Casino withdrawal affects community, state government

by Mary Rupert 312-261-155

The withdrawal of the application for a casino at the Kansas Speedway last week by Kansas Entertainment may have a ripple effect on the state government and the local community.

State legislators already have been talking about drastic cuts in projects because of the faltering economy, and with an expected decline in future state revenues because of the delay in the casino opening, they may look for even deeper cuts.

“We’ve got to cut $4 billion in spending over the next 2.5 years,” said State Sen. Chris Steineger, D-6th Dist. “I believe it is possible without a tax hike. That will be my position.”

Besides trimming spending, the see CASINO, page 19
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Legislature may look at selling the state's assets, including the University of Kansas Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, Steiniger said. State-owned land around the edge of the Edwards Center campus in Johnson County, an extension of the University of Kansas, also could be sold, he said. He also mentioned selling Forbes Field, state-owned property in Topeka that is vacant.

Selling KU Hospital to a for-profit business would generate a lot of property tax in Wyandotte County for property that is currently tax-exempt, Steiniger pointed out.

School districts here are preparing themselves for potential cuts in their budgets after the first of the year. Piper Superintendent Steve Adams told his board Dec. 8 that state officials could be thinking about cutting the education budgets for kindergarten through 12th grades, even though that area has been protected from budget cuts in the past.

The $705 million casino project in Wyandotte County was withdrawn Dec. 5 because of the financial markets, according to the developers, a partnership of the International Speedway Corp. and the Cordish Co. Developers said they were prepared to launch the project in phases, but the contract they made with the state called for them to complete the entire project by 2011. The developers are receiving their $25 million privilege fee back from the state.

Kansas is keeping the $25 million privilege fee from the Boot Hill casino in Dodge City, being built by Butler National Service Corp. of Olathe, according to a spokesman. That casino project moved forward Dec. 5.

In a statement, Kansas Entertainment developers said they would reapply for the casino project here with a proposal to build it in phases at the same site. The reapplication process is expected to take at least nine months. The process will be reopened from the start, and different casino sites and plans could be proposed by other developers. A lengthy process, with changes in the economy as the months elapsed, has been cited as a drawback by some.

"My biggest problem is with the Cordish group," Sen. Steiniger said. "They really led us on. Even four to six weeks ago, they were saying they were ready to start, and they didn't do it."

He said the developers knew all along the financial markets were "headed south" and they have been "a little disingenuous." He said he felt that the state was misled.

He said he didn't think the Kansas system of state-owned and operated casinos, and contracts with developers, was at fault.

"The legislation was crafted with a lot of public input," he said. Lobbyists for casino developers did not express any problems then with the state ownership and contract process, he said.
Community National excited about its future

By DAVE SEATON
Winfield Publishing

The newest bank in Cowley County is the Community National Bank in Winfield.

The bank opened in temporary offices at 800 Main Place in early 2007. The bank moved to its new location at 1112 Main in October of this year.

The Winfield bank is one of 22 “banking centers” or branches of Community National Bank, which was started in Chanute in 1987.

Community National has sprawled across southeast Kansas during the past two decades, leapfrogging from one small town to another. In recent years, the organization has moved into larger communities including Coffeyville, El Dorado and Winfield.

Dr. Phil Eastep, a practicing dentist, is chairman of the board. Eastep lives on a farm in Montgomery County. His dental office is in Cherryvale.

Eastep said his organization’s corporate culture was to build on the strength of individuals who were leaders in their own towns. “We have those people in many small communities,” he said. Community National decided to build a bank in Winfield primarily because its president, Mike Mildfelt, was such an individual. Eastep said.

“We love Winfield,” he said. “I think we’ve got a great future there.”

Mike Mildfelt has been active in business and civic groups in Winfield. He is a brother of Dan Mildfelt, president and chief executive officer of the larger Community National organization.

Before coming to Winfield, Mike Mildfelt worked for 15 years at the Kansas State Bank and Trust in Wichita. His brother, Dan, came to Chanute, where Community National has its central offices, from the First National Bank in Kansas City, Mo.

Community National Bank’s new home in Winfield was formerly occupied by Locke Supply, a dealer in plumbing and electrical supplies. Before that, the building was a Dillon’s grocery store and before that the home of Stuber Brothers’ auto dealership.

Mike Mildfelt would not comment on the cost of reconstructing and remodeling the building, except to say it came in at estimate. A new entrance, new windows...
Bank

from page one

and exterior columns give the building a whole new look. The bank has a drive-in facility, reception area, teller cages, several loan offices and a board room, all with tile floors and dark wood trim.

