

# THE KANSAS PUBLISHER



OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE KANSAS PRESS ASSOCIATION FEB. 10, 2016

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Dan Thalmann, immediate past president of KPA, discusses the veil of secrecy that exists in Topeka around voting records, hearings.

## KPA CALENDAR

### MARCH 13-19

Sunshine Week 2016 is a national initiative to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information.

### APRIL 22-23

Kansas Press Association annual convention, Overland Park DoubleTree Hotel.

### SEPT. 22-24

National Newspaper Association 130th annual Convention & Trade Show, Franklin, Tenn.



Members of the Kansas Press Association were recognized last week by Kansas Senate President

Susan Wagle. Earlier, attendees watched debate in the House and then had lunch with legislators.

## Members: time well-spent at Statehouse

More than 50 Kansas Press Association members gathered in Topeka last week for KPA Day at the Statehouse.

First, attendees heard a legislative update from KPA executive director Doug Anstaett and Rich Gannon, director of governmental affairs.

Members were encouraged to develop relationships with their local legislators so that when there is a need for assistance on legislation, the ice already has been broken.

Following the orientation, members moved about the Capitol calling on legislators. Some hadn't been in Topeka since the major renovation of the Statehouse was completed a few years ago.

In the late morning, KPA members gathered in the House of Representatives to hear resolutions and debate on a few bills. One of those bills, which went failed to attain the required constitutional majority, would have placed a constitutional amendment question about the selection process for Kansas Supreme Court justices on the November ballot.

Following lunch with a number of legislators from both houses, members were introduced in the Kansas Senate.

"We believe the day was well-spent," said Emily

See STATEHOUSE on Page 3

## Students step up with 'It Can Wait' entries

The cooperative effort between Kansas Press Association newspapers and AT&T to encourage students in Kansas to write about the dangers of texting while driving has resulted already in about 85 entries in the competition.

Entries continue to arrive every day at KPA. "Some schools have made this a class project," said Doug Anstaett, KPA executive director. "Many of the entries obviously were written for English classes, because the footnotes describing where the writers found research, statistics or other information

for the essays are quite detailed."

Contest entries will continue to be accepted through Feb. 28, when judging will begin.

The essays are designed to endorse the AT&T national effort called "It Can Wait," which encourages young people to sign a pledge to not use electronic devices to text or send other messages while driving.

One winner will be chosen from middle school and one from high school in early March. The winners also will be recognized at the KPA annual convention in April.

# Facing a tough newspaper call? Seek feedback before you decide

Newspapers routinely face challenging decisions. Should we run this photo? Should we accept this ad? Should we report on every monthly meeting of a local activist group?

An editors' hotline regularly raises these and many other issues. As you might expect, the opinions vary widely depending on the circumstances and an editor's perspective. Consensus is frequently reached through a thread of e-mails – and, more often than not, a healthy minority opinion is delivered, too. That shouldn't surprise. There rarely is a one-size-fits-all response.

The discussions are always enlightening, forcing everyone to rethink positions and crystallize their arguments.

The hotline underscores one of the most important steps for editors when setting policies for ethical and challenging circumstances: Have a conversation with as many people as possible; you have more resources than you might realize. For example:

**Quiz your staff:**  
Whether you have a newsroom of two or 10, get the take of other reporters. Two opinions are always better than one.

**Go beyond the newsroom:** Your newspaper family – your co-workers in all departments

– often represents a cross-section of the community. Their feedback is as valuable as the instincts of your reporters.

**Connect with the community:** Most editors have their “kitchen cabinet” – key individuals in the community that you connect with on a regular basis. As time permits, seek their perspectives. Who you connect with may well vary with the specific issue at hand.

**Consult your peers:** Short of weighing in on an editors' hotline, take the pulse of individuals you respect in the business. They have all had their share of difficult decisions and are usually more than willing to be a sounding board.

**Know your legal rights:** State and federal laws dictate what information you can access, which can be a key ingredient in your decision. Many state press associations have a legal hotline; you should have the number memorized.

