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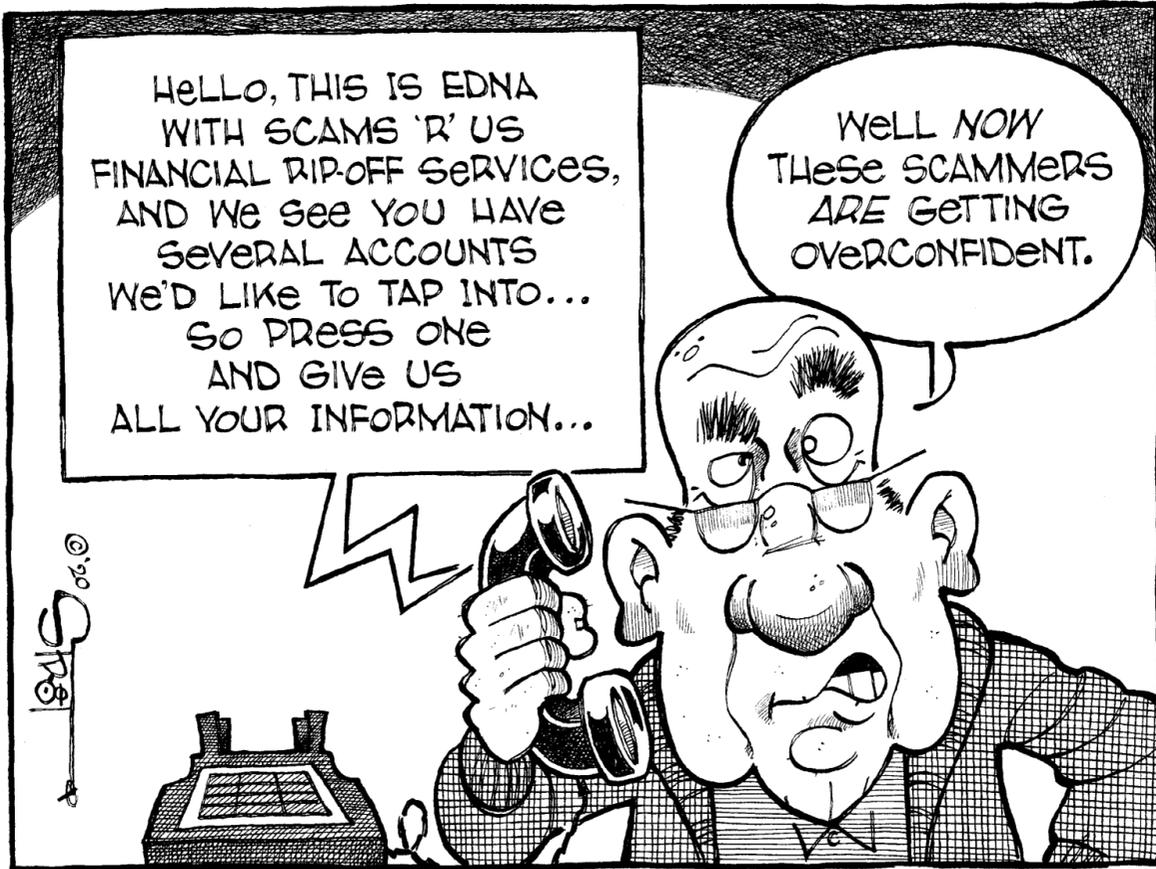
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Falling back in the fall

Don't blame Benjamin Franklin, but he was among the first to value what we today know as Daylight Savings Time (DST). He was 78 years old and serving in 1784 in Paris as the U.S. ambassador.

Education Frontlines



John Schrock
Educator

The room attendant who closed the blinds at night, but failed to do so. Franklin woke up to the sun brightly lighting his room. He checked his clock and it was only six o'clock in the morning. Everybody was generally asleep for another several hours. And that got him thinking about all of the wasted daylight time.

If the French arose with the sun, they could complete their work and return home to finish the day earlier. That meant that they would also go to bed earlier, and that saved candle-power. And candles were not free. Ben calculated the number of households in France and the number of nights between March 20 and September 20. The annual cost of the wax and tallow per hour saved was equivalent to \$200 million today! —Probably an overestimate, but significant. This history is part of the research David Prerau compiles in "Seize the Daylight: The Curious and Contentions Story of Daylight Saving Time."

However, action would not be taken until a hardworking housebuilder named William Willett managed to get members of the British Parliament to introduce his

DST bill in 1908. Despite support from a young Churchill who promoted an extra yawn in the morning and an extra snooze at night, Willett failed for several years to get daylight savings time adopted.

