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The Record

Governor Delivers the State of the State

The following State of the State address is from Governor Laura Kelly:

Mr. Speaker, Madam President, Madam Chief Justice, Lt. Governor Rogers, members of the Legislature, Cabinet officers, leaders of the Kansas tribes, honored guests, and fellow Kansans.

It is my high honor to stand before you this evening to report on the progress of my administration, and to share my plans for the year ahead.

We have much to discuss tonight. But before I begin, please welcome back the third "First Gentleman" in Kansas history, my husband, Dr. Ted Daughety.

Ted still misses his garden and his darkroom, but he's adjusting to our new home by adding some personal touches. He has taken an interest in putting the "Cedar" back in Cedar Crest with the planting of new trees. He also started a vegetable garden. He even has his own compost pile.

In addition to all of that, he continues to practice medicine full time. So, Ted and I have settled into life at the Governor's Residence.

In fact, it was the backdrop for our family's biggest news of 2019! It was a joy to watch our daughter Kathleen wed our new son-in-law, Mathias, at Ce-

dar Crest earlier this year, with our younger daughter, Molly, standing by her sister's side.

Speaking of siblings - my sister, Kay and my brother Paul are also here tonight from Colorado.

And listening in online from Richmond, Virginia, is my brother, Father Fred.

As everyone here knows, it is not easy to be related to someone who serves in public office. I am grateful to my family for the support they have provided from the very first day of this journey.

Since we're talking about family members, I dare not exclude the four-legged variety. Frances, the First Cat of Kansas, sends her regards.

If there is one thing I didn't expect this past year, it was the widespread interest in my cat. She's made lots of new friends on social media. She gets more news coverage than I do.

Frances asked me to relay a special message to Lt. Governor Lynn Rogers, who is here with his wife, Kris.

Lynn -- Frances said to tell you she's very close to exceeding your following on Twitter. And that you need to step up your game.

As everyone here has no doubt come to know, Lynn Rogers is an exceptional lieutenant governor. In case you couldn't tell, he's also

unfailingly good-natured.

Lynn hit the road almost as soon as we took our oaths of office last year, logging more than 17,000 miles on a statewide listening tour, engaging Kansans in our efforts to establish the Office of Rural Prosperity.

Housing shortages, affordable childcare, revitalizing Main Street corridors, protecting rural hospitals, expanding rural broadband -- these are all concerns that weigh heavily on the minds of Kansans. With the right mix of state support and local ingenuity, I am confident that the Office of Rural Prosperity will serve as an invaluable partner for Kansas communities to sustain and enhance our state's rural heritage.

Thank you, Lynn, for your work on this very important issue.

In fact, thank you to my entire Cabinet - seated in the west gallery, behind me.

No governor can succeed without a strong and supportive team, and I could not have asked for a more qualified group of leaders to help rebuild our state.

I realize, for those who have been around the Kansas Capitol a session or two, these annual messages might sometimes seem a bit routine. But tonight carries a special distinction.

For the first time in Kansas history, women sit at the helm

of all three branches of Kansas government.

It is my privilege to serve as our state's third female governor, alongside the first female Senate President, Susan Wagle. And the second female Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Marla Luckert.

Kansas reached this milestone at a fitting moment, as 2020 also marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

Anniversaries and new years are always important opportunities to reflect on time gone by, and on progress made. We have another such opportunity this evening, as we usher in not just a new legislative session, but a new decade.

So let us go back for just a moment and remember where we've been.

Almost ten years ago -- to the day -- we gathered in this chamber for the 2010 state of the state address. Kansas found itself in the throes of the worst economic downturn in 80 years. The Great Recession had necessitated \$1 billion dollars in spending cuts. Another \$400 million dollar budget gap still loomed before us. It was brutal.

It's probably for the best that we did not realize, in that moment, that this would be the brightest fiscal outlook Kansas would have for another seven years.

Of course, you know what happened next. A new administration was in place one year later, and the saga of the failed tax experiment began soon thereafter. Instead of recovering from the Great Recession alongside every other state in the nation, Kansas settled in for six more years of financial chaos. This time, it was self-inflicted.

By the time I stood before you as governor in 2019, Kansas was on life support. The state had racked up record amounts of debt, schools had been cut to the bone, taxes on groceries had been increased until they were the highest in the nation, agencies had been decimated, and Kansas had generally become a national model for what not to do.

After devastating cuts and relentless crises - a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers demonstrated courage and conviction when they joined forces in the face of adversity to stop the bleeding in 2017.

That bipartisan effort -- one that so many of you helped bring to fruition -- changed everything.

So, although it was a decade

in which much went wrong, we rebounded in a way that only Kansas can.

Over the last 12 months, Kansas added 12,400 private sector jobs.

The state not only reached a new employment record, our unemployment rate fell to its lowest point in 40 years.