**Setting policies for tackling the tough and challenging stories involves three steps:**  
Develop the policy. Implement the policy.

Explain the policy. The more effort you put in the process, the more dividends you'll reap for your newspaper and your readers.

Talk with staff. Talk with community members. They may not all tell you what you want to hear, or even agree with your final decision, but you'll earn their respect for seeking their opinions.

We also must be realistic. Many decisions must be made on the spur of the moment and on deadline. Editors don't always have the time or luxury to seek the feedback of others.

That said, newsrooms should regularly set aside time to brainstorm how to approach those challenging decisions that inevitably will come your way. Do you report suicides? What's your approach to coverage of sexual abuse charges and the

subsequent trial? Do you identify high school athletes missing a contest due to violations of high school league or school district rules? Do you publish photos of fatal accident scenes?

Do you accept ads that many readers may view as offensive?

Do you publish all letters to the editor?

In the end, the editor makes the final call. There rarely is an absolute “yes” or “no” on what to do. As is frequently the case when facing ethical decisions, there often is more

gray than black or white.

That's all the more reason that editors should take the final step in setting policies: Explain your decision in a column. Most important, your column should not try to convince readers that you made the “right” call. Rather, you should outline what went into the decision – assuring them that you put serious thought and time into how to approach the sensitive circumstance.

**Jim Pumarlo** writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He is author of “Journalism Primer: A Guide to Community News Coverage,” “Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage” and “Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in Small-Town Newspapers.” He can be reached at [www.pumarlo.com](http://www.pumarlo.com) and welcomes comments and questions at [jim@pumarlo.com](mailto:jim@pumarlo.com).



**Jim Pumarlo**

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# Sales reps: say ‘I Do’ to the creative process

Advertising is a business which is fueled by creativity. Once you get a handle on how to get ideas – ideas that work – you’ll have a big advantage over the competition.

No matter how much you sell, it all comes down to how much your ads will sell. When the ads get results, your advertisers will



**John Foust**

be happy. And when they’re happy, they’ll keep running ads.

If you’ve ever recycled old ideas because you couldn’t think of anything better, maybe it’s time for a new approach. One way to generate ideas is to look elsewhere for a spark. For example, my wife and I recently went to a wedding. Along the

way, she mentioned the old British rhyme about things that a bride is supposed to wear: “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.” A saying as simple as that could provide the starting point for a new advertising idea. Let’s take a look:

Something old: Think history. If an advertiser has been in business for a number of years, that can give you plenty of inspiration. You can use vintage photographs from their files to demonstrate a sense of tradition and stability. You can feature a side-by-side com-

parison of their first building and their current building. (“Look how we’ve grown. And it’s all because we have a commitment to our customers.”) You can even feature a quote from the company’s founder – with a tie-in to their continuing business philosophy.

Something new: Although the words “new and improved” have become an advertising cliché, the general concept has been around for a long time, because it is effective. Consumers like newness – as long as it’s relevant.

What is new with your advertisers? Do they have new products? Have new features been added to old products? Do they have new services? New locations? New hours of operation? Is there new management?

If you use this technique, be sure to show how the new things are better than the old ones. Emphasize benefits.

Something borrowed: Why not find someone else to speak for your advertiser? A testimonial from a real life customer can be a powerful advertising message.

A testimonial adds a couple of important elements to an ad campaign. First, by featuring someone who represents the advertiser’s target audience, a testimonial can help con-

sumers identify with the company. Second, a customer can say things that wouldn’t be believed if the advertiser said those same things. (“Their widgets are great” has more weight than “Our widgets are great.”)

Something blue: Consumers get the blues. They have problems that need solving. Can your advertiser reduce energy bills? Or help improve students’ grades? Or take the hassle out of building a custom home? Show people how your advertiser can solve a specific problem, and they will pay attention to the message.

This approach to creativity can be seen as a two-step process. First,

get inside information about your advertisers, their products, their services and their customers. Then look for idea sparks from outside sources.

