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Republican

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You need your newspaper, and it needs you, too

As this week started, it appears more and more Kansas counties are looking to enact stay-at-home orders similar to what was adopted by Johnson and Wyandotte counties last week-end.



Travis Mounts
President
Kansas Press Association

Through various state and local orders, and through voluntary action taken by many operations, many businesses have closed their doors and cut back on their operations. Other businesses are cutting back as their customers suddenly shut their pocketbooks and wallets.

Small businesses are a key part of our communities in Kansas, from one-stop-light towns to major metropolitan areas.

Now more than ever, they need the support of their communities.

Your local newspaper is one of those businesses.

Newspapers have long been part of the fabric of the communities they serve. Journalists across the state have been scrambling to bring you the ever-changing news concerning the COVID-19 outbreak, to help make sense of the situation, and to separate fact from fiction at this time.

Newspapers bring us the community news that matters most to us. That includes school and education coverage; sports of all kinds, from middle schools and high schools all the way to the Super Bowl-champion Kansas City Chiefs; and the features stories about our friends and neighbors that people cut out and put in scrapbooks or on their refrigerators.

Now more than ever, newspapers are providing critical information to our communities.

And now more than ever, newspapers need you, too. Please consider your newspaper (and its website) for your advertising. Let them help you deliver your message to an active and loyal readership.

Please subscribe. Newspapers need to deliver readers to advertisers to survive. If your business is able, please invest in keeping your newspaper going. In many ways, it is a community asset that belongs to everybody.

Right now, newspapers are doing some of their best work and some of the most important work they have ever done.

Today we need our newspapers more than ever. And today, they need you more than ever as well.

Support local businesses during this economic crisis

Don't neglect your small, locally-owned businesses during this pandemic. There is significant pressure on citizens to stay at home to avoid the coronavirus, and rightfully so, but as a result many small businesses are suffering at levels they have never experienced.



Dan Thalmann
Washington County News

I've already heard of hours being cut for employees at some businesses and others have closed down entirely. Unfortunately, we're not even close to the worst of this downturn.

With comparisons being made between this pandemic and the Great Depression, if something doesn't change quickly, we could be looking at an economic catastrophe.

In rural Kansas, many jobs are linked to mom-and-pop type businesses. Business in a rural setting is already a struggle and these entities simply don't have the financial reserves to last very long when customers are forced to stay at home.

Abide by the call for social distancing, but when you need to eat, use your local grocery stores. If you don't want to cook, order take-out from a local restaurant or cafe - they desperately need your business.

If a federal stimulus check shows up, the entire idea is for people to spend that money to give the economy a boost. Please consider spending that money locally with locally-owned businesses.

With so many jobs in rural Kansas linked to mom-and-pop type businesses,

spending money locally will help keep businesses open and will support your family, friends and neighbors by potentially allowing them to keep their jobs.

If we don't support local businesses, some may end up closing their doors forever and we'll all end up carrying the tab on supporting our local tax base.

Please buy local.

Also, don't forget to support your church over the next few weeks. Most churches are supported by offerings given by local parishioners. When there is no church service, there is no offering plate to pass. When there is no offering, what will pay for the minister and mission, or even the more mundane things like the church building's heating or cooling bills and insurance premiums?

Opportunity in the pause

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..." - Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities



Jackie Mundt
Kansas Farm Bureau

We are a nation consumed by one issue: coronavirus. I am not writing to make light of this serious issue, merely to observe the Dickens like dramatic feel that has our world waiting with bated breath for what the next chapter will bring.

A few months ago, prior to the public health concerns our story was similar to a novel. It was the best of times. A time of prosperity with the stock market high and unemployment low, advances in technology and medicine relieving the world's ailments. The luxury of knowledge, plus material goods and foods delivered with the tap of your fingertips.

It was also the worst of time. People constantly at risk for burnout because we can't escape the constant connection electronics provide. Millennials suffering from chronic errand paralysis,

where a few small unurgent tasks nag at us for months because we just can't find the time to check them off a list. Experts voiced concerns in our children, entertained by electronics every minute of the day, never learn the creativity born of boredom, and our current culture doesn't allow many children to have the character building experiences that come from failures or not winning.

Reflecting on my life, I mostly consider it the best of times. I love my career communicating about the important work of agriculture. Marc and I are working together to build a foundation for our family through life on the farm. I volunteer much (probably too much) of my time with organizations that I believe in whole-heartedly. I am incredibly blessed in this life.

