

Bluegrass Baby Backs

HICKMAN County farmers are requesting that County Judge Executive Greg Pruitt repeal a local ban on large-scale hog farms. With new odor-reducing technology, the sweet smell of swine success is much less of a nuisance than it was years ago. Hog farms are another profitable way to diversify Kentucky's agricultural base, and "bourbon-basted Bluegrass baby backs" has an appetizing sound to it.

One Billion Flyers: A Mixed Blessing

RECENT estimates from the Federal Aviation Administration indicate over one billion passengers will be boarding U.S. flights each year within the next decade. This is an estimated increase of over 300 million flights annually in the next ten years.

But aviation has changed significantly since 9/11. Air carriers are now utilizing smaller airplanes and scheduling more direct flights. These new trends will place a greater burden on air-traffic control equipment and airport facilities.

Previous estimates of operational capacities have likely underestimated future demands on U.S. aviation. Although there is concern that the FAA may be underfunded when it comes to filling the demand for more air traffic controllers and expanded airport facilities, favorable long-term growth trends in air travel must be good news for major air carriers who have been struggling to return to profitability since the major downturn in air travel that occurred in 2001.

KAPT Plan Reeks of Politics and Miscalculations

THE recent decision by Attorney General Greg Stumbo to sue Kentucky lawmakers over moving money in the Kentucky Affordable Prepaid Tuition (KAPT) program into the General Fund looks a lot like political opportunism. Obviously, state government will fulfill the KAPT program's contractual obligations to its participants – whether or not the cash in the KAPT account is mingled with other state monies.

The KAPT program has other major problems – the cost of tuition is accelerating faster than initially forecast, and state government and KAPT participants will be obligated

to fund the deficiency. That's why enrollments in KAPT are on hold and legislation regulating it may be further revamped by lawmakers.

Many legislators may also recall the estimated \$600,000 media campaign promoting KAPT which featured State Treasurer Jonathan Miller and his family. The KAPT advertising campaign was conveniently scheduled prior to Miller's run for reelection in 2002. The cost of the media campaign would have been better utilized by providing scholarships to deserving college students whose parents couldn't afford KAPT.



Obesity Could Help Save Social Security

A University of Illinois at Chicago longevity researcher estimated that the increase in life expectancy gained over the past 200 years could soon decline. The culprit is obesity, which could reduce the average American's lifespan (77 years) by two to five years. A recent study indicates that:

- Two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese
- 30 percent of U.S. children are overweight

and childhood obesity has increased more than 100 percent in the last 25 years

- Childhood diabetes is now 10 times more common than it was 25 years ago

According to the study, researchers believe today's younger generation will have a shorter and less-healthy life because of obesity. A shorter average life span could inadvertently "save" Social Security by reducing the aggregate amount of the government's benefit payments.

No Kidding, Kentucky is Goat Country!



A recent press release from Commissioner of Agriculture Richie Farmer advises that Kentucky is now ranked as the sixth-largest goat producer in the United States. According to Ray Bowman of Franklin County, a goat farmer and president of the Kentucky Goat Producers Association, "80 percent of the world's population eats goat on a regular basis. Goat is probably the healthiest meat you can eat, even better than chicken."

Mr. Bowman definitely knows how to get the chicken producers' goat!

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