Since I became governor, we fulfilled our promise to properly fund Kansas schools.

We reinvested in public safety, and worked tirelessly to stabilize our foster care system.

We increased pay and lowered health insurance premiums for thousands of public employees and their families.

We're paying off debt so we can eventually establish a state rainy day fund and better prepare for financial emergencies.

In US News and World Report's "Best States" rankings, Kansas jumped seven spots in 2019. We now rank 15th highest in education. We scored 7th best in infrastructure.

In fact, I'm proud to report that we improved in almost every category, including the economy and fiscal stability.

I'm also proud to report that in CNBC's annual "Top States for Business," Kansas was declared the "comeback state of 2019."

Above all, I am proud to report that Kansas has ended a turbulent decade on a high note. As we look to the future, the state of our state grows stronger every day.

We have so many reasons to be hopeful tonight. But make no mistake: one year of progress cannot erase a decade of damage. Two of the most important sectors of the Kansas economy remain incredibly fragile.

As a major Boeing supplier, Spirit AeroSystems was hit hard by the recent suspension of the 737 Max production. Even as we speak, thousands of Wichita families are suddenly fearful that soon they may be unable to provide for their families.

I've been in constant communication with local, state and federal officials since temporary layoffs were announced late last week. I instructed my Labor Secretary, Delia Garcia, to take an all-hands-on-deck approach to help workers, Spirit and other Kansas businesses that will be negatively impacted.

Unfortunately, Kansas agriculture also finds itself at a precarious moment.

Between historic flooding last spring and escalating trade tensions

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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Sue's Soapbox

By: Sue Reich



Now, fog, ice, rain, sunshine, what a day, what a week. Took Mr. Ed to Leavenworth Imaging this a.m. and it was foggy. Came out, it was misting, got to Turner the sun was shining. Turned out to be a nice day after all. I cleaned my whole upstairs when we got home. Man, I rushed around like a bat out of H***. But finally got it cleaned up. Even damp mopped the whole upstairs. Some reason I have been so tired, but I think it is the weather. It won't make up my mind how I want to feel.

So sorry I missed the churches with *The Record* delivery. Guess what? They were all closed anyway. That was one heckofa day wasn't it? But at least I caught a few zzzzzs. Shepherd's Center closes when the schools close so Darlene and I have to wait and see what happens. Really love that place. You ought to try it. The people there are really great. Good food, good programs and Melissa Bynum is a great leader too. She really is a nice lady.

Mr. Ed and I are going to downsize. We have so much stuff that we merged when we married almost 21 years ago, that we really have to do something. Can you imagine when two widowed people get married all the stuff they have to go through? Why are people so afraid to get rid of things? Who is going to know anyway? The kids don't want it and we are tired of it. We have a pool table that Mr. Ed had covered and it is a regulation one and no one has played on it. Know why? Can't get to it. Stuff on top, under it, all around it, stuff, stuff, stuff, everywhere. Get this, Mr. Ed was an avid golfer. Three or four sets of clubs, don't know how many boxes of golf balls, tons of nails, in various boxes, tools that he hardly uses, all kinds of buckets of half used

paint, (probably has turned to rubber by now). We can have one biggo garage sale this Spring. We have three or four paper shredders, telephones that don't work, dishes that absolutely go unused. Hey, I bet there are a bunch of you out there that are in the same predicament. We would have sooooo much room around here if we really made up our minds to get rid of some of this wonderful, beautiful junk. Oh yeah, I have a guest room that is so full now that we have to step over everything gingerly to find something I think that "might" be in there. Too many towels, too many of this, too many of that. About a year ago, I went through my clothes and gave a whole bunch, I mean a whole bunch away. Some, believe it or not, still had the tags on them. Know what I did? Had room to buy more. Lol.

Did I tell you about Wiley, our little pugapoo? He had to have his toes amputated a couple of years ago because of blood clots. Sorta cost a pretty penny. Now our little fella is in diapers and is blind. Omgosh, what next? Momma (me) has to give him a shot of insulin every night. Mr. Ed puts something over his head so he won't see me do it. (he is blind) hmmm? The little guy is about 15, I think. But he is one of our fur babies and we love all of them. I have to put a gate at the top of the stairs so he won't tumble down. So therefore, we spend a lot of time upstairs so he won't get lonesome. After his shot, he falls asleep so we sneak downstairs for awhile. Believe it or not, it didn't take him long to learn his way around the house.

Okay, before I sign off I have to tell you this. I know I mentioned it before about the stores and etc. rushing the holidays. Before Dec. 31st, they already had the Valentine stuff out. Now, they (whoever they are) have Easter out too. So, here is what I am going to do. I am going to buy a bunch of cards for Christmas, Valentine Day, Easter, St. Pat's, 4th of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving whatever else comes in between, address them, sign, seal and deliver on January 1st. Get it all out of the way then I will be happy. So, don't be surprised if someone gets a

whole bunch of mail from me. Oh yeah, after 4th of July they were putting school supplies out too. Do you ever wonder why we feel like we are getting old so fast? That's why!!!!

