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**Carlin's Newsletter
March 13, 2009**

Proclamations Honor More Than 70 Combined Years Of Service



Pictured from left to right: Bill Hall, Senator Roger Reitz, President Jon Wefald, Chancellor Robert Hemenway, President Tom Bryant, Senator Bob Marshall and Senator Marci Francisco.

On March 11, the Kansas Legislative Higher Education Caucus and Kansas Citizens for Higher Education honored Kansas State University President Jon Wefald, University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway and Pittsburg State University President Tom Bryant. Each was presented with a proclamation signed by Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, Lt. Governor Mark Parkinson and members of the Kansas. "It is remarkable for any state to have had such long and extraordinary service from such committed leaders," said Bill Hall, Chairman of Citizens for Higher Education. "Our state has been blessed to have these leaders at the helm of their Universities during some of the most extraordinary and challenging times in our history." Presenters and honorees gathered after the luncheon.

Representative Hawk and I were on the Kansas House floor in Session and voting on legislation at the time, and were unable to attend.

Commerce Committee hearing on Minimum Wage

In February, the Kansas Senate voted overwhelmingly, 33-7, to raise Kansas' minimum wage to \$7.25 beginning January 1, 2010. The House Commerce & Labor Committee recently held hearings on the bill. The last minimum wage increase was approved more than 20 years ago in 1988.

SB 160 is the result of a bipartisan compromise in the Senate. The raise in minimum wage would not apply to workers receiving tips and gratuities (such as servers and bartenders). The law would apply to employees of businesses that are not a part of interstate commerce regulated by the federal minimum. This includes workers in about 20 job classifications, including workers on small farms, in small industries, child care facilities, and in companion care. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 Kansans work in jobs governed by the state minimum wage. A worker working 40 hours a week at our state minimum wage is stuck well below the poverty line.

In uncertain economic times, it is essential to keep our state economy headed in the right direction. Taking care of the base of the economic pyramid, the workers, assists in that effort. The Kansas Legislature has supported over \$1.2 billion in tax relief targeted at business and employers over the past four years to encourage business investment. It's now time for us focus and invest in the folks who need help most: the Kansas working for \$2.65 an hour.

Energy and Utilities Committee

- Energy storage opportunities

This week, the House Energy and Utilities Committee began discussions on House Resolution 6011, which requests that the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) convene a group of stakeholders to study energy storage as a cost-effective way to stabilize renewable energy generation, address transmission congestion costs, increase system reliability, enhance the potential for distributive generation, and other energy storage issues. The main form of storage discussed was compressed-air energy storage (CAES), which is the most cost-effective electricity storage. CAES stores energy made by wind turbines by compressing it and storing it underground to be used as needed.

Kansas Board of Regents to study opportunities to increase efficiency in technical education

The Legislature has been taking steps for the past few sessions to improve technical education across the state. Technical education should merge the best of the private and public sectors. The new Technical Education Authority (TEA) brings together stakeholders in both education and business to make technical education more efficient and responsive to the needs of business and industry. TEA will allow technical education institutions to receive direct input from the business world, enhancing technical education curriculum to include business issues and needs.

At the direction of the Legislature, the higher education institutions and leaders report that they are taking steps to get all institutions in Kansas to a "per credit hour" funding formula. This formula will help provide the technical education institutions (and also the institutions that have combined with technical education schools) balanced funding

and help streamline federal funding for technical education. Kansas has an opportunity to capitalize on providing quality statewide technical education that can help keep people working and pull us out of this recession and continue to develop an even more highly skilled workforce.

Smoking Ban Bill

The House Health and Human Services Committee is hearing testimony this week on SB 25, the proposed Statewide Clean Indoor Air Law, which would ban smoking in virtually all indoor workplaces and public establishments including bars and restaurants. The bill passed the Senate on Feb. 17 by a vote of 26-13. It includes a handful of exemptions such as gaming casinos and existing private clubs. Passage of the bill is among the Kansas Health Policy Authority's top legislative priorities this year. KHPA has developed a Fact Sheet that details many of the dangers of second-hand smoke, as well as the benefits of passing a statewide Clean Indoor Air Law. The agency has also compiled a list of peer-reviewed scientific studies that demonstrate how clean indoor air laws have a positive impact on business activity and public health. At least 23 states require most public places and workplaces to be smoke-free.