The remodel was done by LaForge & Budd Construction Co. of Parsons.

Eastep is a graduate of the University of Kansas. He earned his doctorate in dentistry at the University of Kentucky, and lives on a farm in Montgomery County with his wife, Sue. They have two grown children.

The ownership of Community National is spread widely among stockholders in southeast Kansas, Eastep said. Bank managers are encouraged to own stock, he added. While he himself has “a significant position” as a stockholder, Eastep said, there is no dominant owner of the bank’s shares.

Other Community National directors besides Eastep include Mike Mitchell and Ken McCoy, of Chanute, Ken Gilpin, of Iola, Larry Crawford, of El Dorado, and Jon Harrison, of Wichita. The banks in the organization are actually owned by a multi-bank holding company, Community Bancorp.

In several towns where Community National operates, advisory committees of local citizens have been organized. Such committees exist in Iola, El Dorado and Crawford County, according to a December 2007 report. Mildfelt said he was considering organizing an advisory committee here.

Coming to Winfield in 1993, Mildfelt worked as an executive vice president of the State Bank until 2006. When State Bank merged with Union State Bank of Arkansas City, Mildfelt served briefly as president of the Winfield branch.

After about six months, he left Union State to set up the new branch of Community National.

Mildfelt said while Community National was “cautious” in the current economic climate, its loan activity had continued to grow. He was upbeat about the future. “Everybody I talk to in banking is concerned,” he said, “but I am conservatively optimistic.”

Mildfelt and his wife, Debi, have two grown children; Ashli, 26, and Nicki, 23.


The bank has no further acquisition plans at present, Mildfelt said. Loans up to $500,000 can be approved locally at Community National in Winfield, according to Mildfelt. He sits on the committee that reviews applications for larger loans, he said, and an internal video communication network allows him to attend many.

As of Oct. 31, 2008, Community National’s assets were $589 million, according to its report to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. This was up from $478 million on Dec. 31, 2007. The bank’s ratio of capital to assets is approximately 9 percent, Mildfelt said.

As did other bankers in the county, Mildfelt expressed concern that regulators might clamp down too hard and leave banks unwilling to lend. “It’s good to keep a balance,” he said.

With the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation playing a larger role in meeting the current financial crisis, FDIC fees to banks have risen, Mildfelt pointed out.
KU freshman gets community service after BB shooting

LAWRENCE (AP) — Kansas freshman forward Markieff Morris agreed to perform 20 hours of community service for shooting a Wisconsin woman with plastic BBs in August in a university dorm courtyard.

The 18-year-old Philadelphia player had been charged with battery and will not have to appear in court Friday.

Campus police said shots were fired from a room in Jayhawker Towers. The 47-year-old woman was hit in the arm and slightly injured. Officers seized a three-foot-long black Airsoft rifle and medium-sized plastic bag of BBs.

"We've talked about this a lot," said Bill Self, coach of defending champion Kansas. "And I've told Markieff and our guys that obviously they have to make better decisions and be much wiser in their judgment."
KU’s chancellor will step down in 2009

LAWRENCE (AP) — After 14 years as University of Kansas chancellor, Robert E. Hemenway will step down next year to write a book and then return to the classroom.

His announcement came as the state faces a financial crisis, with the prospect of a $141 million deficit in the current state budget that could expand to $1 billion if left unchecked by the end of the next budget year.

Hemenway, 67, said Monday that dealing with the budget problems will occupy most of his time until he steps down next June 30.

“We’ve got good, smart people who are working on this,” he said. “We have a challenge to face and we’ll face it and the university will succeed.”

He’s the third longest serving chancellor since the position was created in 1865. Ernest Hiram Lindley served 19 years, from 1920-39, and Lindley’s predecessor, Frank Strong, was chancellor for 18 years, in 1902-20.

Hemenway’s annual salary is about $267,000.

“There is never a perfect time to step down from a job like this, but in light of where KU is today and the accomplishments of the past 12 months, it is about as good as it gets,” Hemenway told reporters.

He said being chancellor is an around-the-clock job that occupied most of his time and required him to travel a lot.

“I just came to the conclusion that it was time for me to step away from that kind of job and do what I can to prepare the way for the next chancellor and also to live my life as a scholar and teacher,” he said.

Even as chancellor, Hemenway taught an undergraduate English class. He said he will work on a book about intercollegiate athletics and American values then return to the classroom in 2010 to teach American literature.