One more thing, the AHS All Class reunion will be here in June. Next month is our

first meeting at the Argentine library on Strong Avenue. Is there a card for that? Never mind.

Lvya all you sweet people of Argentine, Turner, Armourdale and Rosedale. Be good, be kind, don't throw your trash in our neighborhood

Hit and Run of Turner Middle School Student

By: Sue Reich

A 13-year-old Turner Middle School student was hit and rolled on 55th street and Osage. The lady rolled and drug him and left after he was dislodged. It is said he will be okay. I have witnessed speeders on 55th a lot as the owners of businesses there also have. With all the kids in that area with the schools, TRC, the garden, the eating places, etc. drivers don't seem to pay attention to the speed limit or the crosswalks. Let's get some cops out there when schools let out instead of hiding on side streets. A GoFundMe was

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Just because they "can", they "will". Same trashy people. Apparently, some people just want to be trashy. This is a turnaround on our "New Road". Thanks guys.

or anyone's neighborhood. All I can say is mind your p's and q's.

"If the whole world followed you. Followed to the letter. Tell me, if it followed you, would the world be better?" *Treasures of Silver* Please be careful, Sue.



A Lamp is not just a Lamp

By: Sue Reich

This lamp has traveled many miles, not as a lamp, but as a b flat clarinet. It was first played by Gayle Larson of Argentine high school, band director, Mr. Mould. It marched in just about all the American Royal parades and most of the Argentine parades.

Then it traveled to California where Sue Larson inherited it from her sister and played in the band and orchestra in Bell Gardens. Mr. Forbes, was the director. It played in many parades there including Pasadena. Wait, we're not done. It then came back to Kansas. Guess where? ARGENTINE. Younger sis, Marilyn Larson took it then. Mr. Sherbol was the director at that time. But then that poor ol' clarinet was sure getting tired. Marilyn took up the bass clarinet. But Sue needed it "just one more time." She got in a parade in KCMO called the "Just One More Time" band. After the parade, she was walking toward her car and guess who came down the sidewalk? He said, "let me try that thing" She handed it to a curly haired handsome young man. He squeaked and fumbled with the keys, gave it back and thanked Sue. No other than George Brett. To make a long story short, Mr. Ed turned it into a lamp. There she sits in all her glory, oh the memories she could tell.

Comin' & Goin' Turner Style



By Sharon Hoover

Boy, is my face red! Technology and I are out of sync. Tuesday, as I was making an appointment to have my hair done next month, I pulled out my paper pocket calendar and was asked why I didn't schedule it on my cellphone. I replied that I didn't know how. Although our phones were different, we set up the appointment for the following month. On Wednesday, I attended the 50+'s Weekly Bingo Game at TRC. It is held in the Bear's Den

from 1:00 until 3:00 and open to all us older folk. I needed to go to the office afterward and when I was there, I noticed a flyer for National Hot Chocolate Day to be held on January 31, 2020 at TRC from 9 am to 11 am. When I got home, and with my newfound skill, I set up several meetings I wanted to attend, one of which was the National Hot Chocolate Day.

At 10:00 that night, I got a phone call from Lana Jarsulic, saying she was confused, she had gotten a notice from me saying the Hot Chocolate event had been changed to January 16 (the next day) and that I was the organizer. WHAT!!!! I went to my phone and there it was - WRONG -. I had put in the wrong date on my phone, not realizing it had a mailing list and it had been sent to over 40 people - many I did not know and some of rather major influence in the

community. Panic set in. I immediately corrected the date and when I did an automatic email went out to those same people. By this time, it was almost 11 pm and I was afraid some recipients would not look at their email and show up at TRC the following morning. I stewed about it all night and finally sent an email to TRC to explain what I did and followed up with a phone call.

NATIONAL HOT CHOCOLATE DAY will be Celebrated at TURNER RECREATION COMMISSION on JANUARY 31, 2020 from 9am-11am. Rayna Andrew is the organizer and if this year is as good as last year's, you are in for a real treat.

As for me, I'm back to my paper pocket calendar and looking forward to my next Wednesday afternoon Bingo game at TRC. Hope you can join me.

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Guest Editorial

Bloomberg Funds Democratic Team to Defeat Trump

By: Tom Valverde

Former New York City mayor and now currently running to become the Democratic presidential nominee, Mike Bloomberg, is privately funding 500 campaign workers, with the sole aim of defeating Donald Trump. These workers will be placed in six battleground states, and Bloomberg has employed them through the election in November. Bloomberg has said that even if he is not the Democratic candidate, he will still keep the workers employed, and will turn them over to support the Democratic candidate. He plans to take Hawk Fish, a huge digital political apparatus, and have it devoted to whoever is selected to be the Democratic presidential candidate.

