

# State Representative

# Don Hineman

## Don's Legislative Update

December 13, 2013

### Rural Housing Shortage

Last week I traveled to Topeka to attend the meeting of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors. The topic of the meeting was Affordable Workforce Housing in Rural Kansas. This is an extremely important topic for rural Kansas, and the entire 118th District.

As I travel around my district I see residential homes that are vacant and falling into disrepair, and yet it is obvious that there is a shortage of decent affordable housing district-wide. In fact, I believe that a lack of adequate workforce housing is the number one impediment to economic growth in rural Kansas. A look at [current unemployment rates in Kansas](#) reveals that practically all of western Kansas is below the 4% unemployment level that economists consider full employment. In other words, essentially everyone in western Kansas who wants a job currently has one. If any business in western Kansas wants to expand their labor force (and there are many who do) they have to lure an existing employee away from another business or convince someone to migrate to western Kansas... and this means finding them a place to live. The problem isn't limited to the private sector, as public services, in particular hospitals and schools, face the same challenges in recruiting new employees.

During the meeting Ericka Gillespie-Nicholson told how a business in Quinter wanted to expand but simply could not find workers, and that was caused by a shortage of housing. That business was forced to leave Quinter and move its operations to Colorado in order to find the employees it needed for expansion.

Ken McCarty of McCarty Family Dairy of Rexford related the challenges his business has faced finding the necessary employees for their dairies in Rexford, Bird City, and Scott City. They have been forced to buy up existing homes in these communities and renovate them to create decent workforce housing. Now, however, McCarty would like to expand their operations from 7000 dairy cows to nearly double that. That expansion could be put on hold if they cannot hire additional employees, and that, in turn, depends on affordable housing.

Why does this housing shortage exist? There are many contributing factors, but the most significant is what is called the appraisal gap. Given current home construction costs, any new home built in Western Kansas will appraise for less than the cost of construction once it is completed. That makes it very difficult to consider building new housing unless the developer can afford to cover both the appraisal gap and the required down payment.

Two years ago the Kansas Legislature funded a new initiative through the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation to provide some funding for moderate income housing... i.e. workforce housing. The funding was a



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### Useful Phone Numbers

Department On Aging  
800-432-3535

Child/Adult Abuse Hotline  
800-922-5330

Child & Family Services  
888-369-4777

Consumer Protection  
800-423-2310

Crime Tip Hotline  
800-252-8477

Crime Victim Assistance  
800-828-9745

Gov- Brownback  
800-748-4408

Highway Road Conditions  
511 (in Kansas)

Housing Hotline

modest \$2 million in FY 2013 and another \$2 million in FY 2014. That is enough to provide some grants or loans to cities and counties to develop multi-family rental units, single-family homes, infrastructure extensions, or rehabilitation of dilapidated housing. I am pleased that two communities in the 118th District, Quinter and Hoxie, have been awarded grants through this program.

The moderate income housing program is working well, and I hope the legislature can find a way to continue funding. But let's not kid ourselves. The state of Kansas cannot afford to solve this housing problem with state revenues, and we certainly don't need to establish a state-level department of Housing and Urban Development. I am pleased, however, that Governor Brownback and his staff recognize the severity of the problem, and I intend to work with them to develop free-market-oriented solutions to the problem.

<http://cjonline.com/news/2013-12-04/kansas-council-explores-rural-housing-shortage>

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/21a8bf0f05384b7fb4581377fb660483/KS--Rural-Housing>

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## Battle Canyon Dedication



Scott County was host to a special ceremony in September, commemorating an event which took place 135 years earlier, on September 27, 1878. On that day a group of Northern Cheyenne tribal members were involved in a skirmish with members of the 4th U.S. Cavalry at a location near present-day Scott Lake State Park. The site, known as Punished Woman's Fork, is in a narrow canyon and features a cave at the upper end, where the Northern Cheyenne women and children hid while the warriors prepared for battle.

The Northern Cheyenne had been banished by the federal government from their homelands in Montana to a reservation in Oklahoma in retribution for their part in the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. The Cheyenne were never at home in Oklahoma. A large group of them, 353 strong, decided they would leave and return to their ancestral home in the north. As they reached northern Scott County on September 27 they prepared for battle as the cavalry approached. During the battle one member of the cavalry, Commanding officer Lt. Col. William Lewis, and one Northern Cheyenne warrior were killed. The Battle at Punished Woman's Fork could well have led to the extermination of the Northern Cheyenne people, but a fortunate series of events allowed them to escape from the site under cover of

800-752-4422

**KanCare Assistance**  
866-305-5147

**Kansas Lottery**  
800-544-9467

**Legislative Hotline**  
800-432-3924

**Mental Health Services**  
888-582-3759

**School Safety Hotline**  
877-626-8203

**Social Security**  
800-772-1213

**Taxpayer Assistance**  
785-368-8222

**Tax Refund Status**  
800-894-0318

**Unclaimed Property**  
800-432-0386

**Unemployment Insurance**  
800-292-6333

**Vital Statistics**  
785-296-1400

**Voter Registration**  
800-262-8683

**Welfare Fraud Hotline**  
800-432-3913

**Worker's Comp**  
800-332-0353

darkness and continue their journey northward.