*John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information at [jfoust@mindspring.com](mailto:jfoust@mindspring.com).*

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## Statehouse

Continued from Page 1

Bradbury, director of member services, who organized the agenda for the day. “Feedback from attendees was excellent. We picked up some new ideas and are already thinking about how to improve next year’s program.”

“We wanted to make sure members know how important it is for them to be in contact

with their legislators when they’re back home,” Gannon said. “There is no better assistance you can provide Doug and me than to go one-on-one with your legislators on the issues that are important to you. Then, when we try to influence their thinking in Topeka, they’re aware of our issues.”

While 50 was a solid number, “we’d like to have at least 75 members to really make a statement to legislators,” Anstaett said. “They do respond to feedback from constituents. They must hear from us directly.”



### THIS MONTH’S QUESTION

Q. I’ve got an idea for a story for the KU Statehouse Wire Service. How do I get it to the right person.

A. You can either send it to Doug Anstaett at [danstaett@kspress.com](mailto:danstaett@kspress.com) or directly to the faculty adviser, Barbara Barnett at [barnettb@ku.edu](mailto:barnettb@ku.edu). The Kansas Newspaper Foundation underwrites the program, so all the content is free to Kansas Press Association members. Here’s how to access the information. Click on the link: <https://wire.journalism.ku.edu/login.php?url=%2F&nocookies=true>. KPA members can use this sign-in: Username: kuwire Password: kuwire

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# She likes her state senator, but keeps eyes open

While I'm all in favor of establishing better relationships with my elected representatives, this doesn't mean we're sudden bedfellows.

For those of you who had John Bremner as an editing professor, his adage, "If your mother says she loves you, check it out," comes to mind.

The media, after all, is the Fourth Estate, providing the necessary oversight to the other three.

On a personal level I like my state senator, Caryn Tyson. She's warm and caring and quick to smile. She attends lots of events down our way.

Philosophically, however, we diverge. Which I can respect, as long as she stays honest.

In regards to schools, Sen. Tyson is

against increasing their funding.

OK.

But then in a recent public forum she said Kansas has indeed upped their funding.

"Just look at their budgets," she says.

The glaring omission, of course, is the pass through for the state's retirement program, Special Education services, and other such programs, that previous to this year came directly from state coffers.

So, yes, my local school district's budget is up an enormous \$3.5 million, but they won't see a dime of it.

So every time Tyson makes such comments, the Register takes her to the mats.

I also don't publish her weekly updates because I don't consider them news.

In one such recent posting, she lauded Gov. Sam Brownback's executive order to

ban Syrian refugees from locating in Kansas, adding, "We cannot allow terrorists to take advantage of our compassion."

I wouldn't run that in my paper even if it were a paid advertisement, which is how Scott Stanford, general manager of the Lawrence Journal-World, treats all updates from his legislators.

We are not in the business to be their voice box.

THE BEST relationship you can have with your elected officials is one of respect.

You earn that by seeking out the truth.

Sen. Tyson and I will probably never be

best buds.

I can live with that.

*Susan Lynn is editor and publisher of The Iola Register and 2015-16 president of the Kansas Press Association.*



Susan Lynn

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## NAMES IN THE NEWS

**Larry Phillips**, managing editor of The Leader & Times in Liberal, has retired after 15 years with the newspaper. A reception was held Jan. 28. While there, his newspaper was named the sweepstakes award winner three times.

**Susan Cantrell** has been named vice president of sales and marketing for the Topeka Capital-Journal. She previously worked for Harris Enterprises and the Lawrence Journal-World. She is a graduate of the University of Kansas. She and her husband have two sons.

**Jeanne Sharp** has been named director of advertising for The Hutchinson News. She has

### KU newspaper staffers sue over funding cuts

University of Kansas Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little and Provost for Student Affairs Tammara Durham have been sued by current and former editors of The University Daily Kansan for funding cuts that caused the newspaper to have to eliminate a dozen staff positions.

The students claim a funding cut of \$45,000 a year was retaliation for editorials published calling for reforms of the Student Senate election process.

