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**Republican**

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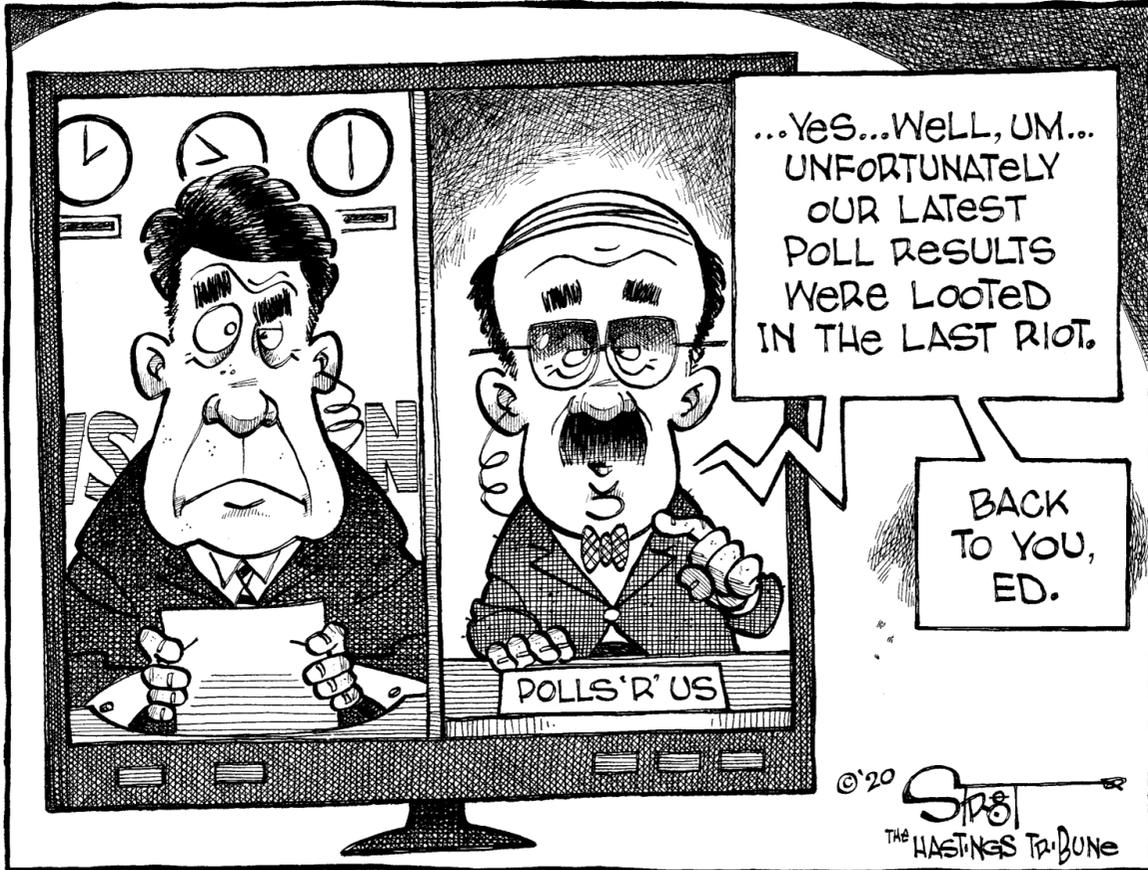
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## Cancel the cancellations – bring back our fall festivals

The evidence is becoming more and more clear all the time. COVID-19 is not the boogeyman for rural states like Kansas that we have been sold these last months.



**Dane Hicks**  
The Anderson  
County Review

It's time to recognize it for what it is according to legitimate data and get back to living, and the best place to start is to defibrillate all the heretofore canceled fall festivals and events whose red lined "save the date" corpses now litter the community calendars of Kansas towns and counties.

Event organizers need to rally ASAP and get those gatherings back on the schedule in their craft booth, BBQ sauce, car show, funnel cake and fiddle-pickin' glory, and help put our state back on its feet this fall.

Just as clear as the lack of rural COVID threat is the fact that government is not going to be able to fix the immeasurable economic and social damage its over-reactionary policies have wrought on Kansas. A solution is not coming from President Donald Trump or Governor Laura Kelly – government has finally done more financial damage than it can afford to fix. In slamming on the brakes on our schools, our businesses, our gatherings and our community economies without regard to virus dynamics and their relation to population density, government has created a

financial maelstrom that it cannot manage nor rectify.

