March 13, 2014

Thursday, 13 March 2014 09:54

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City to expand bus service

KDOT grant allows adding 3 new buses

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Feds, states reach agreement

• Speculation the Lands is Done

Recently the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency (NRCS), signed the Rangewide CRP and Gas Industry Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken.

The services also released an accompanying environmental assessment (EA). The agreement is the result of longstanding cooperation between the services and the five range states of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken: Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and New

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Not a sure thing

Kansas Supreme Court ruling could bring more money to USD 480 — maybe

USD 480 Liberal Public Schools

By RACHEL CLEVENGER
• Leader & Times

A recent ruling by the Kansas Supreme Court could mean good news for Liberal, but only time will tell if it will actually bring more money to USD 480. Although the opinion released Friday morning by the Kansas Supreme Court was the Kansas Legislature's unconstitutional funding from school districts across the state — Liberal included — it did not specify how the Kansas Legislature must proceed in meeting Rangeright.

The conservative court's 7 year-long battle with the state's Public School Finance Act (Gen. Ch. 46-1a) and the ruling said the state must fund the entire amount of the Local Option Budget (LOB) and Capital Outlay (CO) from getting. But it doesn't say where the state has to find that money.

"The Legislature's current plan for the next year will not be adequate until May or even June," and we really cannot answer CO, LOB and Rangeright after that," the court said in its ruling.

On Monday night's board of education meeting superintendent of schools Fred Gaddis was upbeat about the ruling.

"It will be a benefit to Liberal's schools that would be an additional $800,000 dollars just shy of $1 million," he said. "But I always ship every Kansas annoying

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Calif. beef recall may affect area stores

By ROBERT WEILL
• Leader & Times

Several local grocery stores are a chief that may have received beef from a California company which has recently recalled nearly 9 million pounds of meat across the U.S.

Oklahoma City TV station KWCH-TV reported the Rancho

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THURSDAY MARCH 13
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Brownback touts policies on education, record state revenues in case for re-election

Cutting taxes to increase revenues is not a new idea. Ronald Reagan did it in the 1980s, and the economy boomed. Brownback is looking for the same to take place in Kansas.

By DON SMITT
• Leader & Times

Polls indicate that Gov. Sam Brownback is facing a stiff challenge from Paul Davis, but if the governor's recent becomes a focus, it will be hard to argue with success.

During Brownback's first term, he has lowered income taxes, created a surplus and has invested heavily in education, including in Liberal.

Brownback, considered one of the most conservative governors in the nation, has also shown his ability to work with Democrats and moderates in spite of the Republican mainstream, including his focus on all-day Kindergarten.

"It's a big deal, and it's interesting only to a child's education is key, it is important," Brownback said. "It means odd to me to not pay all day in LSD and had a lot of Democrats when all the Republicans were against it. Democrats were the pretty much on national scores on fourth grade

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Governor Sam Brownback encourages the crowd at the finish line of the International Pancake Race Sunday to support the local runners. Brownback is seeking re-election as the state's governor and shared some of the accomplishments of his first term. *Jeff Pierce/File*

Bright Futures supports bond

Staff and reports

Bright Futures Liberal, a volunteer organization dedicated to helping children achieve success, has endorsed the school bond proposal that will be on the ballot April 1.

The organization supporting the bond, Bright Futures stated, "Whether it be doing so that first or a second year student can read proficiently by the end of third grade, mentors who the child has taken a commitment to meet their time, talent and treasure in their schools students are more likely to stay in school through graduation, have a higher degree of self-worth and confidence, and are more likely to be successful in life."

The bond proposal was designed by community members, educators and business leaders in an effort to meet the needs of students in Liberal by the age of the elementary and middle school buildings.

The proposal would replace seven kindergarten-through-eighth-grade middle school facilities with five kindergarten-through-fifth-grade elementary schools and two middle schools, one for grades 6-8 and one for 9-12. The elementary schools would be new buildings, and the two intermediates in Liberal Southwest and Cottonwood would be remodeled to serve 6th grade students. The old would be replaced with two new middle school buildings, and the current West facility would be used as part of

• See BONDS Page 5A

Public meeting to discuss bond March 20

Staff and reports

Citizens for Responsible Growth will host a meeting at 6 p.m. March 20 at the Rock Island Depot to provide information about the upcoming school bond issue.

Mayor Gary Stevens will be present.

Several citizen representatives will provide a 20-minute presentation outlining the proposal, and the Citizens for Responsible Growth will discuss how the public can vote for the plan.

After the presentation, questions will be taken from those who attend.

ObamaCare Band-Aid? Millions potentially exempted from individual mandate through 2016

• Obamacare

The Obama administration is preparing another Band-Aid at the millions of people wounded by the Affordable Care Act, allowing them to be exempt from their existing health coverage.

The latest change, quietly announced last week, allows many of those to skirt the law's "individual mandate" through 2016.

The change was intended to be a victory lap, meaning that the government would let people keep otherwise out-of-compliance health plans for another two years. Instead, it has been a reminder of the problems when policies were cancelled by "hardship exemptions" through the law.

What that means in many of those who were dropped from their plans last year is that they can keep a new set of lackluster or bare-bone insurance.

For many though, the damage of being kicked off their health insurance is done.

Those states and insurers are still refusing to reoffer cancelled plans. Critics of the law cited the latest extension as yet another sign of the chaos and confusion surrounding the law.

"With less than three weeks remaining before the deadline, there can have been no significant period the Obama administration continues to extend the deadline for the law's core obligation," Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee staff in a report on the extension of time to enroll in the Affordable Care Act, noting the extension comes at a time when the law's failures when nobody is watching.

People have been told for months that March 31 is the deadline to buy health insurance, and that the new rates'll only cost now have three more to comply.

Nevertheless, late last year had already delayed the mandate for that group through 2014. The latest change extends that for two more years.

An official with the Department of Health and Human Services told FoxNews.com that "we want

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Happy Birthday, Mel Velasquez!
Liberal, Kansas