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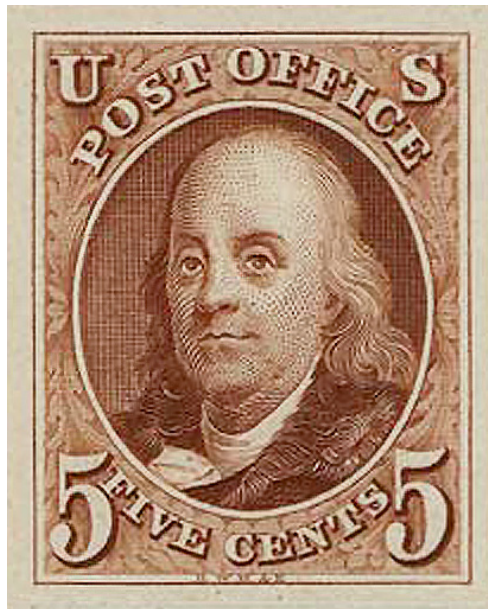
Benjamin Franklin: America's Leonardo

By Jim Haas

This week marks the birthdate of Ben Franklin on January 17, 1706. Like Leonardo da Vinci, Franklin's achievements in a wide range of fields were truly extraordinary. A successful Philadelphia printer, writer, and publisher, he went on to make lasting contributions as a scientist in electricity and oceanography (he named and charted the Gulf Stream saving trans-Atlantic ships days at sea); as the inventor of bifocal eyeglasses, the popular Franklin stove, and the lightning rod; as a successful diplomat in Great Britain and France; and as a statesman and political philosopher who helped write the Declaration of Independence and served as a local, state, and federal official.

Beginning as an apprentice printer, he was the Founding Father most devoted to the welfare of the common man and has been called the "most modern" of the new nation's creators. He believed that government should provide important public services, especially those that made learning and the free exchange of ideas available to ordinary people. In a 1747 pamphlet *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania* [old spelling], he wrote [in the style of the time]:

The good Education of Youth has been esteemed by wise Men in all Ages, as the surest Foundation of the Happiness both of private Families and of Commonwealths. Almost all Governments have therefore made it a principal Object of their Attention, to establish and endow with proper Revenues, such Seminaries of Learning, as might supply the succeeding Age with Men qualified to serve the publick with Honour to themselves, and to their Country.



The public academy he proposed became the College of Philadelphia, merging in 1791 with a state school to become the University of Pennsylvania, home of America's first medical school and first teaching hospital.

Because books were rare and expensive in his day, Franklin and several friends founded and funded, in 1731, the first library in the colonies where books were loaned free to the public. It still exists as the non-profit Library Company of Philadelphia, the forerunner of America's public libraries.

In 1775, the Second Continental Congress established the United States Post Office and named Franklin postmaster general because of his long experience as deputy postmaster-general of British North America. The first U.S. postage stamp was issued in 1847 and honored Franklin's service.

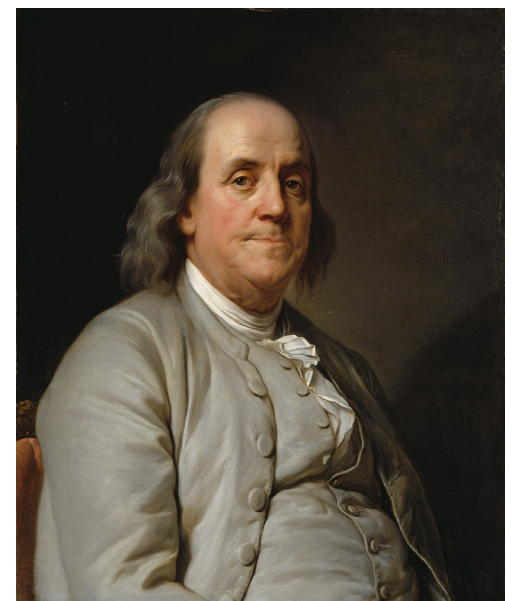
Franklin and a colleague established the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1751, the first in the colonies, and the next year Franklin organized the colonies' first homeowner's

insurance company. He also created one of the first volunteer firefighting companies.

As he matured, Franklin changed his views with the moral compass of man who relished humanity. As a young man, he occasionally owned a household slave and published ads in his newspaper listing slaves for sale, not unusual at a time when slaves were ten percent of Philadelphia's population.

By middle age, he began supporting abolitionists with the power of his writing and reputation. Eventually, he became president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery on whose behalf he formally petitioned the new U.S. Congress in 1790. The duty of Congress, he wrote, was to secure "the blessings of liberty to the People of the United States ... without distinction of color." The petition was voted down by slaveholding interests.

An excellent biography of this fascinating man is *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* by Walter Isaacson, Simon & Schuster, NY, 2003.





By Sharon Hoover

Welcome to Winter! The snow, ice and frigid cold resulted in government and school closings. My grandson, a Missouri resident, is having the time of his life sledding though he's not in favor of walking back up the hill. I will be hunkered down for the duration due to circumstances beyond my control.

