB149 requiring drug testing of welfare and unemployment recipients if there is reasonable suspicion. Individuals who fail a drug test will have to complete treatment and job-skills training before their benefits will be reinstated. There are various steps in place to promote



Letter from Topeka

By Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer
ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov

success, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families money will be used.

Aid meant for children will be provided for through drug-free third parties. With reasonable suspicion, through the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Services, members of the Kansas Senate and the House of Representatives also may be required to submit to drug testing. I supported this bill.

Sub for SB 57. The major parts of the bill involve a new law regarding penalties and tests for chronic wasting disease, and makes it illegal for any person to "possess" domesticated deer without a permit, and allows the animal health commissioner to adopt regulations for permits; also makes the Kansas Department of Agriculture the official state agency for chronic wasting disease testing.

It also amends existing law on the state Poultry Improvement Plan, giving responsibility to the Department of Agriculture rather than the state Poultry Improvement Associa-

tion. I supported this bill.

SB 82 amends the state's renewable energy portfolio standard. Designated years could be used to meet a certain percentage of renewable energy as part of the requirement. Through an amendment, the Kansas Corporation Commission is instructed to initiate a study to determine the impact of projected retail rates for utility companies, and to examine electric rates of neighboring states, and the impact federal regulations and taxes have on utility rates. I voted against this bill.

The Town Hall Meetings in St. Francis, Atwood, Oberlin, Norton and Logan, scheduled for Feb. 23, were canceled due to weather. I plan to reschedule these as soon as Reps. Cassidy and Lovelady and I can find a date that will work for us all.

To reach Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, write him at State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 136-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612 or call (785) 296-7399. His e-mail address is ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us.

Uncertainty hurts businesses

When the Obama Administration admitted earlier this year that the American economy actually shrank late last year, it was described on Wall Street as "unexpected."

Really? No one saw this coming?

The sources of an economic slowdown have been evident to even the most casual observer. As Main Street seeks to get back on its feet after the worst recession and the worst economic recovery since the Great Depression, it faces a trifecta of challenges from Washington: higher taxes, ObamaCare and over-regulation.

This trifecta was crystallized for me when Ed Marin, owner of Lampe Hardware in St. Francis, and I had a one-on-one conversation after a "town hall" meeting last week.

The store has three employees. Mr. Marin said he wants to hire another, but he has no idea what to expect in terms of business expenses.

He said he recently asked his accountant what it is going to cost to comply with ObamaCare, and the accountant was at a loss to tell him. There is simply no way to know or plan.

Keep in mind that Mr. Marin's business is not required (yet) to provide health insurance under ObamaCare with so few employees. But with premiums going through the roof (despite promises otherwise from President Obama), his costs will go up as well.

Beyond complying with ObamaCare, a convoluted tax code and



On the Potomac

By Rep. Tim Huelskamp
tim.huelskamp@mail.house.gov

regulatory structure leaves him fearful of what will happen if he unintentionally fails to "cross a 't' or dot an 'i.'" He pointed out to me that top-ranking officials in Washington can violate their own tax laws (Former Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner comes to mind), but one minor mistake on Mr. Marin's part, and penalties could come his way.

He said he pays his employees much more than minimum wage and more than meets all the labor and workplace laws. Doing so is just good business practice, he argues.

Still, he asks: "As a small business owner, how am I supposed to prepare for whatever comes out of Washington?"

Great question. Main Street — and all of America — needs some certainty. Certain and common-sense regulations. Real spending reductions so the economy can grow.

Real tax relief so Mr. Marin can hire another employee. Instead, we see higher spending, more debt, more regulations, more mandates and less freedom. That's not what Main Street wants or needs.

that Washington lives up to all the campaign rhetoric about protecting small business, the engine of our economy, and all American workers. I will work hard in the House, but bureaucrats need to hear from regular, hard-working, tax-paying, job-creating folks on the ground, too.

As a member of the House Small Business Committee, I am pleased to point out the launch of the committee's "Small Biz Reg Watch." Through its website, the committee is educating and collecting comments from folks across the nation about regulations that will affect Main Street.

I encourage all Kansans to review these proposed rules and submit their feedback to the president and his agencies. Just go to smallbusiness.house.gov/regwatch.