Here are three good accounts of the exodus:

“In Dull Knife’s Wake, the True Story of the Northern Cheyenne Exodus of 1878”, By Vernon R. Maddux and Albert Glenn Maddux, Horse Creek Publications.

“The Northern Cheyenne Exodus, in History and Memory”, Ramon Powers and Jim Leiker, University of Oklahoma Press.

“Tell Them We Are Going Home, The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyenne”, John Monnett, University of Oklahoma Press.

To commemorate this encounter, the citizens of Scott City, under the leadership of renowned local artist Jerry Thomas, organized a dedication ceremony for the 135th anniversary of the battle, followed by an all-day symposium featuring authors as well as Northern Cheyenne tribal leaders and elders.

Close to 150 Northern Cheyenne tribal members made the long journey from Montana to Scott County for the event. Many of them had never been to the battle site, and a few had been unaware of this episode in their tribal history beforehand. It was a moving experience for all as they surveyed the battle site where their ancestors narrowly escaped death on their quest for freedom. I was asked to offer welcoming remarks as a local elected official:

“As the state representative for Scott County, I am honored and privileged to welcome all of you here today, those who now call these lands home as well as those who have traveled many miles for this occasion... the 4th Cavalry from Oklahoma, and especially the Northern Cheyenne people, who have traveled from eastern Montana. It is really impressive that so many of you made the trip, but it is fitting that you did so, because this site and the battle that occurred here represent the intersection of the history of your people and the history of the European settlers who came later.

Like many of my neighbors, I am descended from homesteaders who settled on the high plains of Western Kansas less than a decade after the battle that we commemorate today. And although my people have been on these lands for more than 125 years, we are ever mindful that we are not the first to call these lands home; we are not the first to look to this land for sustenance, shelter, and a way of life. Even today, when we find an arrowhead, a spear point, a scraper, or a broken piece of pottery, we keep that object as a memento of a long ago time and of another people who once called these lands home. When I find an artifact I often reflect on the person who made that object and wonder about his life and times. And now, thanks to this event I have the opportunity to get to know the descendants of those earlier residents of this land.

I read in the paper that this would be a one-time event. I hope that isn’t so. Battle Canyon and the people involved in that conflict represent an important chapter in the history of both native Americans and the European settlers. That history has been too often overlooked and forgotten. We must insure that both the history and the battle site are preserved for future generations. An annual event would be too ambitious, but I suggest that we should already set our sights on fifteen years from now, and start planning for another commemoration on September 27, 2038, the 150th anniversary of the battle.”

My thanks and congratulations to Jerry Thomas and Tina Walker of Jerry Thomas Gallery, Dennie Siegrist and Jerry Snyder of El Quartejejo Museum and Scott County Historical Society, and all the volunteers who made the

135th commemoration a great success.

<http://www.scottcountyrecord.com/news/no-sense-of-sadness-at-battle-canyon>

<http://www.scottcountyrecord.com/news/visions-take-wade-redhat-into-the-past>

<http://www.scottcountyrecord.com/news/mystery-solved>

I encourage everyone to spend some time at [El Quartejejo Museum](#) and [Jerry Thomas Gallery](#) and to visit the site of the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork, near Scott Lake State Park.

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## 2014 Campaign

The 2014 election season is rapidly approaching, with the primary on August 5, 2014 and the general election on November 4. I must prepare now if I am to meet the challenge that next year's election could bring, and I have already taken the first step by filing for re-election.

Early contributions will allow me to prepare so that I can mount the most effective campaign when the time comes. As a reminder, following last year's redistricting by the Federal courts, changes to my 118th district mean I'm now the "Topeka Voice" for 60% new families. It takes a good campaign account balance to reach these new people in four new counties.

You may contribute online [here](#) or by sending a check to:

**Hineman for Kansas**  
116 S. Longhorn Rd.  
Dighton, KS 67839

Contribution limit (per election cycle) is \$500 and is nondeductible. Contributions may be accepted from individuals at any time. Contributions from businesses and corporations cannot be accepted during the 2014 Legislative Session, which starts on January 13. I would appreciate your support now. As always, I couldn't introduce myself to everyone without your help.

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### **Cowboy Logic**

"Anyone who says marriage is a 50/50 proposition knows nothing about men, women or fractions."

### **Quote of the week**

"Vegetables are interesting but lack a sense of purpose when unaccompanied by a good cut of meat." - Fran Lebowitz

### **Sermon in a sentence**

You cannot unsay a cruel word.

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## **Representative Don Hineman**

Visit My Website at <http://www.hinemanforkansas.org/>

116 S. Longhorn Road  
Dighton, Kansas 67839

Phone: 620-397-2504

Fax: 620-397-755

Email: [dhineman@st-tel.net](mailto:dhineman@st-tel.net)

Room 50A, State Capitol Building  
300 SW 10th Street

Topeka, Kansas 66612

Phone: 785-296-7636

Email: [don.hineman@house.ks.gov](mailto:don.hineman@house.ks.gov)

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