First, a few tips from the Public Works regarding snow removal: Don't park on the street whenever

Comin' & Goin' Turner Style

possible. Shovel snow to the right of your driveway to help avoid snow blocking your driveway when the snowplow passes. Clear your sidewalks, as a property owner it's your responsibility. To report snow or ice removal, call 3-1-1 or visit mywyco.wyocok.org.

I just found out about this today, so I hope I'm not too late. Because of the weather, enrolment may be extended. South Branch Library and Catholic Charities are holding Preparation for Citizenship Classes for adults 18 years and older who have had a green card for at least 5

years. This is a free 10 week program beginning January 18 at 5:30 pm at the library. Call 913-295 8250 ext.3110 for more info.

KCKFD is launching its new Academy on April 4. They are now recruiting EMTs and licensed paramedics. Go to wyocok.org/careers for more info. Do not delay. Physical ability test on January 20, written test on January 24. and academy class members announced on March 18.


Do you have an interest in gaining more knowledge about your family history? The KCK Public Library

is holding a Zoom presentation entitled DNA & Your Family on February 3 at 3pm. Professional genealogist Eric Migdal will highlight the understanding of genetic genealogy for use in your family research. For more info or enroll go to www.kckpl.org.

Wyandotte West Library is holding a Literacy Fair for children ages 0 to 5 years on Monday, January 22, 5:30pm -7:00pm. The theme is Mo Willems, his fantastic characters, and amazing stories. Meet Pigeon and take a picture. Resources and information from Parents as Teachers KCK, Project Eagle, Family Conservancy, Lead to Read KC, Juniper Gardens Children's Project, Dreams KC, and KCKPS Head Start Program.

For adults, the Area Agency on Aging hosts orientation sessions the second Tuesday of the month. The next session will be February 13, 2024 from 10am-12pm. RSVP 913 573-8531.

Until next time, stay safe and be kind to those around you. STAY WARM!



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Nearly \$14 million to be Distributed to Families

TOPEKA—Kansas families with school-aged children will receive a one-time benefit of \$120 per child as part of the Supplemental Pandemic Electronic Benefit (P-EBT) program. A total of \$13.6 million will be distributed to approximately 114,000 school-aged children in January.

“The Supplemental P-EBT program helps parents and care providers access nutritious food for their families,” said Laura Howard, Secretary Kansas Department for Children and Families. “I am pleased that we are able to provide this benefit to Kansas children

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SENATE NEWS



By Sen. Pat Pettey

2024 Legislative Session Begins

The Legislature convened for its first day of session for the year on Monday, January 8th.

Committees also began meeting this week to begin reviewing proposed legislation and to hear presentations from associated agencies to inform legislators on topics related to issues the Legislature faces. This year, I am serving on the following committees:

- * Education
- * Public Health and Welfare
- * Ways and Means

Daily calendars, committee and district information, and full text and summaries of bills are all available online at www.kslegislature.org. You can hear legislative proceedings in the Senate by clicking “Senate” under Audio/Video Broadcast on the home page. To watch the Senate and select committees, click here.

I am honored to serve as your Senator. My office is located in 125E. Please feel free to contact me at 785-296-7375 or pat.pettey@senate.ks.gov.

Bipartisan Lawmakers Unveil Tax Cut Plan

On Monday morning, Democratic and Republican lawmakers joined Governor Kelly in support of her bipartisan tax cut plan that will save hardworking Kansans more than \$1 billion over the next 3 years.

The plan cuts taxes on:

* **Property.** Kansans across the state shouldn’t have to worry about being priced out of the homes they’ve raised their families in. That’s why Governor Kelly’s plan to cut taxes would raise the residential exemption on a state-wide property tax from \$42,000 to \$100,000.

* **Social Security.** Our seniors have worked hard their entire lives. Their next chapter shouldn’t

be spent worrying if they can afford medications or groceries. Governor Kelly’s tax cut plan would eliminate ALL taxes on social security income.

* **Groceries, Diapers, and Feminine Hygiene Products.** This plan will axe the sales tax on groceries, diapers, and feminine hygiene products immediately—no waiting until 2025.

* **School Supplies.** Back-to-school shouldn’t break the bank. That’s why Governor Kelly is proposing a back-to-school sales tax holiday—so more working families can ensure their children have the resources they need to be successful in the classroom.

We can’t afford to go back to Brownback. Instead of a radical tax experiment, let’s pass tax cuts

we can afford. Governor Kelly’s bipartisan tax cut plan will put money back into hardworking Kansans’ pockets, without taking a dime from our schools and infrastructure. I’m proud to support it.

GOVERNOR KELLY DELIVERS HER STATE OF THE STATE

In her State of the State message on Wednesday evening, Governor Laura Kelly laid out her plan to take Kansas to the next level. Her administration will focus on five key issues: Medicaid expansion, public education, early childhood, tax relief, and water. You can watch her remarks here.

