

2020: Politics

By Dr. Jim Haas

As a media person, I'm authorized to criticize my colleagues when I think they should do better. Reporters and commentators covering politics should stop using "attack" when they mean "criticize," as in the Democratic debates when one candidate criticizes a policy of another. "Attack" implies violence. Pearl Harbor was



an attack. Senator Warren criticizing Mayor Pete is a peaceful difference of opinion. Attacks are for enemies; political competitors aren't enemies any more than are basketball competitors. KU and West Virginia competed last week, but the Mountaineers weren't enemies (and they weren't winners, either).

The language of violence begets violence, and we surely don't need more of that. Let's drop "attack" and speak of politics as the civilized discussion of public goals and the means to achieve them. Competitive? Yes, but with criticism leavened by courtesy.

Both Democratic and Republican parties face major challenges this year. Democrats need to settle on a platform of social, economic, and global policies that will appeal to clear majorities of voters and need to select solid candidates for offices from president to state-houses. Fortunately, they have a deep pool of experienced talent and a growing, enthusiastic voter base.

Republicans have sacrificed their party to a cult dedicated to their Dear Leader. The cult has no vision for the common good. Instead, they cut taxes for the rich, slash healthcare for millions who need it, foul the environment, sell guns, dictate what women can do with their bodies, lock immigrant children in cages, and appoint conservative judges many of whom can't even earn approval from the Bar Association.

Senate Leader McConnell doesn't abide by the Constitution, as he's repeatedly proven by word and deed, and political scholars have blamed Newt Gingrich and McConnell for transforming the party into one "geared increasingly not to governing but to making governance impossible."

You know the GOP is in trouble when two of its chief election strategies are to suppress votes and rig election districts to favor themselves. Far-sighted officials have deserted the party in droves. Here in Kansas, a leading Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, Dr. Barbara Bollier, is a distinguished former Republican state senator.

The GOP may have reached the point of no return, which is bad news. We need two strong parties, not one and a personality cult. I'll explore a novel solution in a subsequent column. Massive voter turnout will be necessary.

... and Math

Here we are in the last year of the second decade of the 21st century, but we wouldn't know it from listening to several TV commentators who were so enthralled by new year celebrations, and perhaps by the repetitive roundness of the number 2020, that they babbled on about a fresh start in a new decade. On January 1st, CNN ran a crawl across the bottom of the screen warning of severe weather "as a new decade begins." No. Did they not learn to count in kindergarten? There was no year 0. A new decade begins in 2021. (Of course, a decade can begin any year, 2017-2026 for example, but we rarely speak of those. We do speak of historical decades like the Fabulous Fifties that begin with 0, but that's not what the TV folks were excited about.)

You may wonder why this matters. Because children learn from TV, and if they learn something wrong, it has to be unlearned, which is much harder than learning. Or, of course, they can just live their lives being blissfully wrong, which isn't good for anyone.

Jim's columns are online at <http://greatsociety2point0.blogspot.com>

Volume 127 January 9, 2020 Number 02

The Record

Governor Kelly's First Year Rebuilding Kansas

With 2019 drawing to a close, Governor Laura Kelly reflected on her administration's accomplishments during her first year in office and addressed the work still to be done to keep Kansas on the path to prosperity.

"When I took office in January, I made a promise to the people of Kansas that I would do everything I could to rebuild our state and improve their quality of life," Kelly said. "That promise has guided me over the course of the past year, and today I am pleased to say we have instituted bipartisan, meaningful change in 2019 that will help strengthen families across Kansas.

"Our state is on the road to recovery. This summer, CNBC described Kansas as 'the comeback state of 2019,' improving our standing in their annual rankings of top states for business by 16 spots – the largest jump of any other state.

While the Governor has made meaningful progress in restoring fiscally responsible budget practices, she knows that she must keep fighting for and investing in key priorities such as Kansas' schools and infrastructure.