Kansan editors are asking the court to declare the funding decision violated the state and federal constitutions.

been editor and publisher of The Ottawa Herald since 2000. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas and a master's degree from Ottawa University. She and her husband have two adult children.

**Veronica Wallmeyer** is the new face of the St. Marys Star. She has five children. She is also taking classes at Washburn University toward a nursing degree and is a shift manager at a local restaurant.

**Melanie Johnson** has been named an integrated marketing consultant at the Kansas City Business Journal. She has 10 years of media experience in the Kansas City area.

**Amber Jackson, Lori Jackson and Lori Cuellar** of the Kansas Press Association staff will travel to the South Dakota Newspaper Association in Brookings later this week to train on a new advertising placement system the Kansas Press Association has adopted. The system was created by SDNA specifically for newspaper press associations and will eventually allow quicker turnarounds on advertising bids.

**Deanna Evans** is the new senior editor for the Coffeyville Journal. She previously worked in Bartlesville. She has 16 years' experience. She is the mother of two adult children and a 9-year-old.

### JANUARY KDAN, KCAN WINNERS

The following newspapers sold either direct placement, Kansas Display Ad Network, Kansas Classified Ad Network or out-of-state network ads in January.

Remember, if you sell a KDAN or KCAN, which run in almost 150 Kansas newspapers, you keep \$825 for a 2x4 or 1x8 and \$400 for a 2x2 or 1x4.

Sell an ad outside of Kansas (SDAN or SCAN) or do direct placement in other papers and keep half the commission allowed to KPA.

Also, tell your potential clients their ad will have a readership of approximately 1 million with either program.

- Anderson County Review sold two ads for \$1,650 in profit.
- GateHouse Media sold five ads for a \$900 profit; the Anthony Republican sold two ads for \$300 profit; the Oberlin Herald sold one ad for \$150 profit.
- The Hays Daily News placed 36 ads in other Kansas newspapers and got half the KPA commission for \$619.50 profit.



# KPA hosts Day at the Statehouse



*(Counterclockwise from top) Wichita Eagle representatives including Publisher Roy Heatherly (right) and Executive Editor Sherry Chisenhall have lunch with members of their local delegation; KPA members Beth Day, Shannon Fritz and Andy Taylor (back to camera) talk shop; the KPA's Doug Anstaett and Rich Gannon discuss the 2016 legislative agenda and how critical it is for members to develop relationships with their legislators; KPA members including Josh Umholtz and Amanda Williams (front right) of the Independence Daily Reporter gather in the balcony at the Kansas House.*





## MARKETPLACE

### NEWS

**DEPUTY EDITOR** — The Salina Journal is seeking an experienced journalist with strong news judgment and editing skills to lead its daily newsroom operations as deputy editor. The vacancy is being created by virtue of a retirement, and promotion from within. The successful candidate will coordinate the production of news for print, online and social media platforms. Candidates should possess: an ability to identify and deliver the best product for our print, digital and social media customers; sharp editing skills that boast adherence to deadline, accuracy, clarity, style and potential legal problems; a willingness, and adept hand, at coaching reporters as they experiment with innovative ways of delivering news content, and to manage and lead a design desk; experienced communication and conflict resolution skills, and the ability to deal professionally with the public; and solid organizational skills.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in journalism or related field preferred. Candidates should send their resume and a cover letter to: Sharon Montague, Deputy Editor, Box 740, Salina, KS 67402-0740 or to [smontague@salina.com](mailto:smontague@salina.com). (1-11)

**REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER** — A five-day-a-week newspaper is seeking an energetic reporter/photographer who can tell great stories. You will get a well rounded experience here. PO Box 268, Newton, KS, 67114. (12-16)

**COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST** — Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., (KEC) is currently seeking a communications specialist. The selected individual will be responsible for designing publications, writing, and advertising sales. Additionally, the individual will assist with coordination of youth programs and other activities. Required qualifications include a Bachelor's Degree in Communications or related field, and experience working with Adobe InDesign, AP Styleguide. To apply, click: <https://cbsks.catson.com/careers/index.php?m=portal&a=details&jobOrderID=6350982>