In August of 2019, Mike Bloomberg said that his number one goal was to get Donald Trump out of office. It is his belief that any of the Democrats that are in the race, "Would make a better, much better qualified candidate than Donald Trump." Mike Bloomberg is a very wealthy man, with a net worth listed by Forbes of \$56.7 Billion. This makes Bloomberg the 9th wealthiest person in the World.

The week prior, a new Democratic super PAC, The Lincoln Project, was formed and was able to pull in over \$1,000,000 on the first day! It will take a well-funded and coordinated effort to elect the next Democratic president. Working together to place television ads, targeting new potential voters is one job. Hawk Fish's political apparatus has the capacity to address false online statements and to put out corrections, as they occur. It can also fact check the lies and that can be expected to come from Trump and his supporters.

Republican Senators Irate After Disastrous Capitol Briefing

By: Tom Valverde

Senator Mike Lee, (R, UT), was insulted by the security briefing held in the high security SCIF, at the U.S. Capitol.* This Senator is known for his quiet manner, so it was very much out of character for him to come out to speak to the Washington press and complain so bitterly about the treatment of the Senators by Trump security officials. Senator Lee and Senator Rand Paul were exasperated by the Trump National Security team. Primarily because of the willingness of the security team to go forward with Military strikes without the prior consultation of Congress. One of Trump's national security advisers went so far as to tell the Senators that, "even discussing" a role for Congress to play is "aiding and abetting the enemy!"

Senator Lee plays by the rules and he wants to reassert the power to Congress to authorize any future Military strikes. "What I am most concerned about is where it goes from here. What comes next? Are there future strikes planned? If so, at what point does the administration come to us seeking authorization for the use of Military force? The fact that they were unable or unwilling to identify Any point at which that would be necessary at the briefing, was deeply distressing to me" said Senator Lee. Later, Lee would say, "I find it really upsetting that Trump's Intelligence officials refused to provide information to the Senators that gave justification for Trump's decision to order the killing of General Qasem Soleimani, this is not following standard protocol. "There was nothing but a refusal to answer this central question, it's most deeply upsetting to me," Lee said.

Phillip Rucker, White House Bureau Chief for the Washington Post was interviewed and said, "At the Pentagon and elsewhere in Washington, there are no answers, no evidence to back up Trump's claims, and what he said, last week to justify the killing of General Soleimani. Trump said that he believed there were threats on four embassies. Based on the information that we currently know, the imminent attack on four embassies was an unfounded theory, or an outright fabrication.

Food Insecurity: A Top Priority For 2020 Presidential Candidates

By: Tom Valverde

Please don't be lulled into believing that all is well with the problem of hunger in America. Millions of Americans are struggling with hunger and the numbers are on the rise. "Great economy," notwithstanding, new cuts are to go into effect this spring, new "qualifications" will force hundreds of thousands off of the Federal Food Stamp program, called SNAP. Meant to help "deal with" governmental budgets, these cuts are a recipe for increased hunger in America.

Many families in the program, find that the money on their cards isn't enough to provide them with food at the end of each month. Nutrition is a basic necessity to maintain a strong and healthy society. Children are greatly at risk, they must have proper nutrition, to develop strong bodies and minds that can do well in school! Yet, their future nutritional needs are on the cutting block. Federal and State budgets should never be balanced on the hunger of the most vulnerable in our society! Hardest hit are the families of the working poor. They live just above or below the federal poverty line, that is an income of \$23,000 for a family of four. And those just above, do not qualify for assistance.

Returning to the children, nearly 60 million live with food insecurity. Which is defined as, not having consistent access to nutritional food. We must help families with children to put food on the table. And the millions who lack housing also must be fed. Military families and Veterans ought to ever worry about feeding themselves and their children. We owe them this for their service and duty of protecting the country.

In California, public libraries are now offering meals as the need is so great. And a director of a Los Angeles food pantry comments, "Last week we served the highest number of families-ever, and we began 25 years ago!" Low wages lead to poverty, which leads to hunger. Adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage is 38% Lower than it was in 1968. In a recent article in *Military News*, a lady writes, "I am having trouble feeding

my family. My husband has been having medical problems, and I just can't seem to pull it all up together! And we are both Active-Duty service members." How do so many families fall through the cracks? How can the United States allow for our best and our brightest, our service personnel, live with food insecurity? There is always money for war, but we can't feed our poor.