"I'm proud of this, and all we have accomplished," Kelly said. "But we still have so much to do. I promise to continue to work hard every day for every Kansan."

Among the successes of Gov-

ernor Kelly's administration in 2019:

Education

From day one, Kelly ran on the promise of restoring school funding and becoming the "Education Governor." Kelly highlighted the importance of investing in the school system to build a future workforce pipeline and a brighter future for all Kansans.

On April 6, Kelly signed a bipartisan school funding bill that the Kansas Supreme Court ruled adequately funded Kansas schools. In a true victory for Kansas families, the ruling finally ended many years of costly litigation over school finance and put K-12 public schools on a stronger foundation for success.

Kelly also established the Governor's Council on Education, which is made up of stakeholders in education, child welfare, labor, advocacy and business communities across Kansas. The Council has already issued initial recommendations designed to improve education outcomes from early childhood through postsecondary attainment; enhance workforce development; and stimulate economic growth in Kansas.

Kelly also increased funding for higher education and challenged Kansas' Regents universities to ensure that the

funding would protect Kansas college students from a tuition hike for the first time in years.

Labor

Current labor market data, for November 2019, shows Kansas maintained record low unemployment, marking its lowest rate in 40 years at 3.1%. Since November of 2018, Kansas has gained 16,800 non-farm jobs and 11,800 private-sector jobs. November estimates also indicate strong wage growth in the private sector.

Fiscal Responsibility

During her first weeks in office, Kelly submitted a balanced budget to the Kansas Legislature nearly three weeks ahead of schedule. The budget paid down debt, invested in key priorities like schools, highways and health care, and provided the state with the largest ending balance in a decade — all without a tax increase, as promised.

In September, Kelly established the bipartisan Governor's Council on Tax Reform. The Council is performing an in-depth study of the state's current tax system. In December, the Council produced a number of recommendations for a fair and sustainable tax structure.

In calling for a return to the balanced, three-legged stool approach to taxes — income, property and sales — it recommended a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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Sue's Soapbox

By: Sue Reich



I wrote on and I got four of those lovely ladies and they each held one because there were four signs. They are so nice there. Lou is quite a card; one lady is the mother of Jeff Bryant. She is sort of one too.

Last night Mr. Ed and I had our black-eyed peas at the end of the old year and even finished them off with our supper today. Supposed to bring good luck you know. So, I talked to my niece, Andrea, that lives in Oregon and asked her if they had theirs. "Huh? What for?" When I told her, she sort of laughed. "Never heard of it." Duh, it must be a Midwest thing, I guess. Our fur babies sure like them too. I googled about dogs eating black-peas and it said it was ok. You know what? They are actually good for humans that have diabetes. It helps lower their blood sugar. Our little Wiley has diabetes and now is blind and oh yeah, wears a doggie diaper. So, he gulped down his share. You can mix them in their dog food too. We had another dog that had that disease and I had to give her a shot of insulin every night. Mr. Ed covers Wiley's head so I can give him his shot. I am sure getting good at it too. Wonder if I can get a job as a shot shooter sometime? Naw, I would rather do what I am doing now. Sitting on my heinie and typing nonsense.

Oh, guess what? I was in Dollar Tree the other late afternoon and was just about finished when all the electricity went off. The manager took my goodies and said that nothing worked, and they even had to open the door manually. No registers, no

Ho, hum, what a New Year's Eve we had. I hit the sack at 9:45 and thought I was asleep until ka-boom, an M80 went off. Well, that did it. I was wide awake, so I turned on the TV and missed that darn 40 thousand lights ball in NYC drop down. I think everyone was half looped by then, no, I would say, pretty much looped. Steve Harvey had a permanent grin on his face, apparently someone put super glue in his ginger ale. You know, Mr. Ed and I always make sure we are in our little cozy nest way before the fireworks and the shootings begin. Thought I was about to go sleepy bye again and another ka-boom, it was about one a.m. by then. Poor little Moosie, my rat terrier can't stand thunder or anything and he jumped out of bed and disappeared. Oh, heck with it. I finally fell asleep and there he was in the morning all snuggled and cozy.

