Sales tax best option

The sales tax is, as taxes go, a popular tax. If not wildly liked, it is a lot more palatable than the dreaded property tax. We have seen this in recent months in Johnson County.

Lenexa and Overland Park renewed taxes on sales for projects such as streets and other capital improvements. Two sales tax proposals will be on the primary ballot in August. Johnson County commissioners are seeking renewal of a quarter-cent sales tax for public safety and Leawood residents will decide whether to renew a one-eighth-cent sales tax for streets and smaller stormwater projects that do not qualify for the county-sponsored program.

And, county commissioners have agreed to place a one-eighth-cent sales tax on the ballot in November for research facilities at the University of Kansas Edwards Campus in Overland Park, the planned Kansas State University National Food and Animal Institute in Olathe and The University of Kansas Cancer Clinical Research Center in Fairway.

Inevitably, all of this has prompted a question. How high can the sales tax be raised without offending voters?

Nobody knows at this point, but, given the alternative of the property tax, it does not appear to be in sight.

First of all, it is the preferred tax. Government officials like it because it goes down easier with voters. The public likes it because it is paid a little at a time, an advantage that seems to counter its regressive aspect.

Further, part of the tax is paid by nonresident shoppers.

At the state level, the fairest approach to taxation is an evenly divided combination of sales, income and property taxes. The objective is to have a broad base that prevents any one segment of the population from being hit too hard.

That does not apply locally because an income tax is not collected by cities and counties. Here, the fairness factor involves the sales and property taxes.

Currently, consumers in Johnson County pay upwards of 8 percent in sales tax, part of which is imposed by the state and part by the county and cities. For comparison, the rate in Kansas City, Mo., has risen to a bit below 10 percent at most eating places.

The other significant sales tax issue in Johnson County is the share of total revenue that is raised by the tax on sales and property. Most places rely more heavily on the latter.

Countywide, only 10.5 percent of total revenue is raised by the sales tax, compared to the property tax's 28 percent and other fees.

In Leawood and Lenexa, for example, the property tax outpaces the sales tax. In Leawood, the property tax provides 39 per-
percent of the revenue, the sales tax, 28 percent. In Lenexa, the property tax produces $24 million a year, the sales tax $10 million.

Overland Park, Johnson County’s largest city, is the exception in the two taxes. It enjoys a huge windfall from the sales tax because of the many shopping and strip malls, and other businesses throughout the city.

Nearly one-half of its revenue, 49 percent, comes from the sales tax, only 18 percent from the property tax. This gives the city the distinction of having the lowest property tax rate in the state and a significant share of its taxes paid by outsiders.

In Lenexa, where the sales tax was renewed in recent weeks, it is considered a welcome option to the property tax, according to City Administrator Eric Wade.

“"The message they (citizens) send over and over is don’t go to the property tax,” Wade commented.

With the limited choices the city has, the sales tax is considered acceptable.

The other element in taxation is accountability, explained Wade and other officials, including Ed Ellert, former longtime mayor of Overland Park and currently a county commissioner.

“If people feel they are getting value,” Ellert said, “they are more tolerant toward taxes. In the Overland Park street program, you can touch and feel the projects.”

Bottom line, there is plenty of room for the sales tax revenue to grow in most places before it comes close to the property tax.

Contact Bob Sigman at 385-6034 or e-mail bsigman@sunpublications.com.
Race aids 155 scholarships

The first Start2Finish 5K Run-Walk benefiting undergraduate scholarships, sponsored by the University of Kansas Edwards Campus and Johnson County Community College, begins at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, July 26 at JCCC.

The event ends at the KU Edwards campus.

Race proceeds go to support scholarships for JCCC students who continue their education at KU Edwards campus through Start2Finish, an educational partnership between the two institutions.

Visit www.sportkc.org or istart2finish.org.
Wilson receives Classics award

The Department of Classics at the University of Kansas recognized 13 of its top graduate and undergraduate students with more than $8,000 in awards and scholarships at its 33rd annual spring honors reception.

Cheryl Lynne Wilson of KCK, a master's student in classics, received the Mildred Lord Grefe essay award. It honors the best paper written for a classics course.

Students in KU's classics department study Greek and Latin as well as Greek and Roman literature, civilization and archaeology.
Jason Brensing of Valley Center earned academic honors at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City for the spring 2008 semester. Brensing was named to the honor roll, which includes students with a grade point average of 3.40 or higher for the semester. He is a junior management major.

