

THE SHAWNEE NEWS-STAR

ABOUT THIS PAGE

Established in 1943, The Shawnee News-Star is a locally managed division of GateHouse Media.

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On the principle that the fair and unimpeded exchange of ideas is the permanent foundation and continuing guarantee of a free people, The Shawnee News-Star opinion page will offer varied opinions and analyses on a broad range of topics that affect your life. The viewpoints expressed in columns, guest commentaries, letters to the editor and editorial cartoons are those of the authors and artists. Editorials are the opinion of the News-Star. Your viewpoints are always welcome. If you have any questions about this page, including its content, please call or write us. Your opinion matters most of all.

OUR VIEW

Supporting our youth



MIKE MCCORMICK
EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Friday night's premium sale brought down the final curtain on the this year's 72nd annual Pottawatomie County Junior Livestock Show at the Heart of Oklahoma Exposition Center. Once again, we saw excellent examples of communities, sponsors, parents and volunteers supporting youth and helping shape their characters.

This year's show included 70 goats, 70 sheep, 225 swine and 75 beef entries shown by several hundred FFA and 4-H youths from across the county. It was the fourth consecutive year goats have been included in the show.

Those who founded this show back in 1937 would be proud to see what it has grown into and is like today. Unfortunately, none of those founders are alive today.

Once again 110 animals, which represents about 25 percent of the total exhibited between Tuesday and Thursday, made the sale. Eight Pottawatomie County FFA chapters and several 4-H groups qualified for the sale.

A Business After Hours reception always precedes Friday night's premium auction. It recognizes and shows appreciation to those individuals, businesses, organizations and groups who help support the show, its activities, and who help make it such a success.

We listened as Stan Parks, who judged the beef competition, made his remarks to those watching in the stands and to the students in the arena. Parks is a retired Ag-teacher who now is the owner of Parks Realty in Tishomingo.

Parks complimented our livestock show in saying "this is as nice a show as I have ever seen. I'm very honored to have worked with these young people, some of whom started preparing for this show as far back as a year ago."

And Parks made another important statement, telling the parents, supporters and volunteers gathered inside the Expo's orange building "all of you are really, really winners. These young people are a reflection of what you people are teaching them"

Even though we in the community already may believe this, his statement strongly reinforces our belief that the stock show is an integral part of these youths' education and it surely helps build their character.

Making the premium auction is the highlight of the week for the youths involved in FFA and 4-H. They work tediously with their animals throughout the year to qualify them for the sale.

The Ag Task Force of the Greater Shawnee Area Chamber of Commerce is instrumental in making the livestock show and sale happen. Without these volunteers, this annual show would not be the success it is. It's one of the chamber highlights each year.

One of the strong characteristics of this auction, which distinguishes it from others, is these young exhibitors are allowed to keep their animals following the premium sale. That makes it unique in some way. A number of the swine, beef and sheep may go on to compete in the upcoming state event in Oklahoma City.

Friday night's premium sale once again topped the \$100,000 mark.

Raising and showing these animals requires a lot of time and effort from these students who compete in the show and who exhibit their animals here and elsewhere. A great deal of sacrifice and parent involvement also is crucial. The number of people who volunteer their time to make this event possible is incredible.

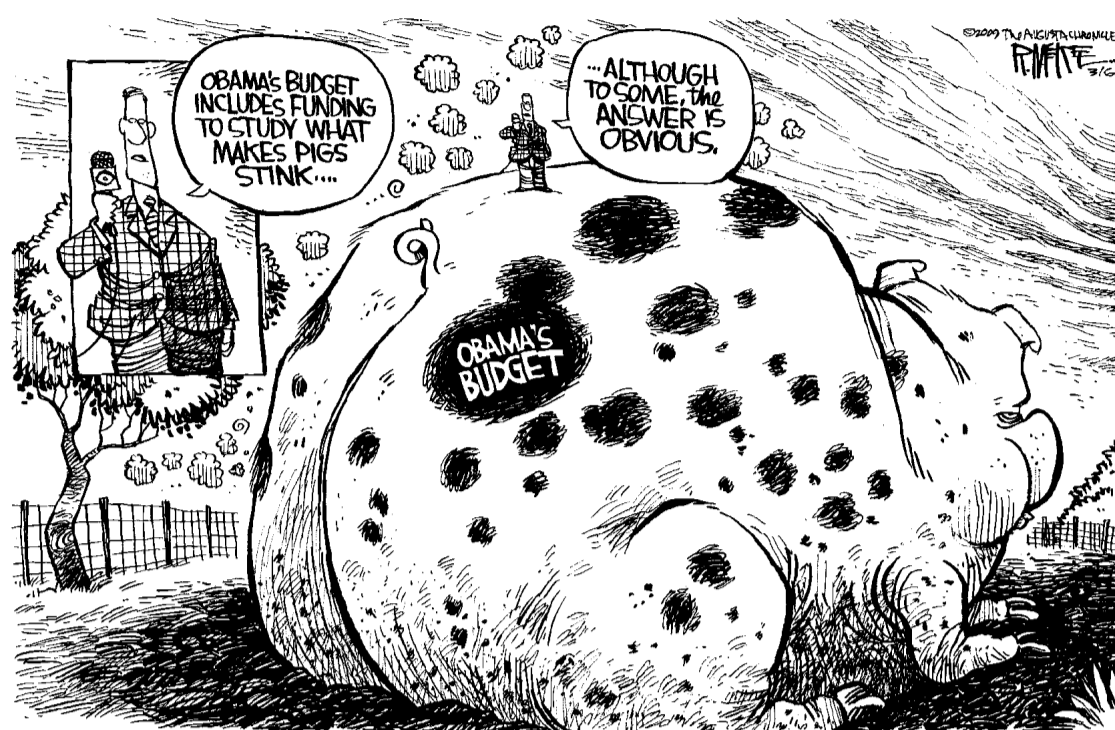
Support from parents is imperative for these students to be able to compete. Without it, they wouldn't be able to raise their animals and provide the kind of care they need in preparation for livestock show competition.