Particularly in Kansas, Governor Kelly's one-size-fits-all approach has been particularly damaging to rural communities. It's time for the regulators and bureaucrats to get out of our way and let us fix this problem.

Ignorance and half-truth are the handmaidens to irrational fear, even without plausible and suspected political motivations circling the drain toward the Nov. 3 elections. Data finally released by the Centers for Disease Control last week noted that 94 percent of COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. were people with underlying medical conditions. In raw numbers, that means 180,000 deaths were quickly reduced to less than 11,000 nationwide, or about a third of influenza deaths the year before, when nothing was shut down or canceled. As it always is, this data reinforces that it's incumbent on people who know they're more susceptible to health threats to personally insure against them. The rest of us? Not so much.

In Kansas we watched state officials manipulate graphs to try to show counties that didn't follow Governor Kelly's mask mandate were recording higher rates of infection. A closer look at the actual numbers showed rates of infection were declining in mask counties but they'd also declined or stayed stable at lower rates in more rural, no-mask counties.

Also at issue is reporting of COVID test-

ing results. Kansas is the second lowest in the nation in COVID testing rates per population, reserving tests primarily for those who believe they've been in contact with someone who has the virus or those presenting symptoms of some kind. That's not a random sample – it's skewed toward those with a higher probability of infection. Even so, the state's 45,000 cases of COVID so far represent 1.5 percent of the state's 2.9 million residents. The 481 fatalities reflect mortality of .0001.

Figures like that back up the anecdotal evidence that keeps popping up in relatively sparsely populated areas. A Memorial Day gathering at Lake of the Ozarks in violation of state shutdown orders resulted in two cases out of untold hundreds of parties – so few the Missouri media hasn't even bothered to report the aftermath. The annual motorcycle event in Sturgis, S.D., yielded 260 cases out of some 500,000 attendees – about .052 percent.

The numbers alone are enough to support a move back toward open outdoors public events, but there's a more human element at play as well.

As Marxist scumbags riot, murder and wreak carnage in America's cities, it's more important than ever for rural residents to be reminded that we are communities of character, and that our way of life extolls in sharp contrast to the rot being foisted on our urban cousins.

So let's break out the barbeque napkins and get back at it.

## Fall flowers on the farm

As the summer begins to wind down, the fall crops filling the fields are slowly transitioning into their displays of color. For my family, the corn and soybeans that exhibited lush greens throughout the summer months have hit their peak in regard to their place on a color wheel and are beginning to dry down in time to gather the grain. While these two crops nearing harvest possess a beauty within the rich warm colors of fall, they are currently being outdone by two of our other crops.

### Insight



**Kim Baldwin**  
Kansas Farm  
Bureau

Our grain sorghum has transitioned into a sea of warm brick-red heads of grain. The berries have truly made it a photographer's dream to capture the rich, warm colors of autumn. It's no wonder many families in my area plan their Christmas card pictures around this time as the colors show a special beauty similar to the days leading up to ripened

wheat.

Earlier this summer, after wheat harvest ended, my husband Adam went back into the fields combines had just run through and planted fall crops. In our area, it's known as double-cropping. When my husband double-crops, he generally plants either soybeans or grain sorghum to be harvested this fall. This year, however, he added another crop into the double-cropping plan: sunflowers! And boy, oh, boy are they showcasing their fall beauty right now.

This is the first year since I've lived in Kansas sunflowers have been planted anywhere on our farm. It's taken 10 years for me to experience the anticipation and excitement associated with a field of sunflowers blooming.

For weeks I have stopped by this field to see how close the crop was to blooming. For days I have peaked at the sunflower heads to see if I could identify hints of yellow appearing. This crop has been a definite tease for me. There have been days I have wondered if the flower heads would

ever bloom. In fact, I have caught myself talking to this field aloud asking things like, "Are you guys ever going to bloom this year?"

But overnight, the field of green plants have now blossomed into a bright and wonderful yellow that absolutely, without a doubt catches one's attention. These sunflowers have become the belle of the ball this fall.

I can't help but stop my car and get out to walk into the field of these "sunnies." It's as if you are surrounded by thousands of smiles that instantly brighten your day.

