Legislative Update
State Senator Tim Huelskamp

Government Transparency Equals Accountability

Remember that 1980s television series – The A-Team – and the much-noted quoted of the character Hannibal: “I love it when a plan comes together!” Well, so do I! As you may recall last year, I was the Senate leader of an effort at forcing fiscal transparency on Kansas State Government. And we were successful – just barely.

As a result of these efforts, the State has just launched a new website – KanView (http://www.kansas.gov/kanview/index.html) People deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent – and this website offers a searchable database including the specifics of more than $22 Billion in state spending, tax sources, other reports, and state debt.

After being up for only a few days, interesting spending trends have already been observed by citizens who care about their tax dollars: $1.6 million in credit card fees and charges, nearly $8,000 in state spending at Air Capital Mattress; $90,000 spent by KU at the San Diego Sheraton.

This week, I will participate in a statewide television broadcast on the Power of Open Government. It will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in downtown Wichita. The panel will be carried live on Cox Channels 22 in Wichita and Topeka, as well as KWCH.com and KFTI-AM (1070). It will be rebroadcast on KPTS, Channel 8, at 7 p.m. on April 3 and around the state on the Public Broadcasting System.

Open, transparent government is the only way you and I can hold our elected (and unelected) officials accountable. Let’s hope Kansas can continue to make government more accessible, more open and more accountable.

Thank you for all your concerns, questions and comments – especially those who visited with me this weekend in Spearville, Dodge, or Liberal. As always, you may leave a message for me on the toll-free line (1-800-432-3924) or call the office directly at 785-296-7359.
The Breaking Traditions scholarship is still alive. This is a scholarship for students going into non-traditional occupations, such as women going into building trades or technology, or men going into nursing or clerical programs. Lance Miller won this scholarship in 2005. We have copies, which must be submitted by April 1.

Anyone majoring in music at the six regents universities (FHSU, KU, etc.) may apply for a scholarship of over $2400, funded by Sony, as part of a lawsuit settlement. We have paper copies, which must be completed by May 1.

Kansas State has a new scholarship available, the Edgerley-Franklin Urban Leadership program, for incoming freshmen this fall. Go to www.k-state.edu/nss/urbanleadership for details. This was not part of the scholarship application that was completed before the deadline.

KSU has a plethora of programs coming up for high school students. Sophomores and juniors are invited to the College Success Seminar on March 28. Juniors may stay in Manhattan for the ACT Workshop on March 29. Junior Days, which are special visitation days, will be held April 7, 14, 21, and May 5. Open House at KSU is April 19, which will include the Spring Football game and a concert by the Goo Goo Dolls.

We have applications and info on all these events.

Juniors, Wichita State will have its scholarship competitions for various majors in November, although your application must be in by October 10. Why is this important to you now? If you haven’t sent your ACT scores to WSU, you cannot compete for the big bucks there.

Juniors interested in a smaller environment might consider visiting Baker University on April 19 for its Junior Day. This school in beautiful Baldwin City features new residence halls, 600 acres of wetlands with lab facilities, and a new molecular bioscience program set up for kids interested in CSI.

BU also feature many fine programs in the arts.

The University of Kansas invites juniors to come to campus on April 5 for the annual Scholarship Hall Sneak Peak. Scholarship Halls are unique living arrangements where students share the work load but also save money in a community setting.

The Kiwanis sponsor the Key Leader weekends at two setting in Kansas for students ages 14-17. One Key Leader program will be June 6-8 at the Rock Springs 4H Camp, but of interest to folks out this way another date has been addend, April 25-27. This will be held at Scott City at Camp Lakeside. We have info, or go to www.key-leader.org.
KU announces Fall Honor Roll

More than 4,540 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the fall 2007 semester. These students, from KU's Lawrence campus and the schools of allied health and nursing in Kansas City, KS, represent 96 of 105 Kansas counties, 43 other states and the District of Columbia and 39 other countries.

Students from Ness County who have earned a place on the Honor Roll include Tonya Booze, Pharmacy, daughter of Scott and Nancy Pfannenstiel, Ness City; Tasha Braun, Pharmacy, daughter of Loretta Braun, Bazine; Julie Keeton, Liberal Arts Junior, daughter of Russell and Kristol King; Christopher Mondero, Pharmacy, son of Ed and Jeannine Mondero, and Brett Stoecklein, Pharmacy Senior, son of Ron and Karen Stoecklein, all of Ness City.