**COPY EDITOR** — The Topeka Capital Journal is seeking a copy editor. The right candidate will be a strong communicator and skilled wordsmith with an eye for cutting-edge design. Apply <http://tinyurl.com/morrisapp>. Questions call Kent at (785) 295-5655. (10-15)

**REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER** — A five-day-a-week newspaper is seeking an energetic reporter/photographer who can tell great stories and make local government meetings and issues interesting. PO Box 268, Newton, KS, 67114. (10-14)

**REPORTER** — The Wichita Business Journal is seeking a reporter who is able to marry strong traditional journalism skills with online and social media know-how. Whatever the platform, reporters in our shop produce content — original and curated — that is accompanied by perspective and context. Primary Responsibilities: Own the beat audience. Own the beat conversation. Build source network relentlessly. Contribute three to five online posts per day. Contribute 1 people and one enterprise story to the weekly print paper. Develop and curate a reporter page in the print paper each week, comprised of information, highlights and data gathered and reported on throughout the week. Meet or exceed goals relating to audience-engagement. Contact Editor Bill Roy at 316-266-6184 or [broy@bizjournals.com](mailto:broy@bizjournals.com). (10-5)

**DIGITAL JOURNALIST** — The Wichita Business Journal is looking for a digital journalist who is passionate about growing audience using compelling content, strategic social media techniques and analytics at an award-winning operation that is part of a great company. Our digital editor is in charge of all the WBJ's digital efforts, from posting blogs to engaging with readers using social media and creating strategies for delivering content. Interested? Check out more information here: <http://acbj.com/careers/detail/acbj.1611> (7-13)

**FREELANCER** — Journalist/writer with experience in breaking/hard news, features and news narrative looking for freelance work. Journalism degree plus 20 years experience. Reply to [JMcdaniel19714@gmail.com](mailto:JMcdaniel19714@gmail.com). (5/20)

**MANAGING EDITOR** for small daily on High Plains, on I-70. Are you ready to step up? This person will lead a full-time staff of three, plus part-timers, plan and track news coverage, coordinate photo and stories, design and lay out pages, cover some meetings and write some stories, deal with public and online/Facebook pages, generally run the newsroom. Journalism degree preferred, at least two years' newspaper experience. This is a good paper, hoping to get better. Apply to Sharon Friedlander, publisher, [sfriedlander@nwkansas.com](mailto:sfriedlander@nwkansas.com), and Steve Haynes [steve.haynes@nwkansas.com](mailto:steve.haynes@nwkansas.com). Colby Free Press/Nor'West Newspapers, Colby, Kan. (785) 462-3963. EOE m/f/h/v (4-30)

**REPORTER/NEWS EDITOR** for award-winning weekly on High Plains. Are you up to the challenge of continuing a strong tradition? Can you do it all? Do you want to learn the news business? This person will plan news coverage, coordinate the work of part-time staff, cover stories and features, take photos, design and lay out pages, post to web pages and Facebook. Journalism degree or some newspaper experi-

ence preferred. Will consider two years-plus experience. Pay commensurate with ability and experience. Competitive pay, benefits, location in Northwest Kansas. Apply to [steve.haynes@nwkansas.com](mailto:steve.haynes@nwkansas.com) and [dpaxton@nwkansas.com](mailto:dpaxton@nwkansas.com). The Norton Telegram/Nor'West Newspapers, Oberlin, Kan. (785) 475-2206. EOE m/f/h/v (4-30)

**MANAGING EDITOR** — The Pittsburg Morning Sun is looking for an editor. We're looking for a hands-on managing editor who can lead by example and motivate a strong news team. Please send a cover letter, resume: [mguthrie@gatehousemedia.com](mailto:mguthrie@gatehousemedia.com).

