

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Fuel Efficiency: A Helpful Reboot

THE KANSAS CITY STAR (June 29): When you set big goals, sometimes you set yourself up for big failure. President Barack Obama's lofty plans to put more fuel-efficient vehicles on the roads crashed headlong into the realities of the marketplace. Even so, there is value in striving to attain a noble end, especially a difficult one.

In 2011, the president shared his vision of a future in which the nation's cars emitted far less greenhouse gases. "I'm directing our departments and our agencies to make sure 100 percent of the vehicles they buy are fuel-efficient or clean-energy cars and trucks by 2015. Not 50 percent, not 75 percent — of our vehicles," he said.

Obama also wanted 1 million electric cars on the road by now. We all let the president down on that latter target. Car buyers purchased about 287,000 plug-in vehicles in the past few years, far short Obama's goal. Americans' appetite for electric cars is not so great when gas prices settle down. Nor are they willing to be tethered by limited range and performance of today's battery-powered cars. There's always a Tesla, but few people can afford such luxury.

Many state governments have not exactly joined the green wave, either. Look at Missouri. The state fleet has 10,014 vehicles. Only 13 — about one-tenth of 1 percent — are hybrid or electric. Indeed, the most recent state fleet report does not even include the words "electric" or "hybrid."

A legislature that focuses on short-budget savings misses the bigger long-term ones. State workers in Missouri drive more than 150 million miles on state business every year. Increasing average fleet fuel efficiency by just one mile per gallon would save hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

Yet if Americans could not reach Obama's high targets, neither could his executive branch. Since he took office, only 7 percent of the new vehicles the federal government purchased were electric or hybrid.

With the 2015 deadline a bust, Obama issued a new executive order earlier this year.

By 2025, he wants to reduce the per-mile greenhouse gas emissions of the federal fleet by 30 percent from 2014 levels. He also wants 50 percent of the new cars the federal government buys to be zero-emission or plug-in hybrids.

Those goals might be more attainable, but Obama's opportunity for success has closed on this particular issue. His executive order is only as good as the next president's willingness to abide by it.

Still, setting the loftiest of goals and striving to reach them can lead to progress even if the end remains elusive. Fuel efficiency nationwide is trending upward, and technology is improving the quality and reducing the cost of fuel-efficient vehicles.

No, America did not buy as many fuel-efficient vehicles as Obama wanted, but ambitious goals are necessary in the face of finite fossil fuel resources and climate change. The American spirit is to tackle the greatest challenges head on, not to sit complacently while things fall apart.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you agree with the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalizes same-sex marriages nationwide?
No.....58%
Yes.....38%
Not sure.....4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST.....426

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you think South Dakota lawmakers may repeal the death penalty during the 2016 legislative session?
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Friday, July 3, the 184th day of 2015. There are 181 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On July 3, 1863, the three-day Civil War Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania ended in a major victory for the North as Confederate troops failed to breach Union positions during an assault known as Pickett's Charge.

On this date: In 1608, the city of Quebec was founded by Samuel de Champlain.

In 1775, Gen. George Washington took command of the Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In 1890, Idaho became the 43rd state of the Union.

In 1913, during a 50th anniversary reunion at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Civil War veterans re-enacted Pickett's Charge, which ended with embraces and handshakes between the former enemies.

In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt marked the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg by dedicating the Eternal Light Peace Memorial.

In 1944, during World War II, Soviet forces recaptured Minsk from the Germans.

In 1950, the first carrier strikes of the Korean War took place as the USS Valley Forge and the HMS Triumph sent fighter planes against North Korean targets.

In 1962, French President Charles de Gaulle signed an agreement recognizing Algeria as an independent state after 132 years of French rule.

In 1971, singer Jim Morrison of The Doors died in Paris at age 27.

In 1985, the time-travel comedy "Back to the Future," starring Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd, was released by Universal Pictures.

In 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down an Iran Air jetliner over the Persian Gulf, killing all 290 people aboard.

In 1996, Russians went to the polls to re-elect Boris Yeltsin president over his Communist challenger, Gennady Zyuganov, in a runoff.

Ten years ago: A NASA space probe, Deep Impact, hit its comet target as planned in a mission to learn how the solar system formed. Saudi security forces killed Moroccan Younis Mohamed Ibrahim al-Hayari, the al-Qaida terrorist group's leader in the country, during a gun battle in Riyadh. Roger Federer won his third consecutive Wimbledon title by beat-

ing Andy Roddick 6-2, 7-6 (2), 6-4.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama announced the awarding of nearly \$2 billion for new solar plants that he said would create thousands of jobs. Vice President Joe Biden returned to Iraq to coax its government into picking a new prime minister. Mohammed Oudeh, 73, the key planner of the 1972 Munich Olympics attack that killed 11 Israeli athletes, died in Damascus. Serena Williams won her fourth Wimbledon title and 13th Grand Slam championship by sweeping Vera Zvonareva in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, in the women's final.

