

State Representative

Don Hineman

Don's Legislative Update

February 10, 2014

Snow Days

The fourth week of the legislative session was cut short when a significant winter storm hit the state. The legislature did not meet on Tuesday or Wednesday, and the 12+ inches of snow that dropped on Topeka stymied legislative progress. Despite this unplanned interruption, legislative leaders decided not to adjust the schedule to make up for the days lost.

[<Back to Top>](#)

Broadband Access

[Senate Bill 304](#) generated some controversy this week. The bill, which would have prevented Kansas cities from providing broadband services to their residents, ran into significant resistance. The bill had been proposed by the Kansas Cable Telecommunications Association with the reasoning that government should not be in competition with private business.

As a strong proponent of free market enterprise I am sympathetic to that argument. But this controversy reminds me of another one involving phone service to rural Kansas. It occurred in the late 1980s or early 1990s, when I was serving as Lane County Commissioner. At that time Dighton and Hill City were served by the same telephone service provider, and that service was absolutely terrible. The discontent reached such a crescendo that the phone company finally convened a meeting in Hill City to take input from concerned citizens. I testified that we had heard and read about the information superhighway, but that we felt as if we were living on an information cow path. Incredibly, the representative of the phone company responded that her company had been operating on the premise that all we country folk expected out of our phone company was a reliable dialtone!

The situation was thankfully resolved when that phone company gave up their territories in rural Kansas and allowed them to be served by local cooperative telephone companies. Once that happened the affected residents experienced a rapid upgrade in phone service and a continued commitment to expanded service. My thanks to the local companies like S&T Telephone, Rural Telephone Service Company and Golden Belt Telephone for making that a reality.

That experience has led me to conclude that at least in rural Kansas, strictly private free enterprise is sometimes inadequate to provide essential services in a cost-effective manner. Competition is frequently so thin in those markets that allowing local governments or local cooperatives the authority to provide those services is helpful. Just that threat of potential competition from the city makes the provider more responsive, leading to lower prices



In This Issue:

[Snow Days](#)

[Broadband Access](#)

[Doctor Shortage](#)

[The Quarter-Million Dollar Classroom](#)

[Town Hall Meeting Schedule](#)

[2014 Campaign](#)

[Cowboy Logic](#)

Visit Don's Website:
[Hineman for Kansas](#)

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

and better service. Obviously I am not alone in this view. Legislators were flooded with so many communications in opposition to the bill that it has now been pulled back, although it may well reappear later in the session.

<http://cjonline.com/news/state/2014-02-05/wire-cut-senate-bill-banning-municipal-broadband-networks>

[<Back to Top>](#)

Doctor Shortage

Kansas has a doctor shortage. Any resident of rural Kansas is surely aware of that, but here are the numbers: Kansas ranks 39th nationally in doctors per capita, and 89 of Kansas' 105 counties have been classified by KDHE as primary care health care provider shortage areas. That situation is projected to even get worse as baby boomer physicians reach retirement age at the same time that demand for health care services will be increasing.

Governor Brownback has proposed additional funding for the Rural Bridging Program to bring doctors to rural Kansas. That is an initiative that certainly deserves support, but that alone is not enough. Unfortunately the University of Kansas School of Medicine no longer has the capacity to produce enough doctors to meet the future needs of Kansas' citizens. KU is [working to correct that deficiency](#), but more must be done. This is a long-range need that requires immediate attention, and I continue to work with others to insure that Kansans continue to have access to quality health care in the future.

[<Back to Top>](#)

The Quarter-Million Dollar Classroom

There is a statistic circulating in Topeka and throughout the state that demands greater explanation. Even Governor Brownback alluded to the statistic in his recent State of the State message. In Kansas, total funding per K-12 student is over \$12,500, which equates to \$250,000 for a classroom of twenty students. That is a big number, and some use that number to make a case for level or reduced funding for schools. But a [closer examination](#) of what makes up that quarter-million dollar investment is revealing. My thanks to Mark Tallman of the Kansas Association of School Boards for this analysis.

[<Back to Top>](#)

Town Hall Meeting Schedule

Saturday, February 15

- 10:00 am. Garden City – St. Catherine's Hospital
- 1:00 p.m. Scott City (with Senator Mitch Holmes) – Scott County Library
- 2:30 p.m. Dighton (with Senator Mitch Holmes) – Courthouse Community Room

Monday, March 3 with Senator Ralph Ostmeyer

Locations to be announced

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
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

8:00 a.m. Oakley
9:30 a.m. Quinter
11:00 am. WaKeeney
1:00 p.m. Hill City
2:30 p.m. Hoxie

Tuesday, March 4

Locations to be announced

9:00 a.m. Colby (with Senator Ralph Ostmeyer)
1:00 p.m. Leoti (with Senator Larry Powell)

[<Back to Top>](#)

2014 Campaign

The 2014 election season is rapidly approaching. I must prepare now if I am to meet the challenge that this 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. Following last year's redistricting by the Federal courts, my 118th district changed significantly, and I'm now the "Topeka Voice" for many new families. It takes a good campaign account balance to reach these people in the four new counties of Scott, Thomas, Sheridan, and Graham.

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 while the legislature is in session. I would appreciate your support now.

[<Back to Top>](#)

Cowboy Logic

Beware of a half-truth – you may have hold of the wrong half.

Quote of the week

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.” - **William Arthur Ward**

Sermon in a sentence

It's not what we have but what we enjoy that constitutes our abundance.

[< Back to Top >](#)

Representative Don Hineman

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

116 S. Longhorn Road Room 50A, State Capitol Building
Dighton, Kansas 67839 300 SW 10th Street
Phone: 620-397-2504 Topeka, Kansas 66612
Fax: 620-397-755 Phone: 785-296-7636
Email: dhineman@st-tel.net Email: don.hineman@house.ks.gov

Newsletter Paid for by Hineman For Kansas - Derek Martin, Treasurer