Went down to Crosslines this afternoon to see my buddies that reside there. Lou colored Happy New Year 2020, for me on four signs

nuttin'. When I went outside all the lights to everything were off. The stop lights, the Family General store and someone said even way down east to Wal-Mart. I don't know if the houses had lost theirs or not. That's the second time I was in a store that went

dark. I was in Kmart years ago and a tornado went over. Same thing.

Well all my wonderful people of Argentine, Turner, Rosedale and Armourdale, we have a new year now so what are we going to do? Going to do something wonderful or

something dastardly? Let's do something wonderful for our communities ok? Gotta go now. Got lots to do. Like, like, oh crum I will remember it tomorrow. Take care, be kind, lvyaa all.

Your little ol gal from Argentine. Sue.



Four lovely ladies at Crosslines in Argentine. They are wishing you a HAPPY NEW YEAR 2020.



Doing her exercises for the new year. Go girl, go!



Jim Jarsulic talking to Harry Truman on one of our senior tours.

Here is a poem I wrote in 1988, called: "Sisters Four"

By: Sue Reich

We're like four peas in a pod but different in our way.
Sometimes we speak alike but different in what we say.
Our lives have taken different paths but then we crossed again.
We always came back together, no matter where we been.
Our eyes are green or brown or blue, but as four loving sisters,
But to each other we are true.
Our hearts are full of love, and of laughter and of song
Through our good times and our bad, we know that we belong.
Carolyn, Marilyn, Sue and Gayle,
We know that when we are together that all is forever well.

Postscript: Carolyn Larson, Marilyn Larson and Gayle Larson are all in Heaven.



Riding the new trolley, some years ago.

Ben Santillan: From Argentine to the Pacific

By: Rudy Padilla

On the evening of December 23rd, 1942, Ben Santillan was on a train leaving the Union Station in Kansas City. He left his home in Kansas City, Kansas to board a train as a new U.S. Navy recruit.

He was aware that a huge battle was being played out in Europe and in the Pacific at that time.

The train was traveling to Chicago and then he would be transported to the Great Lakes Naval Training Base. He would arrive there 2 days before Christmas.

Ben was born on Feb. 13, 1925 in the Argentine community. His family then lived in a box car which was common for the family of railroad workers.

Soon after, the family would move to better living quarters at the Santa Fe housing complex—for the families of Santa Fe employees. He attended the Clara Barton School, a segregated school for Mexican American children and then later Argentine Junior High School.

It was in his sophomore year at Argentine High School that he decided to join the U.S. Navy at the age of 17. These were the War years and



he wanted to do his part in the defense of the United States.

After viewing a promotional video for the U.S. Navy at high school, he at that time decided that was his choice in life. He soon would be sailing in a destroyer in dangerous waters. Violence was always possible from the sky and under the sea.

He trained at the Gunnery School for 16 weeks. "After Gunnery School, I was sent to New York and then assigned to the destroyer, the USS Thorn DD-647. We were assigned to provide protection for the many convoys crossing the Atlantic from German submarines and their aircraft. I made two

trips across the Atlantic and we had numerous contacts with German submarines. Me and my crew got credit for sinking one."

Fierce storms on the seas caused ships to roll and constantly shift. His first ship, the USS Thorn had tremendous fire power. Santillan describes the ships power as "We were loaded!" While the ship was in an attack mode, he remembers the smell of gunpowder, oil and smoke.