“I would hope that I would be remembered as a teacher and scholar who had additional abilities in the administrative part of the university,” he said.

Hemenway came from the University of Kentucky in Lexington where he was chancellor from 1989-95.

From 1986-89, he was dean of arts and sciences at the University of Oklahoma and before that was chairman of the English department and an English professor at Lexington. He’s known for his biography of African-American novelist Zora Neale Hurston.

The state Board of Regents is expected to appoint a committee to begin a national search for Hemenway’s successor. The board could discuss the process as early as next week, during its monthly board meeting in Topeka.

As chancellor, Hemenway is the chief executive of a university that includes its main campus in Lawrence, its Medical Center in Kansas City, Kan., the Edwards Campus in Overland Park and the School of Medicine-Wichita, along with facilities in Garden City, Hays, Parsons, Pittsburg, Topeka and Yoder.

Among accomplishments Hemenway cited were higher ACT scores, a record enrollment of 30,012 students this fall and a doubling of research funding to almost $300 million a year. He also cited a greater diversity of faculty, students and staff.

In addition, he singled out work to get National Cancer Institute designation for the university as a comprehensive cancer research center, allowing it to do more early clinical trials and expanded research for cancer treatment.
Resigning chancellor plans to write, teach

LAWRENCE (AP) — After 14 years as University of Kansas chancellor, Robert E. Hemenway will step down next year to write a book and then return to the classroom.

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KU’s Hemenway to step down in 2009

LAWRENCE (AP) — After 14 years as chancellor at the University of Kansas, Robert E. Hemenway is retiring next year to teach and write.

In a news release Monday, Hemenway announced his decision to leave the chancellor’s position next June 30.

Hemenway said there is no “good” time to step down. But he said the university’s many recent achievements mean “I will return to the classroom knowing the University of Kansas is in excellent shape and ready for the challenges that face our nation’s leading public universities.

In a message sent earlier to faculty, staff and students, Hemenway said he will take a sabbatical during the next academic year to work on a book about intercollegiate athletics and American values, and will then return to teaching and scholarly research at Kansas.

Donna Shank, chair of the Kansas Board of Regents, said the regents would appoint a committee to begin a national search for Hemenway’s successor.

“The people of Kansas and KU alumni worldwide have benefited tremendously from Bob Hemenway’s service,” Shank said in a news release. “The accomplishments of the university during his firm and progressive leadership speak for themselves. KU has grown in size, strength and reputation.”

Hemenway said he would stay committed to the university for the next seven months as it works through difficult economic times caused by the state’s budget shortfall.

Among other accomplishments cited by the university since Hemenway was named chancellor in 1995 was record enrollment, higher ACT scores and diversity of faculty, students and staff.
KU chancellor lauds bio defense lab idea

LAWRENCE — University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway issued the following statement today regarding the recommendation that Manhattan be the site of a new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility: “As a Kansan and as a member of the task force that led our state’s effort, I am thrilled at the news that Kansas has been chosen to be the site of this critical lab. The National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility will be a major economic asset to our state and will boost bioscience research throughout the region, including at KU. When coupled with the cancer, pharmaceutical and other research taking place here, this lab will make Kansas an international center for bioscience research. I commend Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and Sen. Pat Roberts for their leadership, as well as Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson and Secretary Dan Glickman for their work as co-chairs of the task force that has brought NBAF to Kansas. Kansas State University also deserves special recognition for its role in helping to bring NBAF to Kansas. I also want to thank the entire Kansas congressional delegation, the leadership of the Kansas Legislature and Tom Thornton and the Kansas Bioscience Authority for their support of what is truly a statewide effort.”
BOARD OF REGENTS PRAISES CHANCELLOR HEMENWAY FOR HIS LEADERSHIP AT KU

Regent Donna Shank of Liberal, chair of the Kansas Board of Regents, issued the following statement Monday regarding the announcement that Robert Hemenway, the 16th Chancellor of the University of Kansas (KU), will retire in June 30, 2009, after what will be 14 years of service as Chancellor.

"The people of Kansas and KU alumni worldwide have benefited tremendously from Bob Hemenway’s service. The accomplishments of the University during his firm and progressive leadership speak for themselves. KU has grown in size, strength, and reputation. "Under Bob’s leadership, KU’s academic programs have received increased national recognition; the University has embarked upon ambitious plans to achieve Comprehensive Cancer Center designation; it has made huge strides in the amount of federal re-

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Shank . . .

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search activity taking place on campus; all while maintaining the commitment to providing world class education opportunities for students. These and many other achievements have secured KU's position as a national academic and research leader which will have a lasting impact on the residents of Kansas.

