Baker's Briefs by Rep. Dave Baker, 68th District

  The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge Kansans to stay strong, united and diligent in combating the spread of this vile and abominable virus. However, lockdown restrictions are tentatively scheduled to ease on Monday, May 4. County health officials will decide how and when to expand activities. There are no quick fixes and we will continue to be restricted in many areas while the cost of some goods and services fluctuate.

  Kansans will see big changes in education. Online and virtual learning are now accepted options for educating students, and teachers will take advantage of these classrooms without walls. Higher education enrollment will decline as first-year students struggle with the cost of tuition. Universities will suffer lost revenue from athletics, room and board and a reduction in state funds. A semester of ZOOM lectures and seminars appears likely for first-year students before they head off to college campus life. This will provide them an additional year to prepare for post-secondary education.

  Courts and federal agencies are changing the way they do business as the pandemic forces distance restrictions. There has been resistance to conducting business online, but the time has come to change. Transparency and efficiency will increase with the advances in technology, while reducing costs.

  The ability to monitor remote locations increases with the reduction in the cost of cameras. Drones and satellites watch us when fixed surveillance equipment isn’t available and offer lower policing costs.

  Electricity consumption dropped drastically during the past two months. Businesses are not open, offices are dark, factories shut down, hotels empty and the list goes on. One of the biggest contributors to the large reduction in electricity consumption was when college students left town in droves and finally turned the lights off!  On the brighter side, hardware stores, lawn and garden businesses and storage unit rental places are experiencing robust business.

  Kansas farmers are suffering as food processors experience large concentrations of COVID-19. Delayed deliveries to satisfy demand are causing an escalation of prices. Safety measures are being implemented, prices will stabilize and we will continue to have the highest quality, affordable and safest food in the world.

  Having time to call and visit with friends and family is becoming a tradition again. Fuel costs less, food consumed at home is less expensive, cleaning house is good exercise and living on less money may be a good choice. Success in retail is measured by providing products that are “better, faster, and cheaper”.  That will not change. Kansans need to embrace new opportunities and have their doors open for business. Transitioning through these tough times will prepare us for better days ahead. We are preparing for a success we haven’t seen yet.

  I found this quote which seems appropriate for the time in which we are living.  “Staying positive doesn’t mean you have to be happy all the time.  It means that even on hard days you know there are better ones coming.”—Anonymous.

 Stay positive, stay home and stay in touch.  Dave

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