The force of the cannons firing on board caused to ship to shake and shudder. When submarines were detected below, the crew dropped off

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The Record Publications

(913) 362-1988

Publishers of The Record and The Companion

Jon A. Males

Owner/Publisher/Editor

Policy On Opinion

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The Record (USPS No. 002269) is published weekly every Thursday by The Record Publications at PO Box 6197, Kansas City, Kansas 66106. Newsstand price, single copy, 35 cents; subscription price per year, \$16.13. For editorial, display, and classified advertising information call 362-1988. Periodical postage paid at Kansas City, Kansas 66110. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Record, 3414 Strong Ave., P.O. Box 6197, Kansas City, Kansas 66110.

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Ben Santillan... from page 3

depth bombs to destroy the enemy. Those same depth bombs were very powerful and would also cause the USS Thorn to shake from the force.

In January 1944, his ship was assigned to the Pacific Fleet. "We went through the Panama Canal and joined the Pacific Fleet in the Invasion of The Admiralty Islands, where our ship was damaged. We then had to go all the way to San Francisco for repairs."

He then was transferred to the USS Sarasota APA-204 in the Philippine Islands. The USS Sarasota was an extremely active ship. Because it was constantly on the move transporting troops and armament to assault points, attacks by enemy aircraft was a way of life for the crew.

Ben has memories of when the ship was involved in 4 invasions, they were attacked by Japanese Kamikaze pilots. Those were intense days for Santillan as one of the ships gunners.

From the ships log: On 8 January 1945, having survived Japanese suicide attacks, she approached her destination. On the 9th, she rode in Lingayen Gulf as her boats took the troops into "Crimson Beach" near the town of Lingayen.

On 26 January, Sarasota again sailed north. Three days later, she landed the assault troops on "Blue Beach," west of San Antonio then departed the area.

On 1 April, she stood off the Hagushi beaches of Okinawa as her LCMs and DUKWs landed troops on the "White Beaches."

Their equipment followed, and by the 4th, Sarasota

had completed offloading. She then shifted to Kerama Retto, assisted in offloading the damaged Henrico and prepared for the assault on le Shima. On the 16th, she landed units of the 305th Regimental Combat Team on that island off the Motobu Peninsula."

Santillan's first ship the USS Thorn is remembered by the many crewmembers who served on the ship in World War II. They formed a Thorn association, Inc.

To the Crew of the USS Thorn:

May you always encounter fair winds and following seas.

May you never have need to go into harms way.

If called to do battle, be prepared and sharply perseverant.

May you be blessed with our good fortune and luck.

Always be proud of your ship and yourselves.

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Ben is proud to be a U.S. Navy veteran. Among his earned medals: American Campaign, Asiatic Pacific Campaign, European, African-Middle East Campaign, World War II Victory, U.S. Navy Occupation Service, China Service, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation and of course the Good Conduct medal."

Today, Ben leads a quiet life in the Rosedale area with his wife Rachel, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He plays golf, enjoys company of friends and keeps track of local and world events.

He will hear a name of a place thousands of miles away which then brings back memories of long ago.

Guest Editorial

84 Days, the Inside Story of the White House Freeze on the Military Aid to Ukraine

By: Tom Valverde

Interviews with dozens of current and former administration officials, congressional aides, and others, previously undisclosed emails and documents, and a close reading of thousands of pages of impeachment testimony, provide the most complete account yet of the 84 days from when Mr. Trump first inquired about the aid to Ukraine, to his decision in September to relent. Trump gave the hold up on the military aid to Ukraine only after he learned of a damning whistleblower report and came under pressure from influential republican lawmakers.

Mark Mazzetti, *New York Times*, national security analyst, was interviewed to discuss his investigative article, *Behind the Ukrainian freeze: 84 Days of Conflict and Confusion*. White House chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney sent an email to his aide, Robert B. Blair. Mulvaney: "I'm just trying to tie up some loose ends. "did we ever find out about the money for Ukraine and whether we can hold it back? Blair: "well, it's possible, but not pretty. Expect Congress to become unhinged, if the white house tried to countermand spending passed by the house and senate." The President was told time and again by his top officials, that it would be "problematic" should he decide to place a hold on the military aid to Ukraine. White house budget and Pentagon officials, all questioned the propriety and even the legality of such a move by Trump. But he insisted.