* **Medicaid Expansion:** The Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act will extend health

insurance coverage to 150,000 Kansans and protect our rural hospitals – all at no additional cost to taxpayers.

* **Public education:** Public dollars belong in public schools – where 90% of Kansas kids go. We have fully funded education for 5 years, yet some want to reverse the progress we’ve made by directly stripping rural schools of the funds they need to stay open. We must continue to fully fund our public schools and reject any attempt to send public education dollars to private schools.

* **Early Childhood:** Shortages in child care are bad for our children, stressful for our parents, and they slow down our economy. That’s

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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Senator Pat Pettey... ...from page 3

why Governor Kelly is proposing a bill to establish the Office of Early Childhood - a one-stop-shop for families, child care providers, and businesses in need of early childhood services.

* Tax Relief: Governor Kelly has signed over \$1 billion in tax cuts for families, veterans, homeowners, farmers, and ranchers. Now, she and bipartisan legislators want to cut taxes on property, retirement, child care, and food - without taking a dime from our public schools.

* Water: The future of our economy and rural communities is threatened if we don't address our water crisis. Now more than ever before, Kansas has the funding, data, and momentum to tackle this issue.

Governor Laura Kelly is the leader Kansas families need. Under her leadership, we've seen record business investment, low unemployment, and a thriving job market. We've seen major investments in water, child care, and infrastructure.

The state of our state is strong, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the legislature to make it even stronger.

STATE OF THE JUDICIARY
Chief Justice Marla Luckert delivered the State of the Judiciary as scheduled on Wednesday. She highlighted cybersecurity as one of the judiciary's top priorities, and called on all branches of government to work together to protect our information. She also recognized how all three branches of government have joined forces to tackle significant problems that affect those involved in the judicial system-- from mental illness, to the shortage of attorneys in rural Kansas, to issues surrounding our child welfare cases.

GOVERNOR UNVEILS BUDGET PROPOSAL

On Thursday morning, Governor Laura Kelly announced her

annual budget. Her proposal is balanced and continues to fully fund Kansas' K-12 public schools, cuts taxes, and makes historic investments in child care and higher education. Here are just a few of the highlights of this proposal:

* On Expanding Medicaid: This wildly popular policy will ensure we have a healthy workforce, create jobs, and attract businesses. Governor Kelly's budget will provide access to healthcare for 150,000 Kansans, ensuring more Kansans can receive the essential mental and physical healthcare they need.

* On Early Childhood: An important part of making Kansas the best state to raise a family is giving our children the strongest possible start to life. This budget makes the largest single-year investment in our early childhood system in state history - putting over \$56 million toward expanding childcare and other early childhood care and education needs.

* On Public Schools: Governor Kelly's budget fully funds Kansas' K-12 public schools for the sixth year in a row. This continues our public schools' success and ensures every student has the resources they need to be successful. Her budget also puts Kansas on the path to fully fund special education within five years, which helps ALL of our students.

* On Responsible, Comprehensive Tax Relief: The Governor's tax relief plan will put \$1 billion back in Kansans' pockets over three years. It completely eliminates state Social Security taxes, provides essential property tax relief, axes the grocery tax once and for all, and creates a back-to-school state sales tax holiday every fall.

* It's a strong proposal, and I hope the Legislature will implement it.

FOLLOW OUR WORK

Let's stay connected this session! You can follow our caucus on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to receive legislative updates and information about how to get involved.

14 Million... ...from page 2

to reduce food insecurity for our youngest citizens."

Supplemental P-EBT, a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the American Rescue Plan Act, is designed to benefit school-aged children who received free or reduced-price school meals through the National School Lunch Program during the 2022-23 school year. Due to the complexity of gathering the data, the benefit is for the summer months of June, July, and August of 2023.

The benefit distribution will be auto-issued through a direct certifi-

cation process Jan. 17-26. Parents and guardians who believe their children are eligible, but do not receive a benefit in January may request the Supplemental benefit using the DCF Self-Service Portal Feb. 1-29, 2024.

Recipients may use their P-EBT funds to purchase eligible foods from approved retailers that accept Food Assistance benefits like grocery stores and online at Aldi, Amazon, or Walmart. For additional information visit www.dcf.ks.gov, Food Assistance.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) mission to protect children, strengthen families and promote adult self-sufficiency.

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YOU are invited

Anyone who believes in the mission of The League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC is eligible to join us. Being part of the conversation will bring us together with all of society.

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the largest and oldest Hispanic and Latino civil rights organization in the United States.[2] It was established on February 17, 1929, in Corpus Christi, Texas, largely by Hispanics returning from World War I who sought to end ethnic discrimination against Latinos in the United States. The goal of LULAC is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of Hispanic people in the United States. LULAC uses nationwide councils and group community organizations to achieve all these goals. LULAC has about 132,000 members in the United States.

Council 11085 has LULAC members in the counties of Douglas, Johnson and Wyandotte (Kansas) - Clay and Jackson (Missouri).

Join us at the monthly Zoom meetings - the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m.

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