World War I changed the dynamic. Sleeping through the early morning hours and requiring energy to fuel lights after dark not only constrained working hours but also wasted fuel to generate nighttime lighting. Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II used his emergency powers to command daylight savings time as a wartime measure with penalties for any business that tried to reschedule out of it. Britain saw the savings, stopped bickering and adopted the DST by a vote of 170 to 2.

War was also the impetus for America adopting DST. Most farmers objected because their animals would ignore the change. The railroad did not want to reset 1,698,818 clocks and watches that kept the trains running on time. But it was calculated that DST would provide 910 million hours for home gardening annually, vegetables that would substitute at home for meat needed to feed a million soldiers for six months. War is a powerful argument and daylight savings was adopted in the U.S. on March 15, 1918. But the large farm lobby got DST repealed even before World War I ended.

A few states kept DST as a local option through the Depression. But World War II brought back DST, again to save energy. However, the proportion of the farm population has dramatically shrunk today. And meanwhile, other businesses were finding

great benefits from the extra daylight. The golf industry saw increases of \$200 million annually. The barbecue grill industry claimed an extra \$100 million in annual equipment and charcoal sales. The candy industry got President George W. Bush to extend the duration by four more weeks to include Halloween.

Meanwhile, psychiatrists argued on either side. Some point out that our natural circadian rhythms are set while others believed the extra hours of sunlight helped fight Seasonal Affective Disorders (SAD). More activity during sunlight might reduce car accidents or cut crime. We produce more Vitamin D when we are exposed to more sunlight. But others just don't like having to change the clock twice a year.

And times change. The cost of nighttime lighting is now reduced with the use of LEDs. But with a warming climate, being active during more of the daytime may increase air conditioning usage which is a greater energy hog.

So far, over 30 states have legislation pending to make DST permanent. Eight states have halted any springing forward, thus keeping that hour of sleep in spring. Changing DST is not a national priority. And the issue is complicated. It is a problem for the states in the mid-latitudes. If you live in Hawaii nearer the equator, the changes in light-dark are minor throughout the year. But at the poles, there can be months of continuous nighttime and then daylight. And then DST is no solution.

It is a problem you might need to sleep on ... for one extra hour now.

Buyers beware when making online purchases

Kansans can attest that the pandemic has disrupted every aspect of daily life in 2020, from how we work, learn and even shop. As a society, we have steadily been embracing the world of online commerce because of the convenience of shopping from home, avoiding the crowds and comparison shopping.

Consumer Corner



Derek Schmidt
Attorney General

With more people conducting their transactions online, either by computer or smartphone, the risks of online shopping have grown exponentially. Scammers are taking advantage of the fear of shopping at traditional brick and mortar stores and are finding more and more creative ways to exploit vulnerabilities and get into our wallets as well. According to a Federal Trade Commission release earlier this month, consumers reported losing almost \$117 million during the first six months of 2020 to scams that started on social media, for example, including when consumers sent money but didn't receive the goods as advertised.

Here are some helpful tips to keep you, your money and your personal information safe when buying online as the pan-

demic continues and the holiday shopping season begins:

- Check out the seller. Make sure the website you're buying from is a trusted, reputable seller. Today's technology has made it easy for scammers to set up fake online stores, selling merchandise that may not even exist. If you're considering buying from a website you've never used before, do a search for that website's name and check their reviews on other trusted sites. Do not rely on the reviews on seller's site, as these could be just as fake as the product they are selling.
- Learn about the product. Once you've identified a reputable website to make your purchase, make sure you know the details about the item you're purchasing. You might get a great deal buying something used, but be sure to get a detailed description of the item's condition. If new products are being sold at prices that sound too good to be true, this could be an indication that the item is a counterfeit or knock-off.
- Review the terms. Be sure you understand the seller's return and refund policy, shipping and handling charges or any other unusual terms or conditions of the sale. If shopping on a social media site, be sure to check the privacy settings and limit what you share publicly.
- Make sure the site is secure. Before entering any payment information, be sure the site you're using is secure. You can check this by looking at the address bar in your web browser. Many browsers display a lock icon to indicate the site is secure. You can also check the site's URL by making sure it begins with https, not just http. This ensures that your personal information, including your contact information and credit card numbers are sent through an encrypted connection and not intercepted by hackers.
- Guard your personal information. Legitimate online businesses do not need you to hand over your date of birth or social security number.
- Pay with a credit card. A red flag for a fraudulent transaction is one that asks you to wire payment. The safest way to pay for online transactions is through a credit card, which provides you the ability to dispute fraudulent charges.
- Save your receipts. Keep paper or electronic copies of receipts for all of your online purchases. Save them at least as long as the allowed return period, or if the item contains a warranty, as long as that warranty is valid.