Many of these officials said they were kept in the dark about Trump's motivations, but, had become accustomed to "convention flouting" requests from the west wing. Trump appointee, Blair, said that he "saw the aid freeze not as a political tool, but as an extension of Trump's general aversion to foreign aid, and Trump's belief that Ukraine was rife with corruption." Trump's concerns were apparently slow to manifest, as he had never held back Ukrainian aid which went to the previous Ukrainian pres-

ident, a man known for his corruption. Speaking to Rob Portman, R, Ohio, "Ukraine is a corrupt country. We are pissing away our money." said Trump. More pressure to release the military aid comes from Ron Johnson, R, WI. On August 31st, senator Johnson arranges a call with Trump. Johnson had been told days earlier by Ambassador Sondland that the aid would be unblocked, only if Ukraine gave President Trump the investigation he wanted. Johnson asked President Trump directly if the aid was contingent on getting a commitment to pursue the investigation. Mr. Johnson later said "President Trump replied amid a string of expletives, that there was no such demand and that he would never do such a thing!"

The President lied directly to the senator!

Chaos reigns at this time with long serving officials from The Pentagon, The State Department, and former National Security advisor, John Bolton. Trump met with the Secretary of State, the Defense Secretary and the National Security Advisor. They were trying to convince Trump that returning the military aid was in the best interest of the United States. But they were rebuffed by Trump, and he insisted on the freeze of military aid! As it is now known, Trump did, in the end, return the money to Ukraine, once he learned of the whistleblower's complaint. Rep. Eliot Engel, D, New York, remarked "I have no doubt about why the President allowed the assistance to go forward, he was caught!"

Seems we have even more corruption here at home, that we need to be concerned about. These covert actions and denials say so much about this President, and his administration, with almost none of it being of anything good.

Quotes To Ponder

By: Tom Valverde

"Trump struck me as adolescent, hilariously ostentatious, arbitrary, unkind, profoundly dishonest, loudly opinionated, and consistently wrong. Trump remains the most vain man I have ever met... and he was trying to make a good impression!"

Mark Bowden, author of *Blackhawk Down*
Quote from *Vanity Fair*, article, written by Bowden. In it, Bowden recalls his time profiling Trump.

"Trump is beyond repair. He is stubbornly uninformed and temperamentally unsuited to lead our Men and Women in uniform." "He is unqualified and unfit to be our Commander in Chief."

Robert Gates, former United States Defense Secretary, under Bush and Obama

"Lying is second nature to him. More than anyone else I have ever met, Trump has the ability to convince himself that whatever he is saying at any given moment is true, or sort of true, or at least, ought to be true. He said he had no ideology or beliefs, except that he should prevail in the end." "Trump's temperament and his habits have hardened with age." "He was always, cartoonish, but compared with whom I wrote, *The Art of the Deal*, 30 years ago, he is significantly angrier today, deceitful, distracted, vindictive, impulsive and, above all, self-absorbed." "Every American ought to be concerned about his character!"

Tony Swartz, author, and ghost writer for Trump

Please ask yourselves, "don't we deserve better?" Should there be limits on his mad tweets, most filled with rage, disparaging comments about any person who dares confront him with the Truth. What a poor example for the youth of America. Trump betrays his Oath of Office each time he opens his mouth; it is almost always to make an untrue comment or to slam a political foe. Trump is a great risk to the security of our nation; he is not a stable genius!