Honor roll criteria vary among the university's academic units. Some schools honor the top 10 percent of students enrolled, some establish a minimum grade-point average and others raise the minimum GPA for each year students are in school. Students must complete a minimum number of credit hours to be considered for the honor roll.
Kaw Mission to host presentation by Dr. Craig Freeman on March 15

The second program in the Kaw Mission Councils 2008 educational program series, Our Fabulous Flint Hills: The Hills Are Alive!, features Dr. Craig C. Freeman presenting Simple Sublime Statistics: The Flora And Vegetation Of The Flint Hills. The program will be presented at 3:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, 2008, at the Kaw Mission State Historic Site in Council Grove, Kansas. All Kaw Mission Councils 2008 programs are free and open to the public.

Grasslands – one of four major natural vegetation types on Earth – cover 24% of the planet’s terrestrial surface. Historically, they were among the dominant vegetation type in North America, covering more than 30% of the U.S. American poet and essayist, Walt Whitman, called the prairies and plains “America’s characteristic landscape”. The Flint Hills region of Kansas and Oklahoma is one of the largest, intact remnants of native grassland in the U.S. Freeman will provide an overview of prairie as a vegetation type, its significance globally and regionally, and examine how geology, climate, and ecology have influenced vegetation patterns in the Great Plains and, more specifically, the Flint Hills. With photographs and facts, he will provide vignettes of some of the nearly 1,000 species of grasses, forbs, and woody plants that call the Flint Hills home.

Craig Freeman grew up in Waverly, Iowa. He holds a B.A. from Wartburg College and a M.S. and Ph.D. from Kansas State University. He is a research scientist at the University of Kansas, joining the staff of the Kansas Biological Survey in 1988 and the staff of the R. L. McGregor Herbarium in 1992. He has more than 20 years of botanical field experience in the Great Plains, Midwest, and Rocky Mountains, conducting research and publishing on topics in plant systematics, floristics, and prairie conservation. He is a contributing author for the Flora Of North America, Flora Of The Great Plains and An Illustrated Guide To Endangered Or Threatened Species In Kansas, and senior author of Roadside Wildflowers Of The Southern Great Plains. Dr. Freeman serves on the Executive Committee of the Flora of North America Association and on the Boards of the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Grassland Heritage Foundation, and Kansas Native Plant Society. He is a lead editor, taxon editor, and regional review coordinator for the Flora of North America project.

The Friends of Kaw Heritage, Inc. and Kansas Historical Society sponsor the Kaw Mission Councils 2008 educational program series. Free refreshments compliments of FKH. For additional information contact the Kaw Mission State Historic Site at 620-767-5410, e-mail kawmission@kshs.org. Group reservations are recommended.
Five area students earned fall semester academic honors at the University of Kansas.

Honor roll criteria vary among the university's academic units. Some schools honor the top 10 percent of students enrolled, some establish a minimum grade point average and others raise the minimum GPA for each year students are in school.

Students must complete a minimum number of credit hours to be considered for the honor roll.

Area honor students include:

**Dighton:** Jessa Kuhlman, a senior majoring in liberal arts, daughter of David and Nita Kuhlman; and Nick Weiser, a senior majoring in fine arts, son of Richard and Linda Weiser.

**Leoti:** Tyson Mullen, a pharmacy major, son of Kevin and Kathy Mullen.

**Scott City:** Megan Gechter, a senior majoring in liberal arts, daughter of Mick and Lori Gechter; and Cameron Turpin, a senior majoring in liberal arts, daughter of Cynthia Miller.
Brown County Commissioners

March 10, 2008 - Unofficial

The Board of Brown County Commissioners met in regular session with the following members present: Steve Roberts, Warren Ploeger and Glen Leitch. Also present were County Clerk Debbie Parker and Deputy County Clerk Marla Hathorn. Steve Roberts opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Steve Roberts discussed his trip to Washington DC on March 4, in support of the Rulo Bridge project. The Tri-County Alliance group met with various senators and officials.

Treasurer Cheryl Lippold displayed a new license plate which supports the fight against breast cancer. The plate may be purchased at the regular price plus a yearly donation of $50.00 to the University of Kansas Cancer Center.

Treasurer Cheryl Lippold and Register of Deeds Nellie Brockhoff requested additional pay levels be added to the County pay scale for the next budget year. The Commissioners agreed to consider the request.

Road Foremen Herb Roland, Richard Geiger and Mel Werner reported on road projects.

The March 7, 2008 month-end claim was approved as follows:

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<td>135 Capital Improvement</td>
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Buried cable permits #08-01 through #08-04 were approved and signed.

Tax change orders #07-96 through #07-104 were approved and signed.

The Commissioners conducted the annual review of the Township Reports.