At this stage, small businesses and consumers can handle no more bad news — unexpected or not.

Tim Huelskamp, a Republican from Fowler, and a former state senator, is the congressman for the 1st District of Kansas.

Rachel Johnson

For City Council April 2, 2013



Character
Commitment
Community

Paid for By Rachel Johnson

RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

707 Grant Atwood, KS 67730
(785) 626-3211

Bringing Specialized Healthcare To Your Community

March 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
						Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab MRI's
3	4 Dr. Rubinowitz Oncology	5	6	7	8	9
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab		Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic		Cardiac Rehab MRI's	
10	11	12	13 Dr. Frankum Surgery	14 Dr. Reeves Podiatry	15 Dr. Reeves Podiatry	16
Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab		Mammograms	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic		Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab MRI's	
17	18	19 Dr. Frederick C. Miller Cardiology	20 High Plains Cardiologist	21 Kirsten Angel Dietitian	22	23
Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab			Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic		Cardiac Rehab MRI'S	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab			Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic		Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab MRI'S	
31	<p>To schedule an appointment with a visiting physician, PLEASE CALL (785) 626-3211 Cheryl Banister, RN Specialty Clinic Director</p>					

Real Estate Auction

160 (+/-) Acres of Choice Sheridan Co., KS

Cropland

Wed., March 13, 2013 - 11 a.m.

Land Location: From the old townsite of Lucerne, KS - 1 mile East and 1/2 mile South.

Sale Location: Bowen Scout House, 1 Block East of Main Street on Sheridan Avenue in Hoxie, Kansas.

Legal Description and General Information: SE 1/4 of Section 35-6-26, Sheridan County, Kansas.
78 Acres are planted to wheat
78 Acres are idle cropland that was corn in 2012.

Terms: Ten percent (10%) down day of sale, balance on approval of marketable title on or before 30 days from day of sale. Bidding is not contingent upon financing. Financing, if necessary, must have been arranged and approved prior to the auction so that Buyer(s) are capable of paying cash at closing.

FSA and Tax Information									
Auction Acres	Farmland Acres	Cropland Acres	Wheat Base	Wheat Yield	Grain Sorghum Base	Grain Sorghum Yield	Barley Base	Barley Yield	2012 Taxes
160	155.9	155.9	71.9	37	37.5	50	11.2	37	\$427.66

Taxes: Seller will pay all 2012 and prior taxes with the taxes for 2013 and subsequent years to be the responsibility of the Buyer(s).

Possession: Day of Auction on the idle cropland. Possession on the 78 acres of growing wheat land will be after the 2013 wheat harvest; Buyer(s) will receive the 2013 cash lease on the wheat land of \$2,600.00.

Title Insurance: Title insurance shall be used to prove clear and merchantable title with the Buyer(s) and Seller sharing equally the owner's policy expense. The mortgagee's policy, if required, will be the expense of the buyer.

FSA Payments: Buyer(s) will receive all of the 2013 Feed Grain payment.

Acres: All acreages are based on U.S. Government measurements and are considered approximate. The statements, while not guaranteed, are from reliable sources. Any costs incurred in establishing boundaries shall be the responsibility of the Buyer(s). Sale is subject to easements, rights-of-way, reservation and/or restrictions of record. Seller and Realtor make no warranties, either expressed or implied. Broker represents the Seller only and will not be considered an agent for the Purchaser(s). Announcements made day of sale shall take precedence over all printed material. For more information, contact the broker.

Mineral Rights: One half (1/2) of the Mineral Rights will go to the Buyer(s).

Closing: Date of closing will be on or before April 13, 2013.

Agency: Pratt Real Estate is the Exclusive Agent of the Sellers.

Sellers: Heirs of
William Ray Horton,
Rosa D. Horton
and Ben R. Horton

Pratt Real Estate
In Charge of Sale
Les Pratt - Broker - Auctioneer
724 Main • Box 583 • Hoxie, KS 67740
Phone: 785-675-3011 • Cell: 785-675-8531
E-mail: lpratt@ruraltel.net • FAX: 785-675-3220
Web Site: www.midwestauction.com