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Quotes To Ponder

By: Tom Valverde

“Why are people embarrassed to get food stamps? You pay taxes for a reason, and with all the crap that government pays for -- Food Stamps and Medicaid are the only times your taxes pay for something that people really need.” “It’s not a hand-out, but your own money, coming back to you. People ought to be more concerned with the trillions spent on wars in the Middle East.” “The tens of billions that goes to Israel, every year. And tax breaks for the top 1% wealthiest Americans. This grows our debt, and there is nothing returned. And there are many other nonsense items that our hard-earned tax dollars are currently funding.” “The Food Stamp program is something we should be proud of as Americans. It exists to feed the poor, the needy and millions of our country’s children. Many kids would go to

school hungry, without the school lunch program. By the way, Food Stamps only takes up a tiny part of the Federal government’s annual budget. That is why it makes my blood boil when they talk about cutting funding for it!” “You know people are evil, when they want to take food out of the mouths of kids, our Vets, the sick and elderly, just to save a buck!”

Max Primm

President Trump’s new food stamp policies go into effect in March of 2020. And they will adversely affect the school lunch program, that so many families depend on to help provide meals to their children. And there will be new restrictions and limits on the amount of Federal aid each person and family are entitled to.

Why is it that, in this so-called great economy we cannot provide food security for the growing number of poor families in the United States? The world’s richest economy?

And it doesn’t have the means to support feeding our people in need yet sends billions to provide for the World.

“Charity should begin at home!” It’s something we should insist upon. Cut the “welfare checks” that go to big corporations and financial institutions; focus on the nutritional needs of our youth is so very important. They are the future of the United States!

If there are trillions to spend on wars then, we should all be insistent that these tax dollars find their way back to our communities, cities and in rural towns. Write a letter, make a call and say that, “above all else, all our people need never be hungry, increase government support to food pantries too.”

In order to have a healthy and vibrant Economy in the future, we must all have access to good, nutritional, food. This is the base of everything else--it must be priority number one. It is always good to look after our own!

Tom’s Tasty Treats

By: Tom Valverde

With the holidays now over, and all the indulgence past (kind of, maybe?) we all wish to begin the New Year in a healthier way. But there is no reason to give treats up, entirely! Fresh fruit and sherbets are good choices. This week’s tasty treat lets you enjoy the satisfying taste of a cookie, with just 100 calories, and are made with regular Oats, which contain soluble fiber and can help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. Nice treat! Easy to make, and made with pantry staples, you will enjoy returning to a basic.

Old Fashioned Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1/2 c Sugar
- 1/2 c Brown Sugar
- 1/3 c + 1 T Butter, soft
- 1 t Vanilla
- 1/2 t Salt
- 1 lg. Egg
- 1 c Flour
- 1/2 t Cinnamon, optional
- 1 c Regular Oats

Additions, choose one or two of:

1/2 c of Raisins, Chocolate Chips, Dried Cranberries, Chopped Pecans, or White Chocolate Chips.

Directions:

Set oven to 350°.

Line or grease cookie sheets.

Place the sugar and the brown sugar in bowl of a mixer with the butter. Beat until smooth; about 2 minutes. Add the Vanilla, salt, and the egg. Beat until fluffy; about 3 minutes on medium speed.

When measuring the flour, lightly spoon the flour into a measuring cup for dry ingredients, and level with a knife. Add to the butter mixture. Stir in the cinnamon, if using, and then the oats. Lastly, add the raisins, or your other choice of additions. Stir well to evenly distribute.

Drop by level Tablespoons and space 2” apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake one sheet at a time in the 350° oven, for 14 – 15 minutes or until golden brown.

Leave cookies on the pan to set for five minutes, then transfer to rack to cool.

Makes about two dozen.

Store at room temperature in an airtight container. They keep for a week. After then, just dunk into some hot coffee, and Enjoy!



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Gov. Kelly... ...from page 1

food sales tax rebate and return to a tax-reduction fund that would give local governments more ability to lower property taxes. Decreasing the burden placed on Kansas families by the food sales tax has always been one of the Governor's top priorities from the first day of her campaign.