Speedway to Resubmit Casino Proposal

A partnership that includes Kansas Speedway still wants to build a state-owned casino overlooking the track's No. 2 turn. Speedway President Jeff Boerger said yesterday the application for a contract with the Kansas Lottery, which regulates the development of state owned casinos, will be submitted by the April 1 deadline. In December, Kansas Entertainment, which includes the Speedway and Baltimore-based Cordish Co., withdrew its application after it had been selected. It cited the economy for its decision and said it would resubmit its application. The new plans still call for a \$680 million complex with construction starting first on the casino, which would have 3,000 slot machines and be completed in 18 months. Next would come the 300-room hotel and convention center. The speedway and Cordish are reported to have sound financing for the project, which includes commitments to bring a second NASCAR Sprint Cup race to the track, build a road course for in its infield and have a Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car race.

The Lottery also set April 1 for the deadline for submitting applications in Sumner County, although no applications have been received. The new deadlines restart the lengthy process for deciding who will operate the casinos allowed in Southeast Kansas, the Wichita area and Wyandotte County. The law passed in 2007 gives authority for four state-owned casinos, one each in Ford, Sumner and Wyandotte counties and one in either Crawford or Cherokee counties. The Lottery can negotiate as many contracts as it wants and submit them to a state review board, which makes a recommendation to the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission, which must give final approval.

The only casino project under way is Boot Hill Casino and Resort in Dodge City. Construction started in December on the \$88 million facility operated by Olathe-based Butler National Service Corp. The casino will be open later this year, with a 124-room hotel and convention center to open by the end of 2011.

Legislation On Stimulus?

Kansas is set to receive approximately \$1.7 billion under the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act approved by Congress and signed by President Obama. Duane Goossen and several committee members said the state has in place numerous checks to ensure that the money is properly spent. And they said the Legislature, through its budgeting process, has oversight over the expenditures. A portion of the bill would prohibit state agencies from applying for federal funding without prior approval of the State Finance Council, which is composed of the governor and legislative leaders.

Unemployment Increase In Kansas

The Kansas unemployment rate for January stood at 6.4%, a 1.5 percentage point increase from December, which represents the sharpest month-to-month increase in seven years, officials reported today. "While a portion of this increase is seasonal, we are now seeing a more pronounced slowdown of the labor market in Kansas," said state Department of Labor economist Tyler Tenbrink. The last time there was an increase of 1.5 percentage points going from month to month was immediately after the 9/11 attacks, in December 2001 to January 2002 when the unemployment rate increased from 4.2% to 5.7%. The December 2009 unemployment rate was 4.9%. Compare to one year before, when the unemployment rate for January 2008 was 4.3%. The 6.4% statewide rate remains below the national unemployment rate of 8.1%. Garner said the Department of Labor is doing everything they can to ensure that eligible Kansans receive the assistance they need and are entitled to receive. The state report showing February unemployment figures will be released March 27.

Graduate Student Research Summit

State lawmakers and the public had a chance to learn about new cancer treatments, alternative fuels, water conservation, autism and many other topics during the sixth annual Graduate Student Research Summit. Kansas State University, Kansas University and Wichita State University each had students participating. In conjunction with the summit, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has declared this week "Graduate Research Week." For students, presenting their projects in Topeka raises awareness of the outstanding graduate-level research being done at the state's largest universities. It also underscores the economic impact of that research on Kansas and the collaborations that exist among the universities.

Kansas BIO, the state's trade association and advocate for the biosciences industry, will recognize exceptional research at the summit by presenting \$500 awards to two students from each of the three universities. Some of the topics being presented are:

What can be

learned about autism from Fragile X Syndrome, the most common cause of inherited mental impairment; development of more effective drug therapies and less invasive treatments to target sites of advanced-stage breast cancer; evaluating the effectiveness of the state's renewable energy incentives to promote wind energy; trying to find the underlying causes of migraine headaches, specifically those classified as menstrual migraines, to find better ways to target drug therapies; measuring the combined effect of a high-fat diet and estrogen loss on insulin resistance; evaluating sedimentation in

Kansas reservoirs with reference to the Kansas Analytical Method for Natural Channel Design; uncovering the cause of hearing loss; ways workplace issues can impact adverse patient outcomes; research to develop processes to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released in the chemical process of making two commonly used chemicals, propylene and ethylene; studying how cancerous brain tumors metastasize with the goal of developing pharmaceuticals that can be used to treat a deadly disease; measuring emissions from heavy-duty engines fueled by biodiesel blends; monitoring patterns of how children acquire bilingual language skills; finding the mechanism of liver injury in cholestatic liver disease in order to develop drugs to target its treatment. The students are from Kansas, other states and foreign countries.