If you wish to file a complaint about an online transaction or any other scams please contact our office at 1-800-432-2310 or online at www.InYourCornerKansas.org.

Cold Weather Rule in effect

TOPEKA — The Cold Weather Rule, designed to help Kansans who are behind on their utility payments avoid disconnection during the winter months, began on Nov. 1 and remain in effect through March 31.

While the Cold Weather Rule is in effect, utility companies cannot disconnect a customer's service when local temperatures are forecast to drop below 35 degrees within the following 48-hour period. The Kansas Corporation Commission, the agency that regulates public utilities in the state, implemented the rule in 1983 to prevent utility companies from disconnecting a customer's natural gas or electric service

during periods of extreme cold. The Cold Weather Rule also requires utility companies to offer a 12-month payment plan to allow consumers to maintain or re-establish service. Any residential customer with a past due balance will qualify for payment arrangements; however, it is the customer's responsibility to contact their gas or electric company to make those arrangements.

Payment plan terms to maintain or restore service require that customers agree to pay 1/12th of the total amount owed, 1/12th of the current bill, the full amount of any disconnection or reconnection fee,

plus any applicable deposit to the utility. The remaining balance must be paid in equal payments over the next 11 months, in addition to the current monthly bill.

The Cold Weather Rule applies only to residential customers of electric and natural gas utility companies under the KCC's jurisdiction. More information about the Cold Weather Rule is available on the Commission's website (<http://www.kcc.ks.gov/consumer-information/cold-weather-rule>). Kansans may also contact their local utility company or the KCC's Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection at (800) 662-0027.

Anticipating normalcy

Fall harvest has come to a screeching halt for my family. We have had some minor issues that have slowed us down, but those issues are always expected during the marathon known as fall harvest. We began back in August picking corn. Since then, we have transitioned to popcorn followed by soybeans followed by sorghum with wheat sowing sprinkled into the mix starting in late September.

Insight



Kim Baldwin
Kansas Farm Bureau

And now here we are in November. I can always begin to see the light at the end of the proverbial fall harvest tunnel when we start cutting sorghum. Once we move into our sorghum fields, I know we are getting closer to being done with harvest. We are closer to being done eating sandwiches in the field. Closer to putting fewer miles on my vehicle. Closer to having regular grocery bills for a family of four instead of for a harvest crew. Closer to having my husband home at night to help with bedtime routines. Closer to returning to order and normalcy.

When we start harvesting the sorghum, it's as if a switch is flipped in my mind. It happens every year. For so many months before the sorghum harvest, I try to stay laser focused on the tasks at hand that need to be done on a day-by-day basis. I do what I can to help the crew stay as efficient as possible. I put my head down and keep moving forward while trying to preserve as much of a routine as possible for the kids. But by the time sorghum harvest rolls around, my focus wears off, and I begin envisioning our anticipated "downtime" once harvest wraps up. I am ready to get the crop in and return to normalcy with my family.

However, sometimes Mother Nature has other plans. Case in point — 2020. The recent change of weather has completely shut down our harvest efforts. We were running full-steam ahead, but our late October ice and snow has made it impossible to get the machines into fields. It's simply too wet. My husband half-jokingly stated we should be done with harvest by Christmas now.

Wait, what? In the 10 years I've been part of this farm, the latest we have ever gone with fall harvest is the day before Thanksgiving. I'd like to aim for the eve of Thanksgiving this year if possible. But I realize we very well could be harvesting into December. After all, we still have the sunflower crop to harvest after we get done with the sorghum.

One silver lining to harvest being delayed because of weather is my husband has been home during the evenings. My family has been able to eat warm meals at the kitchen table together. We've cuddled on the couch with the kids to enjoy a family movie night. We've played board games in the living room before bedtimes. It's a rare occurrence to have him join us at home in the evenings during fall harvest, but it's one we truly embrace when we get the sweet opportunity.

I know this pause in harvest will soon end, and I also know we will eventually get all of the crops out of the fields. Even though it's less than ideal — and regardless of my desire to get harvest done as soon as possible — there is a possibility that we will harvest clear into late December. I'll continue to remind myself that whenever we officially finish our fall harvest it will still allow my little farm family some much anticipated normalcy before spring planting begins and another busy season rolls around.

— "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.