I know these beautiful blooms are temporary and will soon begin to dry down, but I will enjoy these fall flowers in all of their beauty for the time they have. Yes, while they only showcase their welcoming warmth for all to enjoy for a brief period, I will remember the magic and beauty of this crop long after their colors fade.

—*"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.*

## Off to school?

Teacher morale is at its lowest point since the pandemic began, according to data reported from the Education Week Research Center. It appears that about half of the nation's schools have at least some students returning to classrooms and about 90 percent of districts are requiring teachers to wear face coverings. Reports indicate that elementary students are adapting well, wearing their masks without complaint and often with enthusiasm. They are eagerly washing their hands too.

### Education Frontlines



**John Schrock**  
Educator

But for teachers, speaking through a mask makes having a "teacher's voice" particularly important.

Many elementary teachers are also using more gestures. Many teachers naturally use gestures and we often joke that they would go silent if they had to sit on their hands. But good teachers realize that we all converse with our hands and our eyes and our body posture. We have innate or unschooled gestures that are "homesigns" as described by University of Chicago Professor Susan Goldin-Meadow. She saw how a deaf child who had not learned sign language nevertheless used richly meaningful gestures that were natural and understandable.

Homesign gestures are nouns and verbs

and possess the "universal properties of language." Sometimes you see a person walking alone but speaking into a cell phone and gesturing to a listener who will never see it. This is "co-speech gesturing" that we naturally provide even if our listener cannot see it. When they can, it adds visual richness.

Teachers also realize "When we are excited, our students are excited." And it comes as much from our visual expression as from our speech. This is the richness of face-to-face classroom communication. But you have to be in the presence of the speaker. Going through media dampens students' perception.

See **Schrock**, Page 6

## Closing deals

While most Kansans were looking forward to the three-day Labor Day weekend, a small group of legislators last week in a quiet committee room on the 5th floor of the Statehouse moved forward with a plan to spend \$5 million to bring nearly 2,500 new jobs to Kansas.

### At the Rail



**Martin Hawver**  
Columnist

Those new jobs, and new buildings and such – and the taxes that will be paid by those businesses and their workers – are what fuel the Kansas economy that makes us all more prosperous.

That meeting? It was the Legislative Budget Committee, and it approved and will now urge the Legislative Coordinating Council to send \$5 million in coronavirus recovery funds to the Kansas Department of Commerce to close deals that will bring \$243 million of investment and construction and those jobs which are expected to pay an average of \$48,000 a year to the state.

Not a bad investment, is it? Kansas Secretary of Commerce David Toland told the panel that his agency is about out of money in its Job Creation Fund, which it uses to lure businesses and their positive effect on the Kansas economy to the state.

Most of us don't think about the Department of Commerce much, and there are no support groups or GoFundMe accounts that provide the agency with the last few bucks, the little incidental costs to locating a business in Kansas, that close deals for new development and jobs.

That \$5 million will help the state close those deals and provide jobs across the state. Mostly in central and eastern Kansas, though one deal that is in the air is in western Kansas. Nope, Toland isn't naming those close-to-done deals for fear of competition from other states which also want new jobs and businesses, but they are getting close.

And, Toland said, Commerce access to that closing-the-deal money adds to the near sudden increase in interest by many companies to move facilities to Kansas, partly for its center-of-the-nation location and highway system which make the state a convenient and economic place to put down a plant or warehouse for national marketing.

Oh, and there are also those smart, reliable, and dedicated workers – that would be Kansans – who populate the state.

Now, the Legislature has been a little protective of the money it has appropriated to itself for response to wide ranges of COVID-19 effects, such as assistance to existing businesses struck by the pandemic, job losses, and the need to generate more jobs for Kansans.

Seem like a good use for the legislature's rebuild-the-economy and protect Kansans money, doesn't it?

Toland said that Kansas now has eco-devo prospectors on both coasts to urge businesses to relocate here. The nature of American commerce has changed through the pandemic with more online shopping that can be served from relatively low-cost mid-continent facilities. It's the change from being a "fly over" state to one that has economic advantages for a wide range of companies for which Kansas can be a money-saver and profit-boosting place to put a business.

It's just that little Job Creation Fund that can provide the services or few additional bucks to close those deals, which is where Toland and most Kansans want us to be.

Look for the Legislature to OK the money, and then we'll see just what new businesses are coming to the state ... and whether it means the kids can find work close to home instead of moving to the coast ...

—*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.*