The Presidential election of 2020 provides the opportunity to place hunger as a priority for all office seekers. And in the meantime, we can all help by contributing to local food drives and also support HARVESTERS, food pantries by making a contribution at the check-out at Price Chopper. Or, by volunteering at a food kitchen or pantry. All efforts add up, and You can play your part to address food insecurity in Kansas City.

Tom's Tasty Treats

By: Tom Valverde

Special sporting events on the television brings friends and family to gather to enjoy watching them. This week's tasty treat is a hot dip, that's delicious hot or warm. It can be served straight from the baking casserole, or for a special presentation, hollow out a loaf of Tuscan style bread or a round of Sourdough bread. The crowd will be happy when you make and serve the following:

Hot Artichoke And Crab Dip

Ingredients:

2, 8oz. Pkgs. Cream Cheese, softened
 1/2 c Sour Cream
 1/4 c Mayonnaise
 1/4 c Red or Green pepper, finely diced
 2 or 3 Garlic Cloves, minced
 1/2 c Red Onion, diced
 1 t Old Bay seasoning
 2 t chopped Fresh Dill
 1 t Worcestershire sauce
 1/4 t Red Paprika
 Salt and Pepper, to taste
 1 pound of Lump Crab meat, drained
 2 jars of Artichoke hearts
 Or, 1 14oz. can Artichoke bottoms
 1/4 - 1/2 bag Fresh Baby Spinach leaves, chopped
 1 1/2 c White Cheddar cheese, shredded

Set oven to 375°, and spray oven casserole with non-stick spray, or hollow out a loaf of bread.

Place all ingredients in a bowl, except for the cheese. Thoroughly blend the mixture, by stirring with a large wooden spoon.

Place 1/3 of the dip into the casserole top with 1/2 c Cheese, add another

1/3 of the dip with another 1/2 c Cheese, repeat. Place in a roasting pan or place the bread in a foil lined pan. Bake at 375° until heat thru, about 20-25 minutes.

Sprinkle top with Paprika. Let dip cool slightly, it is too hot to have straight out of the oven.



As with any recipe, adjust quantity to your taste. And use Mayonnaise, not a similar spread.

Serve with an assortment of good quality crackers. Happy snacking, and Enjoy!



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

over the last two years, net farm incomes have dropped 50 percent from their peak in 2013.

Congress could certainly help, and they could start by ratifying the pending USMCA trade agreement.

I have been a vocal proponent of the USMCA agreement from the beginning. I commend the U.S. House of Representatives for passing this agreement, and urge the U.S. Senate to do the same.

It's critical for Kansas. We are indeed an export state. And with us tonight, from our second largest customer, Canada, is Consul General Stephane Lessard.

Thank you for being here, Consul General.

When it comes to the livelihoods of Kansas families and businesses, we won't wait on Washington and the USMCA agreement however. We must take matters into our own hands.

The International Trade Division at the Department of Commerce was dismantled in recent years. I've instructed my Commerce Secretary, David Toland, to focus on rebuilding this division.

As I said before, Kansas is an export state, and we cannot compete in a global economy without strong international trading partners. We must breathe new life into our efforts to increase exports and compel international companies to choose Kansas.

I'm not just focused on convincing companies to choose Kansas. I'm also focused on the people who choose Kansas.

The effort to reconnect people with their state government and to rebuild public trust -- starts at the top.

From day one, I've wanted Kansans to hear from me about what we're doing, and why we're doing it. Kansans deserve to engage directly with their Governor.

That's why I've hosted "Kansan to Kansan" townhall meetings regularly since I took office. This fall, when I was building the state budget, I went on a listening tour to hear directly from the people about their priorities.

I've talked extensively -- and candidly -- with Kansans about what we've accomplished, and where we'd like to go in the year ahead. In turn, they've spoken candidly with me about their concerns, and how state government can better serve them.

I'd like to share their thoughts and concerns with you, and what

I think we can do about them, together, in 2020.

I promised Kansans that I would be "the education governor." I consider the progress we've made on public education to be our most important accomplishment to date -- but we have more to do.

Last year I stood here and asked you to put aside partisanship and work with me to finally provide schools with the resources they need to be successful. You did it, and I applaud you.

I was proud to stand with many of you that Saturday morning last April, as hundreds of public school teachers packed into the ceremonial office to witness the signing of legislation that would end a decades-long legal battle over school finance.

It was truly a remarkable moment. Not just because of what we accomplished, but how we accomplished it.

None of the teachers who attended the bill signing cared if it was a "Democrat" plan or a "Republican" plan. They cared only that their schools would be funded. That it might help improve Kansas teacher salaries, which rank 41st in the nation. They cared that it would ensure educators have what they need to serve Kansas children well.

Let's keep that in mind as we forge ahead.

Restoring school funding was a critical first step. But now I challenge us all to engage in a bigger and bolder conversation about "what's next."