**ENTERPRISING** community journalist needed at award-winning weeklies near resort lakes. Great place to start. Fully paid benefits. Details at <http://marionrecord.com/job/>

### ADVERTISING

**ADVERTISING SALES** — Accepting resumes for a self-motivated, goal driven individual to join an award winning sales team. Must have excellent written and oral communication skills. Established client base with the opportunity to develop new clients for both print and on-line business will be provided. Competitive pay and generous benefit package. Current driver's license and reliable car required. Send resume and cover letter to Mary Karst at [maryk\\_ads@dailynews.net](mailto:maryk_ads@dailynews.net) or mail to The Hays Daily News, P.O. Box 857, Hays, KS 67601.

### CIRCULATION

**CIRCULATION SALES MANAGER** — Looking to hire a Circulation Sales Manager responsible for growing digital and print circulation by retaining current customers, gaining new customers, and improving single copy sales of the newspaper. Send resumes to [kevin.gunn@tulsaworld.com](mailto:kevin.gunn@tulsaworld.com). (11-12)

### NEWSPAPERS FOR SALE

Respected 128-year-old weekly newspaper in Southwest Kansas; only newspaper in the county. Owner moving out of state. Steady subscription, advertising, annual sales approximately \$140,000. Will include building and property in sale. (785) 341-7573 after 5 p.m. MST.

### PRESSROOM

**PRESSROOM SUPERVISOR** — The Manhattan Mercury needs a new supervisor for its printing press staff. Good salary and full benefits. This is a working press operator's job, running and maintaining a Harris 845 offset printing press. Fulltime hours, including Satur-

## MARKETPLACE

day nights. Printing press experience required; experience on a Harris press preferred. Maintenance and mechanical skills a must. Supervisory experience also preferred. Send resume and cover letter to nseaton@themercury.com, or by mail to: Ned Seaton, The Manhattan Mercury, P.O. Box 787, Manhattan KS 66505. (1-12)

**PRESS OPERATOR** — Are you dependable? Like working with your hands? Enjoy learning how things work the way they do? Have an ability to fix things? Then you may have the abilities we're looking for. The ideal candidate will have previous mechanical experience and a demonstrated ability to work well with others and can work flexible hours, including nights during the week. Prior newspaper press experience a bonus but not mandatory. The Nevada Daily Mail and Nevada News is located within easy driving distance of Kansas City, Joplin and Springfield. We're part of Rust Communications, a family newspaper company. Interested applicants should contact Chris Jones, production manager, by calling 417-667-3344 after 4 p.m., or via email at cjones@nevadadaily.com (7-14)

**PART-TIME PRESS OPERATOR** — The Great Bend Tribune is seeking a part-time press operator to join our printing team. The

ideal candidate will have previous web press experience, including print of process color and press make-ready. Good work ethics along with mechanical skills and ability to react quickly to print related problems. We are willing to train the right person. Job requirements include: • Current valid driver's license with clean driving record, ability to pass a written fork lift test and train on lift; • Color vision and depth perception; • Ability to lift a minimum of 75 pounds; • Ability to read and comprehend written and/or oral English instruction along with ability to communicate effectively with team members. To submit a resume with references or request an application contact jaudus@gbtribune.com.

### DIGITAL MEDIA

For much less than you think, you can take charge of your online future. Let The Hays Daily News' Pixel Power Haus take your newspaper to the next level, whether you are considering your first website or looking to retool your existing one. Call Patrick Lowry at (785) 628-1081 to hear how we can help. Designed by a newspaper, for newspapers.

### MISCELLANEOUS

**FOR SALE** — Vanguard Model 1958, Serial BF 103, Last used December 2015. It worked

well at that time. It has two units, but we've only used them separately. Buyer will need to dismantle and move it! \$4,000; ATF Chief 17, Model 11.17, \$300; ATF Chief 215 Model 2.15. Used mostly to print envelopes & two part forms, \$150; MGD Duplicator 20, \$100; Argyle 23 Process Camera Model G23, \$50 in 2012; Photostat Whitin Masterlith Duplicator Model 1115 Perforator, \$100; NuArc FT40UP Ultra-Plus Flip-Top Platemaker, \$175 in 2015; free negatives and plates, various sizes. Call Linda Foster (785) 413-0349 or email at thewholeisgreater@gmail.com (1-8)

**WANTED** — Muller Martini 227 inserter hoppers, turning station, 310/20 stacker parts/equipment, or compatibles from inserting equipment or mailing machine. Call James at (620) 792-1211.