"KU is a stronger institution today as a result of Bob's leadership and unwavering dedication to higher education, and we look forward to celebrating his many achievements in the upcoming months.

He has enriched the University and the state of Kansas during his years of service and for that we are truly grateful.

"We are thankful that Bob will continue to serve as the Chancellor through the end of the academic year and will remain at KU in a scholarly capacity following his retirement. In the coming weeks, the Board will formalize the process to conduct a national search for a new Chancellor.

"I wish Bob and his family the very best as they enter a new chapter of their lives. Bob has given unselfishly of his time and talent to the University for the last 13 years and his tenure has been nothing short of remarkable. He will be missed."
Roberts Graduates From Law Enforcement Training In Hutch

FOR THE CLARION

HUTCHINSON- Mark D. Hunsaker, police commissioner for Honolulu, Hawaii, congratulated 58 graduates of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center at a Nov. 21 ceremony at the 4-H Encampment Building at the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson.

Maize USD 266 Police Department's Robyn Roberts was one of the many who graduated.

The graduates, who began their training course Aug. 18, represented 45 municipal, county and state law enforcement agencies from across Kansas.

They were the 199th basic training class of graduates.

The training center is a unit of University Continuing Education.

Established in 1968 as the central law enforcement training facility for the state, the center is near Yoder. Graduates receive certificates of course completion and Kansas law enforcement certification from the Kansas Commission on Peace Officers.

Standards and Training, the states law enforcement licensing authority

The training course fulfills the state requirement for law enforcement training.

Classroom lectures and hands-on applications help train officers to solve the increasingly complex problems they face in the line of duty.

The center trains the majority of municipal, county and state law enforcement officers in Kansas and oversees the training of the remaining officers at seven authorized and certified academy programs operated by local law enforcement agencies and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

About 350 officers enroll annually in the 14-week basic training program.

The center offered continuing education and specialized training to more than 2,500 Kansas officers last year. Funding for the training center is generated from court docket fees from municipal and state courts.

No funds from the state's general revenue are used to operate the center.
Local woman writes and illustrates Christmas book

BY TIM LINN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Susan Cox never knew she was a writer.

The Leavenworth native never thought much about writing. In fact, she said she stopped going to school after eighth grade, although she said she wanted to drop out after kindergarten.

"I used to draw stick people," she said. "I couldn't even write 'roses are red, violets are blue,' that sort of stuff."

It was only after her son, Calvin Cox Jr., died in 2003 and she started suffering from depression that Cox began writing poetry as a therapeutic exercise.

Her first poem was titled "Play Children Play," and Cox said it was inspired by a vision of her son and her mother in a field outside her home on Limit Street.

Thinking about her son and a lot of imagination also inspired her new book, "Welcome to Christmasville."

"I felt like taking off in my nightgown and looking for him," she said. "I decided to write about him instead."

The 44-page book took about four days to write and about 2 1/2 weeks to illustrate.

The book follows a younger version of Cox on a journey down a country road, through a peanut farm, to the Nativity scene and finally to Christmasville. Along the way, she meets reindeer, elves and builds a snowman who comes to life.

Cox said she has always been a "seeker of sorts," ever since growing up on Fifth Street in Leavenworth, and frequently found herself walking around the city or jumping trains to nearby towns.

"I've always been the type to wonder what's on the other side of the hill,"

Welcome to Christmasville she said.

That desire helped her write "Welcome to Christmasville," she said — along with the support of her daughter Kim Benson and niece Rhonda Wyatt.

"We all encouraged her," Wyatt said.

see BOOK on page A3
Book tells of Christmas journey

Continued from page A1

Wyatt said she and Benson thought the story was good and encouraged her to approach Tom Turkle of Personal Publishing Services, to help her publish and distribute it.

Cox said she is planning to take copies of the book to the burn units and cancer centers at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., and the University of Kansas Hospital. She said she also took a copy to the Leavenworth Public Library. As a cancer survivor herself, Cox said she hopes children in the hospitals find the same sort of escape and comfort in reading the Christmas fantasy that she did in writing it.

"It might give children hope or even adults hope that something is out there," she said.

There's even an extra poem at the end, "Our Huge Strong Oak Tree," that Cox said is addressed to a family going through difficult times. She said her family has always been very important to her, and helped bring her through her hard times.

In the future, Cox said she will continue to write poetry, although she said she didn't know if she would publish anything for a while.

She said the book is available by calling 913-651-6970.