Soon after taking office, I established the Council on Education. I asked the Council to re-evaluate every corner of our educational ecosystem -- early childhood, K-12, higher education and workforce development -- and to bring those players to the same table. I also engaged business and industry, labor, and other stakeholders so we may cultivate the workforce that Kansas will need to compete in the years ahead.

It is time to align all of these moving parts so that we can put Kansas at the forefront of growth and innovation. The work of this Council will be essential in helping us shape the future of Kansas education, the Kansas workforce, and Kansas as a state.

I want to recognize the co-chairs of this council - Dr. Cindy Lane, the former KCK Public Schools Superintendent and Dr. Fred Dierksen, current Superintendent of Dodge City Public Schools, who are here tonight in the gallery. Thank you for all your hard work - and the hard work yet to come.

Our progress on education is a valuable reminder to all of us that Kansans do not keep partisan score -- even when clever sports analogies are employed. Kansans care about results. That's what we get when we work together.

We can deliver bipartisan results again in 2020.

And we can start with one of the most urgent issues we face.

This must be the year Kansas becomes the 37th state to expand Medicaid.

Apparently, you have heard that Kansas made a little bit of news on this front last week.

After weeks of tough negotiations and lots of give and take, we developed a proposal that will not only expand healthcare to 150,000 Kansans, but also has the potential to lower health insurance premiums in the marketplace.

It was an honor to stand with so many of you -- Republican and Democrat, Representatives and Senators -- who have been committed to getting this done for Kansas.

We have so many reasons to bring this across the finish line.

In July, a study of mortality rates in non-expansion states estimated that 288 Kansans have died prematurely every year from 2014 to 2017 specifically due to our failure to adopt expansion.

Another study, released in November, showed that expansion improves infant and maternal health.

Yet another found the rate of rural hospital closure increases significantly in non-expansion states like Kansas.

Just last week, a study was released that linked Medicaid Expansion to a decline in opioid abuse.

There is a stack of rigorous, nonpartisan evidence to illustrate how critical KanCare expansion is to the health and welfare of our state. It grows by the day.

So does public support.

The number of expansion states continues to increase. No state has reversed its decision to expand. And voters across the ideological spectrum continue to reaffirm their support for expansion in election after election.

I'm talking about in states like Kentucky. Louisiana. Virginia. States where access to affordable healthcare drove people to the polls.

I'm talking about Nebraska, where 54% of voters approved Medicaid Expansion by ballot initiative in 2018.

I'm talking about Oklahoma, where in October a record number of petitions were submitted to put Medicaid expansion on

the 2020 ballot.

And, yes, I'm even talking about Missouri. Where expansion is well on its way to a statewide vote, with momentum growing by the day.

If nothing else, surely maintaining Kansas' 159-year tradition of beating Missouri is something we can all get behind...

In all seriousness:

As I said last week, compromise is hard. It is messy. It is slow. But it is so worth it.

Now it's up to all of you to finish the task.

When we do add this to our list of bipartisan accomplishments, it will not only save lives, it will close the book on a long, senseless, expensive political fight -- making room to improve access to health care and grow the Kansas economy.

We are so close. Let's get this done.

As we continue our work to rebuild Kansas, there's one area where we mean it... literally. It's time for us to develop a new, comprehensive transportation plan so that we can rebuild roads and bridges across our state.

My Secretary of Transportation, Julie Lorenz, and her team have spent months hosting community meetings to ensure that all Kansans - in communities large and small - have the opportunity to help shape the future of infrastructure in a way that meets local needs.

Infrastructure is about far more than just roads and bridges.

It's the means by which our school buses safely transport our most precious cargo. It's how we make Kansans' daily commutes faster and safer so they can spend more time with their families. It means jobs. Thousands of jobs. It's the gateway to rural broadband. And as an export state, it is how we get Kansas goods to market and keep our economy humming.

This will be the fourth time Kansas has pursued such an endeavor. Each plan has improved upon the plan before, adapting to changing needs throughout the state and building on lessons learned. Each plan has propelled Kansas into the future, making our transportation system one of the best in the nation.

There's one lesson from the past, in particular, I hope you will keep in mind as we begin this process anew:

Even the best laid infrastructure plan will crumble if we do not maintain the resources we need as a state to see it through.

As promised, last year I officially began "closing down" the "Bank of KDOT." I am fully committed to continuing that phase out

throughout my first term so that we can fulfill the promises of the previous transportation plan and invest in the future.

But I've always been clear that this pledge comes with one, critical caveat: stable state revenues.

Rebuilding fiscal stability in Kansas state government has been one of my top priorities as governor. Last January, I presented a balanced budget to the Legislature without raising taxes. A budget that paid down debt. Re-invested in core services like education and healthcare. All while leaving the largest ending balance in more than a decade.

The budget didn't quite return to me with all those features intact.