Incoming University of Kansas students and their parents from Sedgwick County will be welcomed into the KU family at the Jayhawk Generations Welcome Picnic at 6 p.m. June 26 in Wichita.

The KU Alumni Association and its Wichita chapter will greet new Jayhawks at the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame, 238 N. Mead. Area alumni, new students, students interested in learning more about KU and parents are invited to attend and enjoy complimentary food and beverages. Current KU students, alumni and university representatives will mix and mingle with students to answer questions and offer advice.

Those invited from this area include: Ian Ehrlich, Jordan McClain and Jordan Leiker from Bel Aire; Justin Zielke from Kechi; Amanda Allen, Aaron Babidge, Ashlee Bade, Jen Berger, Donovan Carson, Alexander Hatfield, Joseph Martin, Gabrielle Schock, Seth Sherwood and Sean Snavely from Valley Center; Danielle Aldrich, Derek Cooley, Courtney Crites, Veronica Kelly, Garrett Lent, Ian McGonigle, Paige Pond, Kelli Sanborn, Juliann Vignatelli, Bradley Wine, Amber Conde, Ashley Conde, Catherine Huslig, Tan Le, Taylor Alfers, Madison Beck, Dustin Befort, Andrea Black, Elizabeth Cannon, Rebecca Cannon, Kylie Deneen, Jillian Dinsmore, Samuel Gurney, Yasser Hassan, Scott Hawthorne, Matthew Henry, Caitlyn Hentzen, Bahir Hosny, Jennifer Hsiao Fang-Yen, Greg Huenergardt, Lindsey Jonas, Anthony Jones, Maureen Layhey, Hannah Lowry, Zachary Marsh, Kara McKinney, Ashley Moretti, Clayton Nguyen, Kelly Rathert, Courtney Reisner, Brett Rickert, Ross Snodgrass, Lauren Stucky, Lindsey Ward and Jordan Cox of Wichita.

Christina Nikhomvannh, Karen Slater and Tiffany Martin of Valley Center were named to the spring 2008 honor roll at Pittsburg State University. Nikhomvannh, a senior majoring in early/late childhood, and Slater, a senior majoring in family and consumer sciences, both received All-A Scholastic Honors. Students on that list must complete at least 12 semester hours, receive a grade of A in all credit work and have no grade of I in any course during the semester. Martin, a junior majoring in communication, received Dean’s Scholastic Honors. For that list, a student must complete at least 12 semester hours, receive a grade point average of 3.600 for all credit course work, have no grade lower than a B and no grade of I in any course during that semester.

Katie Christine Luna and Yaw James Fellin were married Feb. 16, 2008, at St. Jude Catholic Church in Wichita. Father Doug Campbell officiated. A cocktail hour, reception, dinner and dance were held at the Hotel at Old Town following the ceremony.

The bride is the daughter of Ed and Rosanne Luna of Wichita and the granddaughter of Martin and Reda Luna of Valley Center. The late Bob and Shirley Crager of Wichita. The groom is the son of Nina Fellin of State College, Pa., and the grandson of Eleanor Fellin of Naples, Fla., and the late Lawrence Fellin.

Katie is a health care consultant for ECG Management Consultants in Arlington, Va. Yaw is a health care consultant for The Advisory Board in Washington, D.C. The couple honeymooned in Hawaii and reside in Arlington, Va.

Alvin and Joyce Gregg of Wichita will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with a reception from 1 to 4 p.m. on June 28 at Central Christian Church, 2900 N. Rock Road in Wichita. Their children and grandchildren are hosting the event.

Alvin Gregg and Joyce Stapp were married July 4, 1958, in Olney, Texas. In 1998, Alvin retired after teaching for 30 years in the English Department at Wichita State University. He then served eight years as an associate pastor at Central Christian Church.

The couple has three children: Gavin and Mona Gregg of Bel Aire, Charissa and Kim Schmidt of Wichita and Lane and Jennifer Gregg of Rose Hill. They have seven grandchildren.

Hank and Phyllis Barnes of Wichita, formerly of Valley Center, will observe their 50th wedding anniversary with an open house hosted by their children from 2 to 5 p.m. June 29 at the Sunflower Pavilion at Sedgwick County Park in Wichita.