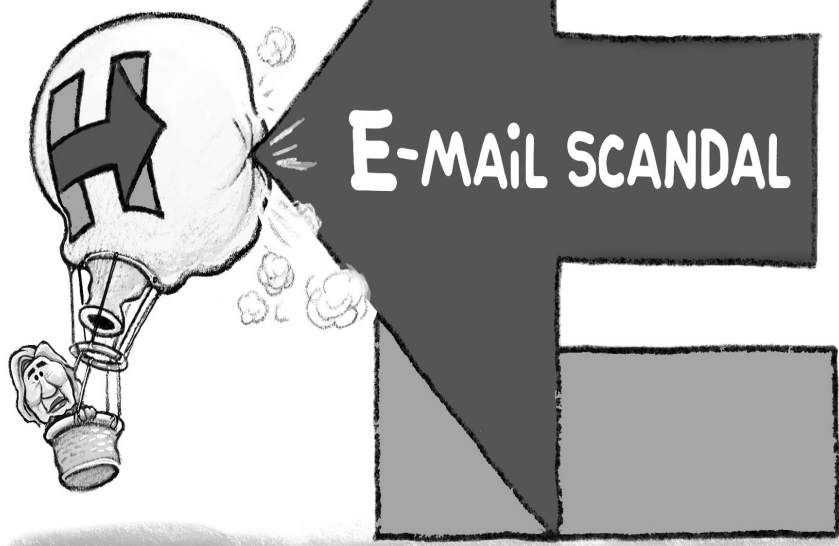
One year ago: Hurricane Arthur struck North Carolina as a Category 2 storm with winds of 100 mph in the late evening, taking about five hours to move across the far eastern part of the state, but causing far less damage than feared.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Tim O'Connor is 88. Jazz musician Pete Fountain is 85. Playwright Tom Stoppard is 78. Writer-producer Jay Tarses is 76. Actor Michael Cole (TV: "The Mod Squad") is 75. Attorney Gloria Allred is 74. Folk singer Judith Durham (The Seekers) is 72. Actor Kurtwood Smith is 72. Country singer Johnny Lee is 69. Humorist Dave Barry is 68. Actress Betty Buckley is 68. Rock singer-musician Paul Barrere (Little Feat) is 67. Actress Jan Smithers is 66. Actor Bruce Altman is 60. Talk show host Montel Williams is 59. Country singer Aaron Tippin is 57. Rock musician Vince Clarke (Erasure) is 55. Actor Tom Cruise is 53. Actor Thomas Gibson is 53. Actress Hunter Tylo is 53. Actress Connie Nielsen is 51. Actress Yearley Smith is 51. Singer Ishmael Butler is 46. Rock musician Kevin Hearn (Barenaked Ladies) is 46. Actress-singer Shawnee Smith is 46. Actress-singer Audra McDonald is 45. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is 44. Actor Patrick Wilson is 42. Country singer Trent Tomlinson is 40. Actress Andrea Barber is 39. Singer Shane Lynch (Boyzone) is 39. Actor Ian Anthony Dale is 37. Actress Elizabeth Hendrickson is 36. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tonia Tash (Divine) is 36. Country singer-songwriter Sarah Buxton is 35. Actress Olivia Munn is 35. Actress Shoshannah Stern is 35. Actor Grant Rosenmeyer is 24. Actress Kelsey Batelaan is 20.

Thought for Today: "I suppose it can be truthfully said that Hope is the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity." —Robert G. Ingersoll, American lawyer, politician (1833-1899).

FROM THE BIBLE

To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 2:14. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Freedom Is Hard

BY KELLY HERTZ
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Happy belated Second of July (if you're a fan of our second president, John Adams, who thought THAT date would be long celebrated as the day this nation declared its independence from England) or an early happy Fourth of July (that's for the rest of us). This is the time when our love of freedom joyeously explodes around us and above us.

But this year's holiday arrives at a complicated moment when the concept of freedom isn't an answer but, instead, a difficult question. Last week's Supreme Court decision on same-sex marriage and the debate over the Confederate flag are two current debates that show us conclusively that freedom is hard.

The court's ruling on same-sex marriage, for instance, has set off an emotional earthquake.