**FOR SALE** — Hamada 800 DX w/spray unit, electrostatic unit, 3M dampening sleeves; LOG Etronics Film Processor Model #LL2218, 196-264 volts, single phase, 15 amps; Brown Ultra-lite 1500 plate burner; 2 Nu-Arc light tables; 1950 Anniversary Edition Heidelberg Windmill press, very good condition. Nor'west Press, Goodland, Kansas. Call 785-899-2338.

## CREATING JOBS AND PROSPERITY

*How KU benefits the economy*

University of Kansas researchers don't just make discoveries that change the world. They make discoveries that create jobs for Kansans and prosperity for our state.

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**\$12 million** in licensing revenue

**\$275.2 million** in externally sponsored research expenditures, including **\$250 million** from sources outside Kansas

**\$9 million** in corporate-sponsored research funding

**29** corporate tenants in the Bioscience & Technology Business Center at KU, including **Garmin** and **ADM**

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# Legislators need to quit hiding behind those Statehouse walls

When Jesus said “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” in Matthew 6:3, he meant to keep your charitable acts a secret – not like the hypocrites who announced their good deeds with trumpets.

The Kansas Legislature seems to be in direct conflict with Jesus’ instruction, only allowing Kansans to know about the acts that shine favorably on them, rather than giving us the whole picture of the job they are doing representing us.

As it currently stands, unless a committee chairman requires records of votes, the only consistent record of our elected officials’ activity and votes in committees comes from newspaper reporters and other media who go to the Capitol to cover the work being done there.

Unlike most other states, Kansas does not require audio or video streaming of committee meetings, and while there is inconsistent audio streaming of the House and Senate floor proceedings, this coverage isn’t archived and audio doesn’t allow people to see how their representative is voting.

To make it worse, except when legislators are taking final action on a bill, a record of votes in general orders is not required, thereby allowing legislators to make decisions on legislation without their constituents knowing how they voted.

We’re not getting records of committee votes, we’re not getting records of general orders votes and when conference committees start working major legislation at the end of the session, we’re not seeing that either.

So unless we physically show up at the Capitol each and every day, there is no guaranteed way to know for sure what is going on there. No wonder there is so much distrust in the legislature.

There have been bills presented to bring real accountability and openness to the

day-to-day business of Kansas government, bills that would allow citizens to get more engaged in state government. But those efforts have failed.

It should not be overlooked that the transparency effort could serve to benefit legislators. If an elected official’s commentary is video-recorded, and an opponent or lobbyist takes their comments out of context, the politician could easily reference the recording of the event.

Or if an elected official thinks media coverage of their activity is wrong or slanted, they would have an archive to cite to defend themselves.

It is laughable that many city councils and school boards in Kansas offer live video feeds of their meetings, but not our state legislature.

An article last fall in the Topeka Capital-Journal said Kansas is just one of nine states that does not offer live coverage of some or all committee meetings. Most of those states use video and 35 also archive recordings.

Elected officials should own their decisions. If they have something to hide, they shouldn’t be in Topeka representing us.

Our elected officials are supposed to be the voice of their patrons while at the Statehouse – in essence, they are us. However, we as citizens do not have a full picture of

what our representatives are doing.

Our left hand doesn’t know what our right hand is doing.

These days, one of those hands usually has a smartphone in it. Technology is part of our lives. It’s time to start live recording and archiving legislative proceedings at the State Capitol and recording all votes taken by our legislators.

**Dan Thalmann** is owner/publisher of *The Washington County News and Linn-Palmer Record* and immediate past president of the Kansas Press Association.



**Dan Thalmann**

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