Hank Barnes and Phyllis Sumner were married June 21, 1958, at Westside Christian Church in Wichita. Hank retired after 41 years at Victor L. Phillips. Phyllis retired in 1998 after 24 years as administrative secretary at Valley Center High School.

The couple have two children, LeAnn and Rob Fluker of Valley Center and Kim Barnes and Jeff Lobemeier of Wichita. They have three grandchildren: Ryan Fluker, Morgan Fluker and Andrew Lobemeier. The couple requests no gifts.
Local student completes certification

Times New Report

The Center for Service Learning at the University of Kansas recognized Andrew Kuttler of El Dorado for completing certification in service learning during the 2007-08 school year.

See Certification, page 3

Certification: Students recognized

Students were recognized in a ceremony held May 8 in the Kansas Room of the Kansas Union. Andi Witczak, director of the Center for Service Learning, opened the ceremony by thanking the students, faculty, administration and community partners who supported service learning throughout the year. Senior Vice Provost Kathleen McCluskey-Fawcett spoke about the history of service learning at the university and the importance of its future. More than 80 students attended the ceremony.

Kuttler, the son of David and Judy Kuttler, earned his bachelor of fine art degree in design. He also earned a Senior Service Learning Certification. He is a graduate of Circle High School.

In addition to certificates, students will receive a designation on their transcripts that informs future employers and graduate and professional schools that the students have dedicated significant time to classes and activities that foster civic engagement, community involvement and leadership.

The certification process consists of four components: completion of a service learning course; an independent service project; a set of directed civic engagement and leadership readings; and a reflection. All undergraduate and graduate students are eligible for certification.
The Brando pun is intended

Musicals, to me, are fun. I love seeing them either live on stage or in the movies. Many of the songs became popular and sung by everyone. There seemed to be a long dry spell when there was no new musicals. Hopefully, it is coming back.

Sam bought me a dvd called "Broadway's Lost Treasures". Now I know there are probably some people who are thinking "Broadway. I've never been to Broadway". I know that you have heard many of the songs and maybe even seen a production of one or two. I listened to it a week or so ago and I was smiling all the way through it.

What I noticed was the actors only sang one song. It was the song they had in the play and it was usually associated with them. Anyway, when they sang their song, it was as if they were right there in the play. You could see them become the character. They weren't just singing a song for an audience. They became the character again.

One person on it is Angela Lansbury singing "Worst Pies in London" from Sweeney Todd. She is so good. I almost told you what the meat in the pies are, but I'm afraid you might get sick. Ms. Lansbury sings the song just a little off-key, but that's her character. I know she did that "on purpose" because I've heard her sing perfectly in other performances. Now if you ask Matt or Adam, they will tell you that Aunt Carol sings off key very well. Between you and I, I do it on purpose.

Another performer was Zero Mostel singing "If I Were A Rich Man" from Fiddler on the Roof. Mr. Mostel became his character again and the audience was right there enjoying watching and applauding him. In two places in the song, he starts dancing with his arms up over his head and bouncing his tummy. He has such a wonderful expression. You can't help but smile and maybe just dance along in your mind with him.

Remember Jerry Orbach of Law and Order? He was a Broadway performer for many years and does he have a great voice. He sang "Lullaby of Broadway" from 42nd Street. When he started singing, I forgot all about the character on the television show. Too bad they couldn't think of a way to have his character sing at least one song as they did with Mandy Patinkin, another longtime broadway star also appearing on television. Mandy went to KU and, naturally, that makes him a great talent.

Watching this dvd I remembered I took tap dancing lessons one time as a child. My lessons were with Loretta and Sheryl Huber. One time I was to shuffle, step. Well, I shuffled and my tap shoe went flying off toward the mirror. I was so embarrassed. Do you know that Loretta and Sheryl just laughed at me? Well, it is funny now XX years ago, but it wasn't then. If I hadn't stopped, maybe "I could have been somebody" like all the tap dancers I saw on the dvd. You know...like...Marlon Brando's dancers in Guys and Dolls.

Watching those dancers both in person and on the dvd made me out of breath. They would do these long routines.
KU Alumni Welcome new students

LAWRENCE — Incoming University of Kansas students and their parents from Barber, Harper, Kingman and Pratt counties will be welcomed into the KU family at the Jayhawk Generations Welcome Picnic at 6:30 p.m. Monday, June 30, in Pratt.