In addition to balancing the budget, Kelly's administration began the process of thoroughly reviewing the state's "no-bid" contracts. The practice of "no-bid" contracts bypassed the official state bidding process designed to ensure that contracts are transparent and in the best interests of Kansans. New measures of transparency, accountability and fairness have been established within the state procurement process. Kelly has taken exhaustive steps to ensure that Kansas taxpayer dollars go toward the most qualified bidder.

Child Welfare

One of Kelly's top priorities after taking office was taking steps to rebuild Kansas' broken foster-care system.

She first appointed a nationally renowned leader to guide the Department for Children and Families. In January, Secretary Laura Howard took the lead at DCF and immediately improved transparency within the agency and efforts to locate children who were absent or had run away. Secretary Howard made meaningful progress by also hiring dozens of new social workers needed to improve response times and handle the existing caseload.

Kelly also signed a bill allowing Kansas to leverage millions of federal dollars to benefit programs that strengthen vulnerable children and families. The bill enables Kansas to meet the requirements of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act program, which uses funds to give Kansas families access to strong, evidence-based programs – from mental health services to substance use disorder treatment – designed to prevent the need for foster care.

Transportation

Kelly reduced more than \$160 million in sales tax transfers from the "Bank of KDOT," the money from the state's transportation program. Over the past several years, more than \$2 billion from this fund was used by the Legislature to pay for programs unrelated to transportation. By working toward closing the "Bank

of KDOT," the state can finally use Kansas' infrastructure dollars to begin rebuilding deteriorated highways, complete five delayed T-WORKS projects, address critical safety needs, reinstate the local bridge repair program and create a partnership program for communities to address their infrastructure problems.

The Governor has directed KDOT to develop a new long-term transportation plan for the state. After meeting with more than 2,000 Kansans, the proposed new FORWARD transportation plan calls for completing all T-WORKS projects, fully funding highway preservation, modernizing all modes of transportation, and providing economic development opportunities across the state.

Health Care

Kelly has made it clear that her top priority in 2020 will be expanding KanCare, the state's Medicaid program, so that 150,000 more Kansans will have access to affordable, quality health care.

As part of Kelly's commitment to ensuring 2020 will finally be the year we bring expansion over the finish line, Kelly established the bipartisan Governor's Council on Medicaid Expansion.

"The group studied what worked elsewhere to help determine the best path for Kansas," Kelly said. "The Council will submit a final report to me in early January outlining several guideposts for responsible expansion in Kansas. I call on the Legislature to carefully consider these guideposts next session as a way to pass a clean, effective bill to help the many Kansans who currently don't have enough coverage."

Economic Development

Kelly, in conjunction with Secretary of Commerce David Toland, established the Kansas "Framework for Growth" – a comprehensive strategy for economic growth in the state. A team of stakeholders, business leaders and economic development professionals from across the state will implement three phases: assessment and benchmarking; recommendations and best practices; and implementation planning. Key priorities of the Framework for Growth include business and workforce development, industry promotion and job creation.

The Department of Commerce also re-launched the Main Street program, which is critical to the growth and revitalization of our

rural communities. Prior to 2012, when Main Street was discontinued, the program had a 27-year history of building stronger communities and strengthening businesses by preserving historic commercial districts around the state.

Rural Prosperity

Kelly appointed Lieutenant Governor Lynn Rogers to lead the newly-established Office of Rural Prosperity, which will develop statewide policies and initiatives for improving life in rural communities that have been neglected for far too long.

This summer, Rogers visited 54 Kansas counties on his Office of Rural Prosperity listening tour. On the tour, he learned that key needs in rural communities include developing rural housing, investing in infrastructure and supporting hospitals.

Kelly, along with Lt. Governor Rogers, urged Kansas' congressional delegation to support the pending United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), due to its importance to Kansas trade and exports – and the state's economy.

Additionally, the Kansas Department of Agriculture recently unveiled a new website to assist Kansas farmers and ranchers who are dealing with ag-related stress. The website contains resources and support to assist Kansas farmers, including help with stress management, financial and legal challenges and mental health services.