The budget that came back to my desk in May included \$182 million dollars more in spending than I had recommended. It did not maintain the statutorily-required ending balance we need to cushion state investments in case of an emergency. It also spent more than we were taking in.

The good news is that Kansas' economic outlook has stabilized, and even improved a bit. While the risk of a recession will always remain a possibility, the foreseeable future does not appear as ominous as it did last January.

That is why tomorrow, for the second year in a row, I will submit to you a balanced budget that continues our rebuilding efforts, that continues to pay down debt, and that honors my promise to cut taxes.

Kansas families are taxed more for food than anywhere else in the United States. These families shouldn't have to pay more than their fair share, especially when it comes to the essentials. So my budget will take the first step in lowering taxes on groceries, starting with Kansans who need help the most.

I've always considered lowering the tax on groceries an urgent need. But ultimately we must work our way back to that longstanding notion of the "three-legged stool." We must rebalance all of our revenue streams -- income, sales, and property tax.

The Kansas tax structure has become more than a little lopsided in recent years, which is why my budget will also include property tax relief.

As funding for schools, cities and counties was cut over the last decade, local units of government were left with few options to make

Gov. Kelly... ...from page 6

ends meet. Increasing property taxes was one of them.

This left local communities frustrated, and put a desperate strain on working Kansans and Kansans living on fixed incomes -- especially our seniors. They need relief, and we can give it to them in 2020.

Together, the food and property tax relief I will offer will take meaningful strides in re-building our overall tax structure so that it is more fair and more fiscally responsible.

But it is only the first step of what must be a multi-phased, multi-year process.

I understand that any discussion of taxes is politically charged. But if we ever truly want to move forward, we must confront the stark inequities, outdated inefficiencies, and expensive loopholes riddled throughout our tax code.

To this end, I established a Council on Tax Reform last summer to develop such comprehensive, commonsense reforms.

I'd like to recognize former Democratic Senator Janis Lee, who is here with us in the gallery, and former Republican Senate President Steve Morris, for spearheading this bipartisan effort.

The Tax Council's work will continue into 2020. In the meantime, the Council identified a targeted food sales tax cut through a refundable rebate and broad property tax relief as two initial steps we can and should take as a state to begin the long process of re-balancing our revenue streams.

Before I move on, I ask you to have a little faith.

As governor, I have worked diligently to honor every promise I've made to Kansans. I've also worked to include you as my partner in the governing process every step of the way. My commitment to working with you on tax reform is no different.

I began my remarks this evening with a quick stroll down memory lane — but not because the last 10 years were filled with such pleasant memories.

I started there because I don't want Kansas to finish there. We simply cannot go back.

So I want to be clear: to protect our recovery, and to ensure Kansas does not repeat the mistakes of the last decade, I will veto any tax bill that comes to my desk that throws our state back into fiscal crisis, or debt, or sends us back to court for

underfunding our schools.

I hope you won't stand for it either.

This has been an eventful year.

One year ago, our social safety net was in shreds.

Together, we took action. We hired dozens of new social workers across the state to better support vulnerable families. We created special response teams and amplified collaboration with the KBI to more quickly recover missing foster care youth. We brought nursing homes back from the brink of fiscal ruin without closing a single facility. We bolstered funding for mental health in an effort to confront an alarming increase in suicide. And, as you will hear more about tomorrow... after five years, we have made preparations to lift the Moratorium at Osawatomie State Hospital.

One year ago, our corrections system was in crisis. Prisons were dangerously overcrowded and staff shortages fueled consistently volatile situations.

It led to violent inmate uprisings at multiple facilities. The situation was so dire at El Dorado that I was forced last February to declare a state of emergency.

Together, we acted, investing \$30 million dollars to reduce overcrowding, address staff shortages and enhance safety in our prisons.

Today, the situation has stabilized. The emergency declaration has been lifted.

The Corrections Department, under the leadership of Secretary Jeff Zmuda, is providing more programming to help reduce recidivism — and shift from an approach that's purely punitive to one that emphasizes rehabilitation and workforce training.

By partnering with businesses to train these inmates in badly-needed job skills, we can both help the private sector fill their workforce shortage and set our incarcerated population on a path to success once they leave the corrections system. By expanding and innovating our capacity for substance abuse treatment and mental health treatment, we can bend the curve on our prison population long-term, improve public safety and strengthen Kansas communities.

We have now laid the groundwork for a serious discussion about comprehensive criminal justice reform.

These are the kinds of things we can accomplish when we act together.

The last decade was one of fits and starts, to be sure.

And, yes, there will be chal-

lenges in the decade ahead that we cannot foresee at this moment.

But last week, Kansas Republicans and Democrats stood together to announce a bipartisan compromise on an issue that had been mired in gridlock for years.

Kansas proved once more

what's "right" with our state. We stunned outsiders who had watched the disastrous policies of the previous decade unfold and had all but written us off.