The KU Alumni Association and its South Central chapter will greet the new Jayhawks at the home of Dan and Marcia Suiter, 207 Lake Road. Area alumni will arrive with the signature KU trailer full of grills, burgers and brats for the festivities. Current KU students, alumni and university representatives will mix and mingle with students to answer questions and offer advice.

For more information or to make reservations, visit www.kualumni.org, call the KU Alumni Association at (800) 584-2957 or e-mail kualumni@kualumni.org.

The alumni association invited incoming students whose enrollment deposits were received by the Office of Admissions and Scholarships by May 1. The guests are listed below by hometowns and ZIP codes.

Cunningham 67035:
Allison Steffen

Kingman 67068:
Dayona Nett and Mandi Roser
Kephart earns KU art scholarship during its annual spring exhibition and competition, the University of Kansas Department of Art honored students with $255,370 in scholarships and awards. Among the recipients was Sarah Caroline Kephart, daughter of Michael Kephart, a graduate art student, the Daniel MacMorris Scholarship.
KU Journalism students use classroom lessons to benefit clients

Mitchell George Voth was among University of Kansas students enrolled in Principles of Advertising this spring that teamed with the Center for Service Learning and used classroom lessons to help two organizations improve their marketing strategies.

Bob Basow, associate professor of journalism, and Amelia Roudebush, graduate teaching assistant, arranged the service learning projects for the class. Basow worked with six teams of six students to promote the Lawrence Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Roudebush's six teams promoted KU's Department of Student Housing.

Students submitted weekly diaries and timesheets to document learning and experience gained.

"Early in their career, students may expect to volunteer to help a number of pro bono clients," said Roudebush, a master's degree in journalism from Topeka. "Being able to show that they are willing and able to work on a project--for the public good--makes an excellent impression on prospective employers."

The ReStore sells donated building materials, appliances and overstocked goods to raise funds for Habitat for Humanity. Although the ReStore has been operating for two and a half years, its staff recently became concerned about the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. They found that it was a challenge to develop strategies while working within the means of a nonprofit budget.

The students began by touring the store, facilitating customer surveys, examining marketing and customer buying trends and studying the ReStore financials. The students then presented their findings to the ReStore staff and volunteers. They identified target markets and respective marketing and loyalty strategies and suggested specific low- or no-cost ReStore promotion in tandem with cost-effective advertising strategies.

Bonnie Briscoe, a Habitat for Humanity director, said that the students' research and recommendations will help the Lawrence ReStore for years to come. Writing to Basow, she said, "We will be conscious of the wisdom you have shared and the generosity you and your students have shown in giving back to the community through your efforts in this project."

Meanwhile, the other half of the class worked with Roudebush to enhance occupancy in KU student housing facilities. They created strategies based on findings from focus groups held at four of the university's residence halls.

Through their research, they developed the following strategies: early communication with potential first-year residents by targeting juniors and seniors in high school before they are accepted to KU; utilizing the Web and promoting KU housing on Facebook.com; delivering information to students early and often; use of video; and launching a campaign to portray KU housing as more than "just a room." The department is still deciding which of the strategies to implement.

"The students' presentations provided us with very good ideas and tangible strategies that we can implement to meet our objectives," said Diana Robertson, director of the Department of Student Housing. "We're very appreciative of the opportunity to benefit from these professionals-in-training."

Basow said that educational work like this shows his students that the skills they gain from the classroom extend to the working world.

"The teams worked collaboratively, not competitively, to learn about their client's needs, to conduct original research and to present an effective solution," he said. "Service learning projects like this help students apply what they are learning to a real-world situation. It is especially meaningful to them when they realize that their work has value and can actually help someone accomplish a worthwhile goal."

Bill Nolan, a master's degree student in journalism from Omaha, Neb., said the service learning project was a unique way to simultaneously gain real-world experience and help promote a worthy cause.

"Conducting original research and making recommendations based on the findings was the greatest learning experience for me," he said. "This project seamlessly blended the service aspect and educational mission to create a very rewarding
experience."

Mitchell, a Maize High School graduate and son of Kent and Deborah Voth is a Pre-Journalism Senior at KU.
Maxx Krueger is a member of the 2006 University of Kansas graduating class. He received his degree in communications studies. He has accepted a position in marketing and sales with First Investors in Overland Park. Maxx is the son of Sheryl and Brady Krueger. He is a 2003 graduate of Newton High School.