Sheriff Lamar Shoemaker and Deputy Randy Mayfield reported on a head-on collision near Sabetha this morning.

Emergency Management Director Jennifer Ploeger reported the on the Brown County expenses submitted to FEMA for reimbursement during the December 2007 ice storm disaster.
Local farmer testifies at hearing on immigration reform

At a hearing in Topeka recently, local farmer, William D. Gudde, testified in support of Senate Bill 458, the Kansas Illegal Immigration Relief Act. Among those speaking for the bill, in addition to Gudde, were Texas Senator Debbie Riddle along with representatives of The American Legion, Citizens for Immigration Reform, Minute Men Civil Defense Corp., Kansans for Immigration Reform Effort, Numbers USA, the Center for Immigration Studies, private certified public accountants and a KU law professor.

According to Gudde, he invited all illegal aliens to join our culture and become educated and share the American Dream. He stressed the value of an English language education.

In addition to explaining that farming is no longer bare-handed labor, he said, “Agriculture requires educated people with computer programming skills, an understanding of labor and agricultural practices and good English language ability to fill in farm reports and work the large machinery.”

Gudde asked that the senators support the bill, “so that the people entering the United States will place value on our culture enough to want to join our culture, speak English and become educated and documented workers.”

Senate Bill 458 is an attempt to stem the tide of illegal entries into Kansas. According to those in favor of the bill, it is needed due to other states and neighboring Oklahoma, along with Arizona, passing very strong illegal immigrant laws.

“In effect, their laws make Kansas more attractive as a sanctuary state of residence for ‘illegals,’” Senator Peggy Palmer said.

Sen. Palmer is bold in her attempt to mandate use of the E-Verify system of identification for applicants in the hiring process of businesses in Kansas. In addition to helping businesses verify identification of job applicants, it would help serve as protection against penalties imposed for hiring illegal aliens. At the same time, it would penalize businesses that make no effort to verify the legal status of their employees.

“The passage of this bill,” Gudde said, “would dry up the jobs for ‘illegals’ in the state. This bill is undoubtedly opposed by those businesses which profit from a large pool of cheap undocumented laborers.”

E-Verify is also a key tool for stopping the rampant identity theft, which is now the most common crime of illegals. E-Verify is a Department of Homeland Security System and is important and effective in equipping employers with the ability to verify the legal status of a potential employee by online means.

According to the US. Citizenship and Immigration Service Verification Office, there are 398 employers in Kansas who are registered to use the E-Verify system as of Feb. 16, 2008. Enrollment in E-Verify is free to employers.

According to Gudde, most legislators believe that some law is needed to address the problems presented by illegal aliens coming into our state and it needs to be on a state level since the United States government has a selective, if non-existent, enforcement of the laws.

“This bill is an attempt to answer the need to do something about the problems illegal aliens create,” Gudde said, “in a positive and workable way.”
Getting it just right — Students enrolled in the Building Trades Program at Neodesha High School were out enjoying the warmer weather this week. These students were working on installing a handicap ramp at North Lawn Elementary School. Students are instructed by Jim Flessner and John Willard.

-Photo by RJM
Former student tells of great foundation for her career due to education

The 40th Annual Keith Hersh Scholarship Banquet was a success due to fantastic honorees, the families that support their children and those who participated in this event. Honored were the Educator of the Year, Jodi Stover, and the Volunteer of the Year, Carol Bramhall.

The banquet began in 1968 under the direction and supervision of Keith Hersh, a social studies teacher at NHS, along with many others who wanted to recognize scholarship. The Neodesha Board of Education, the Keith Hersh Scholarship Committee, and the Neodesha Chamber of Commerce now support it financially.

The speaker was a former student of the Neodesha schools, Jeanette Lozenski.

Dr. Lozenski is a graduate of the University of Kansas Medical School. She told those in attendance that the Neodesha schools provided the foundation in math and science that prepared her for her career in anesthesiology. Dr. Lozenski gave credit to the teachers who challenged her to learn for the sake of learning. She recalled when she transferred from Neodesha to another school, she was leaps and bounds ahead in her classes.

She reflected on what Neodesha meant to her as a child. She shared that Neodesha was a community of caring residents, wonderful neighbors, a faith based community and a safe community. The community provided fun activities—Easter egg hunts, fire works, summer recreation programs, and scouting.

Dr. Lozenski encouraged students “To dream your dreams. Get an education and with the support of the wonderful community of Neodesha, your dreams are possible!”
With their plaques of honor are (l-r) Carol Bramhall, Volunteer of the Year, and Jodi Stover, Educator of the Year.
Shield law would protect us all

The Salina Journal

The Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony Monday about a “shield law.”