Kansas National Guard Agribusiness Development Team Deploys to Afghanistan

A joint Kansas Army and Air National Guard team of approximately 60 personnel was honored in a special ceremony as they deployed to Afghanistan for a year-long mission as an Agribusiness Development Team. Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson joined Major General Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, at the departure ceremony to convey appreciation and thanks to the Guardsmen for their service to the state and nation. The team, under the leadership of Col. Eric Peck, is comprised of personnel with backgrounds and expertise in various aspects of the agribusiness field. They will work in conjunction with the Provincial Reconstruction Team, USAID, USDA, the Department of State and other agencies in Afghanistan's Laghman Province to assist in building capabilities for increased agricultural production, training and services, and improving the safety of food and other agricultural products that are produced and distributed to the Afghan people. They will also assist in the development of sustainable agriculture and other related enterprises that will increase the economic well-being of the Afghans.

This mission is a great opportunity for our state to share what Kansans have learned and experienced with the Afghan people to help their economy grow and prosper. The Kansas National Guard will be performing this mission in partnership with Kansas State University over a three year period to build continuity and relationships with local and regional Afghan individuals and leaders. The Agribusiness Development Team program is a joint effort of several federal government agencies and the National Guard.

Look Out for Bad Weather

Nearly a year ago Chapman, Manhattan and Kansas State University were hit by a devastating tornado. Severe weather can affect Kansans at any time anywhere, so it's up to each of us to do everything possible to stay prepared for emergencies. The Adjutant General urges all Kansans to make a home emergency kit and to prepare and practice home emergency plans on a routine basis. In 2008, Kansas was hit by a record-breaking 187 tornadoes that resulted in four fatalities, nine injuries and millions of dollars in damage to homes, property and infrastructure. The total for 2008, rose nearly 8% from the 141 tornadoes seen in 2007. Numerous severe thunderstorms also caused millions of dollars in damage to property and crops by producing high-speed winds and large hail. Flooding and flash flooding was widespread in Kansas last year and caused millions of dollars in damage as well. Although the threat of a tornado seems to receive the most attention, thunderstorms and high winds frequently cause

more damage and occur more often than tornadoes. Flooding, particularly flash flooding, claims the lives of more people than any other weather emergency. For more information, go to www.ksready.gov.

Regents Ask For Tuition Freeze

At the request of the House Appropriations Committee the Kansas Board of Regents today voted this week to use stimulus funds to provide a one-year state university tuition freeze for Kansas residents for students in the fall of 2009 if the Governor's recommendations of a 7% cut is passed. That proposal says that if the Legislature implements a 7% decrease in state funding for higher education institutions in fiscal year 2010, higher education would be eligible for \$40 million in stimulus funds. The federal rules require that \$10.7 million of that stimulus money must be used for tuition mitigation. That means it must be applied in ways that assist college students by making tuition affordable during this tough economy. Regent Gary Sherrer said the regents' action would protect the state's funding levels for higher education, while also protecting families from tuition increases at state schools. Sherrer also said that if the cuts are more than 7%, he would have to make the motion to raise tuition for families. The action affects only Kansas residents -- the proposal does not cover out of state students or fee increases.

Stimulus Package To Help Unemployed Kansans

An additional \$25 per week will be added to unemployment benefits paid through the week ending Dec. 26, 2009. The additional \$25 became available the week of Feb. 22 and the Kansas Dept of Labor began making these payments the week of March 1 and the \$25 will continue to be added to all unemployment benefit paid through the rest of 2009. The funds for this additional benefit amount comes from the federal treasury and will not impact the State's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and will not be charged to individual employer accounts.

The new law suspends federal income tax on the first \$2,400 in unemployment benefits paid in 2009. This provision is administered through the Internal Revenue Service. The new law extends the deadline to file for and collect Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) benefits. Eligible individuals are entitled to up to 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits. The EUC program provides up to an additional 20 weeks of extended unemployment benefits once regular unemployment benefits have been exhausted. The EUC program was originally set to expire on March 31, 2009. The Recovery Act expanded the deadline for new applications for EUC through the week ending Dec. 26, 2009. This provision does not extend the number of weeks or amount of benefits available for EUC -- it extends the program to cover those exhausting regular benefits after March 31st.

Keep in Touch

It is a special honor to serve as your state representative. I value and need your input on the various issues facing state government. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and questions. My office address is Room L79, Docking State Office Building, Topeka, KS 66612. You can reach me at (785) 296-7677 or call the legislative

hotline at 1-800-432-3924 to leave a message for me. Additionally, you can e-mail me at Sydney.Carlin@house.ks.gov. You can also follow the legislative session online at www.kslegislature.org and review previous newsletters at www.sydneycarlin.com.