State Employees and Cabinet

This year, Kelly increased pay for state workers by 2.5%, without a tax increase. And after years of health insurance premium hikes,

this year Kelly's administration was able to decrease costs by 6% for families and spouses.

In addition, one of Kelly's first priorities was to appoint a highly-qualified, bipartisan Cabinet focused on rebuilding state agencies that had been hollowed out over the course of the past several years.

The Cabinet has taken great strides to serve more Kansans and restore transparency and accountability in state government.

Corrections

When Kelly took office in January, the state's corrections system was in dire straits due to overcrowding and other problems. To address the crisis in state prisons and enhance public safety, Kelly increased pay for corrections workers by 15.9%.

She also appointed several members to the new, bipartisan Kansas Criminal Justice Reform Commission, which will address systemic problems in our criminal justice system and make suggestions for change that should help ease prison crowding and reduce recidivism rates.

Inclusion and Equality

On her first day in office, Kelly signed Executive Order 19-02, reinstating protections to state employees who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

She also agreed to a court order allowing transgender Kansans to update the gender listed on their birth certificate, so it accurately reflects their identity.

When Kelly took office, the state boards and commissions to which the governor makes appointments were composed of 37% women and 63% men. Now,

due to Governor Kelly's appointments and her commitment to gender parity throughout Kansas, state boards and commissions are composed of 51% women and 49% men.

2020 Priorities

"There is still so much to do," Kelly said. "I will continue traveling across the state to hear from Kansans about what is working in their communities - and what is not. Hearing from Kansans directly is how I've always operated. It's the only way to get things done, and get things done right."

"I am proud of what we accomplished, and I look forward to continuing this hard work next year."



Passings...

By: Sue Reich

Juanita June Thomas, age 95, passed away December 28, 2019. She attended Wyandotte High School.

Connie Joe (Crowder) Welchert, age 76, passed away December 22, 2019. Graduated Argentine High, class of 1961.

Shirley McBee, age 85, passed away December 30, 2019. Graduated Argentine High, class of 1952.

Larry Poore, age 77, passed away December 26, 2019. He attended Rosedale High.

Kevin Pullman, age 57, passed away December 26, 2019. He attended J C Harmon High School.

Arlene Benham, age 86, passed away December 20, 2019. Graduate of Wyandotte High, class of 1951. She was the secretary for the mayor circa 1955.

Virginia (Verlerugge) Heliker, age 85, passed away December 21, 2019. Graduate of Argentine High, 1952. Virginia had a KC Star route for 28 years.

Don Imus, age 79, passed away December 27, 2019. He was a radio personality known as the "Acid tongue".

Jerry Hernan, age 88, passed away December 26, 2019. He wrote Broadway songs: "Hello Dolly" and many others.

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REQUESTING BIDS

Turner USD 202 is requesting bids for ERV replacement at Turner High School RFP # 122019 Please contact Chris Crockett at 913-288-3721 for bid documents. Bid opening is schedule for 01/13/2020 at 1:00 pm. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Turner USD 202 is requesting bids for Parking Lot Replacement at Junction Elementary School RFP # 121719 Please contact Chris Crockett at 913-288-3721 for bid documents. Bid opening is schedule for 01/13/2020 at 10:00 am. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Turner USD 202 is requesting bids for Parking Lot Replacement at Transportation RFP # 121819 Please contact Chris Crockett at 913-288-3721 for bid documents. Bid opening is schedule for 01/13/2020 at 10:15 am. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Turner USD 202 is requesting bids for Parking Lot Replacement at Turner Sixth Grade Academy RFP # 121919 Please contact Chris Crockett at 913-288-3721 for bid documents. Bid opening is schedule for 01/13/2020 at 1:00 pm. Late proposals will not be accepted.

For information about any of these projects including bid documents, please contact Chris Crockett at crockettc@turnerusd202.org or call 913-288-3721.

(First published 1-2-20)
2t-The Record-1-9-20

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