A shield law would allow a judge to order reporters to release information only if it has been shown by “clear and convincing evidence” that the information is relevant to the controversy, can’t be obtained any other way, there’s a compelling and overriding interest for the information and it’s needed “to secure the interests of justice.”

That would make it easier for courts to balance the interests of reporters exposing corruption with the help of confidential sources and law enforcement officials wanting to uncover evidence of criminal wrongdoing, said Mike Kautsch, a University of Kansas law professor.

“This isn’t about reporters. It’s about citizens who have information that needs to be in the public discussion, but they are reluctant to provide it,” said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, who introduced the bill last year.

This is a law that would, we hope, be called upon, well, never. The Salina Journal very, very rarely uses anonymous sources.

Occasionally, readers will notice Associated Press stories quoting anonymous sources. The AP guidelines instruct reporters to “use anonymous attribution only when essential and even then provide the most specific possible identification of the source. ... The material must ... provide information of significant value to the news report ... The information must not be available except under the conditions of anonymity imposed by the source.”

We think that readers should know where the information comes from, so they are better able to judge its significance.

Having said that, we think the shield law is something long overdue in Kansas journalism. Most other states — 34 of them and the District of Columbia — have some sort of shield law.

Ninety percent of Kansas newspapers couldn’t afford to go to court to defend themselves against efforts to force information from a reporter, said Doug Anstaett, Kansas Press Association executive director.

“If police have power to indiscriminately acquire journalists’ materials, then the journalists become an arm of law enforcement,” Kautsch said. “Moreover, journalists’ sources will get a clear signal that anything they say could be discovered by law enforcement.”

Both readers and sources need to know they can trust the reporters and the media.

Let’s hope the shield law is passed on the Senate floor, and then in the House this year.
BY KEVIN FLAHERTY
THE MORNING SUN

TOPEKA — A Pittsburg business was among several businesses throughout the state to earn an award at the fifth annual Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year Awards Ceremony at the state capitol building.

The Decorum, located at 822 N. Broadway, was awarded an Emerging Business award at the ceremony by the Kansas Small Business Development Center. Owner Judy Dugan could not be reached for comment.

Each of the eight KSBDC regional centers, one of which is located at Pittsburg State University, selected at least one emerging and one existing business in their region for the award. In total, 19 Kansas small businesses were recognized with their local Kansas legislators presenting the award. Those businesses were selected from more than 2,000 business that received KSBDC services in 2007.

Front Row Sports, a Garnett business awarded as an Existing Business Tuesday, also worked with consultants at the PSU center.

According to a release accompanying the award, Dugan started up The Decorum in 2002, "enhancing the appearance of downtown."

The release also read: "The Decorum provides unique gift items and a fresh artsy look usually found in destination locations. Merchandise includes home décor and accessories, fashion accessories, jewelry, handbags, glassware, candles, keepsake gifts and more."

"Judy's talent in finding unique gift items and creating attractive displays makes shopping in her store a delight," the release went on.

Dugan started with one employee and $50,000 in start-up capital. Now with four employees, The Decorum hit $84,000 in sales for 2007.

"The PSU KSBDC provided me the assistance I requested, which allowed me to realize my goal of owning my own business," Dugan said in the release.

The ceremony came as the KSBDC celebrated its 25th anniversary. KSBDC clients create new wealth in Kansas by starting and growing businesses, creating and saving jobs, and accessing capital. Since its inception, KSBDC has consulted with more than 82,000 Kansas entrepreneurs. In addition, 82,452 Kansans have participated in 4,863 KSBDC workshops.

The Kansas Small Business Development Center Network is a statewide network of business assistance centers. The network provides free, confidential, one-on-one consulting designed to find practical solutions to business problems. The KSBDC is administered by Fort Hays State University and is a partnership with the US Small Business Administration and the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The centers are located at the following locations: Emporia State University; Fort Hays State University; Garden City Community College; Johnson County Community College; Pittsburg State University; University of Kansas; Washburn University (Washburn University in Topeka and an outreach center in Manhattan); and Wichita State University (Wichita State University in Wichita and an outreach center at Cloud County Community College in Concordia).

Two new outreach centers recently opened at Allen County Community College in Iola and Independence Community College in Independence. Those centers are a collaborative partnership with Emporia State University and Pittsburg State University. Allen County Community College and Independence Community College are part of the Southeast Kansas SYSTEM of Higher Education which also includes Coffeyville Community College, Fort Scott Community College, Labette Community College, and Neosho Community College.

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