January 3, 2013

Friday, 03 January 2014 10:33

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City manager Mark Hall insists "The city has an easement to operate a shooting range, which affords the city the sole responsibility and authority to do so," in Letter to the Editor.

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Range still closed

Auditions set for Jan. 14, 15 for musical **'Into the Woods'**

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Housing unit plans at Village Plaza moving ahead

By GRELLA MORENO
Leader & Times

Thursday's special city commission meeting called for a public hearing and a first and final reading of a zoning change and a site plan for a 48-unit apartment HUD and Sec. 8HUD supporting Village Plaza and Edwards Street.

Housing and community development director Karen LaFontaine then recapped the previous weeks' work with the ordinance No. 4818.

Last Tuesday, the Leader & Times Village Plaza was to adopt a plan to establish an RHED. The next commission meeting would be the last chance for the apartment plan.

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Governor's plan aligns with Liberal's needs

Fully-funded, all-day kindergarten in five years?

By ANGIE COLEMAN
Leader & Times

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback's announcement Dec. 30, 2013, that he plans to promote — and fund — all-day kindergarten statewide was met with a cheer in Liberal. If the governor and Brownback's plan become reality, Kansas would become the 15th state nationwide to provide full-day kindergarten at no charge. But a celebrating Liberal school district would be one of the first state leading for education dollars, demonstrable over the past four years. Between 2009 and 2013, Kansas cut its education spending by 18.3 percent — a decrease greater than all but three other states.

"It's time when states and the nation are being competitive in education, we need to be using all technologies and adapt to the completion of a

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District superintendent Paul Lyons said "It is vital that you get children in school all day, no matter in you rate, if you never have been in a school, achievement where you want it to be."

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FRIDAY
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Justice delays health law's birth control mandate

By JOEL HOLLAND
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court has thrown a block into President Barack Obama's new health-care law, ruling that religious-minded companies and nonprofit organizations provide health insurance that includes birth control.

The high court late Monday night in a 5-4 vote blocked implementation of the contraceptive coverage requirement, only hours before the law's insurance mandate was to take effect for many firms.

Five justices, which come after federal court filings by Catholic-affiliated groups from around the nation in recent weeks, granted the request by lawyers for the president's signature law into temporary slumber. At least one federal appeals court signed with Democrats appointed to the bench has upheld the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

The White House on Wednesday issued a statement saying the law's administration is confident the law is on solid footing. The administration is working with faith-centered groups to ease the burden of complying with the law's contraceptive coverage while preserving non-profit religious organizations with religious objections to contraceptive coverage from having to contract, arrange, pay or refer for such coverage.

Announcements by companies from an organization of Catholic nuns in Conway, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and a Texas firm, Hobby Lobby, that they would be exempt had been denied earlier in the day by a federal appeals court.

The government is "temporarily enjoined from enforcing against applicants the contraceptive coverage requirements imposed by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and implementing regulations," the Supreme Court said.

Companies who sued in New York Sunday night to hold the final 10-second countdown and push the mandate back beyond the Jan. 1 deadline, lost in a 2-1 Tenth Circuit vote. Lower government officials said Friday they expected to lose earlier. A Denver federal judge had rejected a request for a permanent or temporary block even for those under before Jan.

"The government has lots of ways to deliver contraceptive to people," said Mark Rienzi, a lawyer for the

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State attorneys general claim ObamaCare changes are illegal

In this Dec. 11, 2013, file photo, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington. There's another quirk in the Obama administration's new health insurance system: It lets insurance companies cancel policies that don't meet new requirements, but it also lets them keep those policies unchanged. It's a reminder that the new coverage for many uninsured Americans comes with a third party in the mix this fall. And the system's wiring for extra vital federal functions isn't yet fully connected. AP photo/Jose Luis Magana

Illinois state attorneys general are slamming the Obama administration for making repeated changes to ObamaCare without consulting the states, a practice they contend violates the law in Illinois.

In a Thursday letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius the group specifically criticized the administration's decision to allow insurance companies to cancel policies that would otherwise be out of compliance with the Affordable Care Act for reasons you can't keep your doctor, for example. They say the law is both federal and state law because it "compounds illegal executive action."

"We support allowing citizens to keep their health insurance coverage, but the way in which the administration has done this was — through unilateral, illegal congressional action," the letter states.

The attorneys general also express concern about the impact of changes to ObamaCare enrollment exchanges, and accuse the administration of ignoring the potential vulnerability of consumer information.

"In attempts to expand, we take the privacy of our states' consumers very seriously," the letter states, and accuses the Administration's decisions not to

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ObamaCare brings new taxes, fees for 2014

For those who don't buy coverage, the IRS plans to slap them with a fine

By Jim Abrams
Associated Press

With the launch of coverage under the health care law on Wednesday's deadline, the government is ready to tax — or pay off the hundreds of billions of dollars the government intends to raise over the next decade to help pay for the program.

The law's tax increases come in the form of fees on health insurance companies which could transfer into higher premiums, and a tax on those who don't buy coverage, the IRS plans to slap them with a fine — some call it a tax — of $95 for 2014.

That is only the beginning, the conservative Heritage Foundation said in a report.

The largest revenue-raiser for long in the year is an annual fee on health insurers, meant to help fund premium subsidies and other provisions.

The fee is expected to bring in $8 billion this year and roughly $100 billion over the next decade. The Heritage Foundation said it will cost 200 Democrat lawmakers — an image it opposed in warning that those votes will be used in the next campaign. The same will go for Affordable Care Act subsidies.

Heritage's congressional study by economist Chris Weyrich estimated that taxes will rise in 2014 by up to $1 per cent for that income alone. By 2023, the study said, rates could be rising by as much as 10 to 12 percent because of the law.

The other major fee to watch out for is the tax on those who don't buy coverage. Under the law, those who do not get insurance by the end of March and do not qualify for a waiver will be charged the fee. The most that people will be $95, or 1 percent of household income, whichever is higher.

The penalty will increase, consid-

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