On Feb. 2, a month preceding the show, a pig roast and trophy auction was held. A number of businesses and individuals stepped up by bidding and purchasing the trophies that were presented during this week's show, and they also supported a silent auction the same night.

Most of these same businesses, along with ag booster groups and individuals throughout the county, also were there again on Friday night to lend major support at the premium auction.

The livestock show and auction is another great example of how our youth are supported by their parents, businesses and other organizations and individuals from the area.

And this is just another shining example of how communities support our most precious commodity - our kids.



REPUBLICANS GOTTA PLAN

GOP squeezing lawsuit reform opposition

By **TIM TALLEY**
Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Republicans lawmakers eager for new civil justice guidelines that would change the way Oklahomans file and litigate lawsuits are putting the squeeze on their opponents with a flurry of legislation that offers a variety of options to get some form of lawsuit reform through the Legislature and on Gov. Brad Henry's desk.

And if the Democratic governor vetoes it like he did two years ago, the GOP's even got a plan for that.

The state House was split along party lines last week when it adopted a 228-page bill that would make sweeping changes to the state's civil justice system that supporters say are needed to block frivolous lawsuits and lower the price companies and doctors pay for liability insurance.

Among other things, the measure would cap non-economic damages, also known as pain and suffering, at \$300,000, require a certificate from an expert that a lawsuit has merit before it can proceed in state court and change class-action lawsuit guidelines.

The measure, now pending in the Senate, is the top goal of leaders of the Republican-controlled Legislature this year. And they have introduced a bevy

of other bills designed to apply political pressure on opponents and force them to negotiate a lawsuit reform proposal.

The House narrowly approved legislation that asks voters to lower the cap on contingency fees charged by trial attorneys. If passed in a statewide vote, the measure would limit fees on damage awards to their clients at 33 percent of the first \$1 million recovered and 20 percent on higher awards.

Attorneys would still be able to collect costs and expenses they incur in pursuing the case on top of contingency fees. Contingency fees are currently capped at 50 percent in addition to attorney expenses and costs.

The House and Senate have also passed other bills that could be used as vehicles to change civil justice procedures if the need arises.

Opponents, primarily Democrats and attorneys who represent accident and medical malpractice victims, say the measures place corporate profits over the interests of injured people.

"The main focus of any legislation dealing with the civil justice system needs to be on the thousands of Oklahomans who are wronged by insurance companies or injured by a defective product each year," said Matt

Latham, political director of the Oklahoma Association for Justice, comprised of lawyers who practice in civil court.

"The only people who will benefit from this are insurance companies. And right now they are hiding behind doctor's coats," said Jeff Raymond, executive director of OKWatchdog, a nonprofit consumer and patient advocacy group.

But one way or the other, legislative Republicans are confident they will get something enacted into law.

"I think we've got a great opportunity to get something done that will definitely move the bar forward and the governor will sign," said Rep. Dan Sullivan, R-Tulsa, author of the lawsuit reform legislation.

"There's limitless numbers of scenarios," Sullivan said. "We're going to get something accomplished, either a bill that's signed by the governor or a vote of the people."

Supporters of lawsuit reform have not always been so optimistic. It was not a high priority when the Legislature was controlled by Democrats, and previous proposals have either been vetoed by Henry or struck down by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Things you cannot do and be successful

Dear Editor,
William J. H. Boetcker was a minister and motivational speaker regarded as the forerunner of today's success coaches such as Anthony Robbins. In 1916 he published a pamphlet named "The Ten Cannots" on which he based his pathway to success. Here are those ten:

"You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help little men by tearing down big men. You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot help the poor

by destroying the rich. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn. You cannot build character and courage by destroying men's initiative and independence. And you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they can and should do for themselves."

Truth remains true no matter how dated, but progressives believe all old wisdom should be replaced by something new and shinier. Bush set the precedent as he began dismantling piecemeal our system of government and now Obama is taking a huge wrecking ball to it in the name of

Change. Using the tactic of unrelenting pressure through more and faster changes, and constant crisis speechmaking he intends to initially overload and then to numb an already apathetic public to what is actually being done to them. He learned Alinsky's rule number ten (among others) very well, but this purposeful demolition assumes something new must be built. What is he building, how many innocent bystanders will be harmed during construction, and will the system stand once it is built? Prepare yourselves as best you can and vigilantly search for the truth. He is just beginning.

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Shawnee, OK



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TRI-COUNTY SPEAKS 214-3967

Editor's Note: Tri-County Speaks, the News-Star's call-in line, is designed to let our readers express their opinions on various issues. We ask that you focus on issues and refrain from personal attacks. We encourage you to be positive in your calls or offer suggestions in your criticisms and feel free to inquire about topics pertinent to the Tri-County area.

Profanity is forbidden. Your comments are subject to editing. Inquiries that may require research will be printed as quickly as possible, but may take a day or more to answer. Criticisms of private business should be directed to the business itself. Your calls should be restricted to 30 seconds or less and those longer will not be published.

Attempts to verify statistics, phone numbers and other information will be made. We hope this widely read and popular forum will encourage more positive comments to be called in and in many instances will provide us with ideas for stories.

MJM
Executive Editor