My biggest wish is often for more time. Constantly overwhelmed by the demands of my job, plus all my volunteer commitments, and eternally behind on all the everyday responsibilities like laundry and grocery shopping, I sometimes just want to hit pause.

I think many people can identify with the desire to hit the pause button so we can metaphorically get up and stretch our legs, get a snack and throw away candy wrappers. That extra moment to get healthy, feed our mind and soul, and organize our affairs. It would make ev-

erything better.

Currently, my sense of irony is excitedly exclaiming, "be careful what you wish for!" So many of the extra things in my life like volunteer obligations, organizational and social events have been temporarily halted.

The world continues to function and for many it has added responsibilities and challenges. We should all be grateful for the people who work in key sectors like medicine, public service, transportation, agriculture and food supply chain sectors who are continuing to work under less than ideal conditions.

But outside those foundational obligations, there is opportunity in this pause. Make your kids go outside so you can read Dickens. Find a way to do something good for your neighbors. Take control of your health. Give yourself the grace to be imperfect.

It won't be long before the world hits play and things return to normal. Now is your time to make a change, take control of something that has felt beyond your reach or maybe just enjoy yourself for a bit.

Find the opportunity in this pause and make the most of it.

—*"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.*

Pandemic spurs early break

Yes, it sounds a little odd to call it a Spring Break/coronavirus first adjournment of the Legislature, but that's where we are, and lawmakers

At the Rail before heading out two weeks early for that annual break prepared the state as best they could for whatever that pandemic is likely to bring within the next month ... or maybe two



Martin Hawver
Columnist

That early first adjournment saw lawmakers pass an initial budget for the remainder of this fiscal year and next fiscal year ... waiting and hoping to learn what the epidemic is going to do to the state.

This isn't just - now doesn't this sound heartless - a local flood or a drought that reduces crops or threatens the livestock industry. It's a border-to-border health/ economic emergency. Can't fix things nearly as easily as those localized disasters were dealt with. It's bigger, much bigger in the problems that it will spark. It's a stirring re-direction of legislative authority.

The focus on Medicaid expansion and a proposed constitutional amendment dealing with regulation of abortion paralyzed much of the session so far, but those issues were put aside while a bare-bones budget and several bills to respond to the pandemic and its effect on Kansas were passed, some already signed into law.

...
Before leaving town, lawmakers created a \$50 million fund from which the state budget director can ask legislative leadership for cash to deal with emergencies ... if they sign off on the expenditures ...

The Legislature does allow Gov. Laura Kelly to lead the pandemic response efforts, making the sometimes-jarring public policy decisions (closing school buildings) that are already shaking the state from border to border. But it also put a leash on her authority for some relatively strange-sounding reasons. For example, lawmakers won't allow the governor to restrict movement of people or their animals in the state, which might limit the spread of the disease but which some conservatives find heavy-handed. A breach of the constitutional issue of freedom of association, they assert.

And the gun-rights legislators also limited the governor from any restriction on traveling with guns, ammunition or explosives - and liquor - within the state. That's the good old Second Amendment issue that always goes better with a drink or two ...

Kelly's closing of schools, or at least attending classes in schoolhouses for the rest of the school year, was seen as an over-reach by some lawmakers, who being elected from districts want their local school and public health leaders to make that decision.

Well, Kelly closed down those schools - not learning by Internet or such, but school buildings. That means the whole educational process for children and the near-grownup high school students is shaken. And those kids stay home and their parents have to watch them. Probably the most notable upside - besides reducing transmission of diseases - is that the schools are now leading in efforts to make sure those students who relied on breakfast and lunches at the schoolhouse are getting them delivered to their homes, a vital public health service.

...
But ... and being practical about it, the governor's wide-sweeping executive orders during this state emergency come down to politics for some. Like the Legislature where all 40 Senate seats and all 125 House seats are up for election this August and November.

Just how much authority are legislators going to give the governor for health-necessary, economic-stability orders? Well, virtually every order which the governor issues to deal with the outbreak is going to get a review by legislative leadership, which has authorized itself to scrutinize or delay, or even overturn, those orders.

That doesn't quite put your local legislators in charge of battling the epidemic but might leave their fingerprints on restrictions on Kansans' way of life...for reasons that they may or may not have to justify when they are campaigning.

We'll see how this works out ...
—*Syndicated by Hawver News Company LLC of Topeka; Martin Hawver is publisher of Hawver's Capitol Report - to learn more about this nonpartisan statewide political news service, visit the website at www.hawvernews.com.*