Those who oppose the ruling on religious grounds are now facing a serious legal headwind. The expansion of same-sex rights comes into conflict with some religious principles, creating potential cultural flashpoints. Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore, an outspoken critic of gay marriage, predicts that "Christians will be persecuted" for their beliefs. Meanwhile, some lawmakers are already crafting legislation that will, they say, "respect the rights" of organizations that have religious convictions opposing same-sex relationships. They cite the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom to buttress their case, which is quite fair.

However, didn't same-sex couples face a form of persecution before last week's decision? In some states, like South Dakota and Nebraska, they were forbidden from marrying because they didn't conform to the Christian standard of "traditional marriage." Don't they also have a First Amendment right of freedom FROM the religious dictates of others? (That's actually another reason for the First Amendment's existence.)

As far as seeking laws that protect religious groups amid this new reality, it could also be fair to say that these groups want laws that, in effect, respect their right not to respect the right of others. That's a knotty little paradox.

Eventually, an accommodation must be found in order for all this to work, and that would've been true even if the Supreme Court had upheld the same-sex marriage bans. How we get there seems almost unimaginable at



Kelly HERTZ

the moment, but get there we must. The flag issue is still waving and, as I wrote last week, I think the Confederate flag's only practical purpose anymore is to serve as a lesson about a brutal past. It has no place as an official emblem in modern American society. (There is now the obligatory urge to go too far with this. Just this week, the TV-Land channel pulled reruns of "The Dukes of Hazard" because the car used in the show has a Confederate Stars and Bars on it. That's just silly — referring here to TV-Land's decision, not just to the show itself.)

However, there are others who see the Confederate flag as a celebration of personal and familial pride and are vowing to defend that symbol, no matter how much pain and humiliation it represents to others. (I was thinking, as a reverse example, that insisting on flying the flag in the South might be akin to renaming the main thoroughfare through Atlanta the William Tecumseh Sherman Freeway in honor of the Union general who plundered that city during the

Civil War. But that's not even close to being an apt comparison.)

But once again, the battle cry of freedom does not speak clearly. If, for instance, a person's right to burn a flag is protected by the First Amendment, could flying a Confederate flag fall under the same mechanism of expression? Also, my dislike of the flag is tied to personal sentiments, but that's not a quantifiable basis for outlawing that thing. However, "that thing" is an artifact of an ugly mentality — more loathsome than anything America's history has ever produced. It's something many people warred and died over, and that can't be dismissed either.

Quite often, freedom is not a plain proposition when more than one person enters the picture. Thus, on this Independence Day, it makes me wonder sometimes how our country ever made it this far without collapsing in a writhing heap of conflicting intentions.

But it also makes me marvel that it has. The republic has endured anyway, which is a great hope for the road ahead. These are not the first tough questions about freedom we have faced; they won't be the last. As long as we search for the answers together, America will stay standing. And that may be the real answer to the confounding riddles of the freedom we are celebrating.

Follow @kelly_hertz on Twitter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Grocery Numbers

Randy Gleich, Yankton
Here is some food for thought: Yankton needs another grocery store.

According to average city data, based on Yankton's population we should have 2.8 grocery stores. So let's say three.

According to USDA (April 2015), an average household spends approximately \$600 a month on food. I think it is more than that.

Right now, we have an oligopoly in Yankton. An oligopoly is a market structure in which a few firms dominate. While each of these two stores have weekly specials, overall there is no incentive to lower prices because of no or limited competition.

Our various organizations in Yankton have failed drastically to bring in another grocery store to Yankton. This should be a top priority!

If another store located in Yankton, and overall grocery costs could be decreased by ten percent for a household, that would be the equivalent of about a \$700 a year savings. I'll bet more likely a thousand dollars a year savings to the average household.

A new grocery store would add more jobs. It would pay more property taxes. It would create more traffic to Yankton.

Imagine, if you were running for office,

and you could give every household an extra thousand dollars per year by just brining in another grocery store — from the savings in food overall food costs. I think you would win by a landslide.

The simple fact is, the savings in food cost, most likely would be again re-spent in Yankton. The economic impact would be great. We have seen this with the drop in gasoline prices. Everybody benefits.

Yankton has allowed two entities to dominate the market for a long time. I think it is time that they fend for themselves and end this honeymoon status they enjoy.

About Citizenship

Brad Butzloff, Yankton

Isn't it interesting, the government requires every citizen must have health insurance, however, not everyone living here is required to have proof of citizenship, yet we citizens will pay for most of their medical bills.

Not to mention, in some cases, we pay for some of the housing, food, education, legal fees, etc. for some of the same people.

If you are OK with paying higher health insurance/medical fees, legal fees, school taxes, social security (FICA) taxes, etc., fine.

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