And, if we're being honest, we may have even stunned each other.

So, my hope is that 10 years

from now, when this body convenes the first session of that new decade it will look back and remember this as the Soaring 20s, a decade when we lived up to our motto *Ad Astra Per Aspera*.

God bless our great and beloved state of Kansas.

Caminos: Jonathan Suarez *Life of Experiences*

By Rudy Padilla

Many of us have known people who have traveled extensively in their lives. In some instances, this was of their own choosing and others it was circumstances beyond their control.

Jonathan Suarez of Kansas City KS is a well-traveled man which becomes his 90 years of age. Sometimes it takes a bit of work asking Hispanic adults to speak of their war-time experiences.

Jonathan was the same, but lately he realizes the importance that Mexican American's tell their stories, realizing how Public Television overlooked their contributions in the recent documentary "The War."

His life began in Alamogordo, New Mexico and then he traveled many miles and had several of life's experiences before he arrived in Wyandotte County 9 years ago.

Alamogordo was established in 1898 and is described as "the southeastern New Mexico gateway to the Land of Enchantment." It is a city which locals and New Mexicans refer to as "Alamo" and is an hour and a half drive north of El Paso, Texas. Suarez was born on September 11, 1918. His family which included 4 sisters and 3 brothers then moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico when he was 10 years of age.

His family again relocated to the Los Angeles area in the year 1932, the year that Los Angeles was host of the 1932 World Olympics. He remembers being caught up in the excitement of the Olympics and was present for several of the events. Later, world events would cause change in his life. He was drafted in October of 1942 as part of a show-down with the Nazi's in Europe. Suarez was transported to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma for training.

His life was then constant traveling and training as a

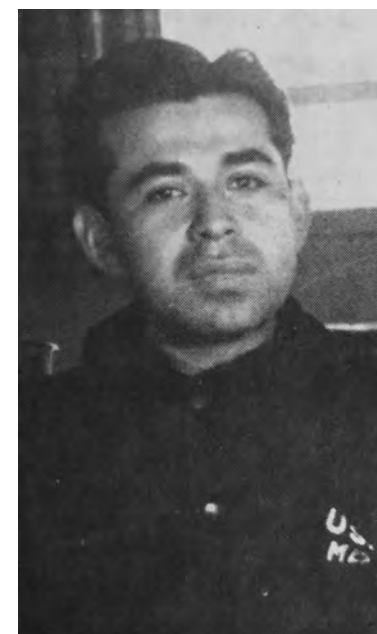
member of the 88th Infantry Division, 351st Regiment. His Division had training maneuvers in Northern Africa, after a few weeks they boarded ship and were sent to Naples, Italy for more training. His regiment spent the next year chasing the enemy in the hills of Italy. The living was difficult, but they fought on as they were trained to do.

The difficult part was to see the suffering of the children and the women who were left behind to survive alone. He and his fellow soldiers would go without food in order to give their rations to the many needy children who were always looking for food and water to drink.

He also remembers his regiment traveling so fast that their supply lines could not keep up the pace. In some instances, they had to stop and wait or have a detail go to find supplies.

They were often running out of gasoline, water and ammunitions. He vividly remembers the bombing of the Monte Cassino monastery in Italy, founded in 524 AD by St. Benedict. According to history, the bombing was carried out because it was feared the building was being used as a lookout post by the German Army. Because of the advantageous position high up in the mountains, the enemy could fire down on the American's. Suarez describes the sounds of the many American bomber aircraft as "devastating that day." There were many aircraft in the sky headed toward the stunningly beautiful monastery building. On February 15, 1944 the monastery located high on a peak was destroyed.

In May 1944 Jonathan was wounded in Italy by enemy fire. He was sent stateside and later spent Christmas in California at the U.S. Army hospital. The only photo he could share of his WWII days was of him sitting in the hos-



pital while he recuperated. He was released from the hospital in November 1945.

Jonathan Suarez remembers his buddies and family who also served in the WWII Europe and Pacific battles. His brother served as a gunner in the Army Air Corps and he had 3 uncles and a cousin serving all at the same time.

One irritating memory lingers, although he does not go into much detail. There was a Prisoner of War (POW) camp on the edge of Riverside, California at the end of 1945. He and the other soldiers did not like the attention which the German POW's were given by the young females who traveled to the camp.

Jonathan and his spouse Linda later would live in Mexico. His son Luis had taken some medical technician training in Mexico and would later relocate in Kansas City, Kansas. Jonathan loves his family. The Turner District of Kansas City, Kansas suits him fine.

This is another of the many chapters in his life. He is currently recuperating from some health problems. He soon hopes to spend more time with his hobby of model trains (model 'H' and 'N'). Possibly more community activities are in his future.



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