

**Our view**

## Help firefighters: Keep to the right

**THE ISSUE:** The Hobbs Fire Department is putting "keep right" decals on emergency vehicles to remind drivers to yield.

**WE SAY:** Time is key in an emergency, so please pull to the right and give emergency vehicles the right of way.

In an emergency, time is often of the essence and can be a critical factor in saving a life, preventing injury or preserving property.

Hobbs Fire Department recently received 15 decals to affix to its emergency vehicles' windshields. The decals, written backwards so they can be read in a rearview mirror, remind other drivers to move the right and yield to the ambulance or fire truck.

New Mexico law state emergency vehicles with flashing lights or sirens have the right of way and all other vehicles should yield to the right.

"Many people panic or just simply don't adhere to the rules of the road," Hobbs Fire Chief Manny Gomez said.

By yielding to the right, drivers can shave precious moments off an ambulance arriving at a medical emergency or the police arriving at a burglary. Those moments could be the difference between life or death.

Failure to yield can also result in a ticket and a fine.

So, drivers, please pull over to the right and make way for emergency vehicles.

## Don't lose your head over tax increases

As legislators prepare to face the \$433 million monster in the closet, some folks have suggested a tax increase. They should take a lesson from New Mexico history.

In 1837, when New Mexico was still a part of Mexico, the central government appointed Albino Pérez as governor.

Mexico had pretty much ignored New Mexico since freeing itself from Spain in 1821, and the New Mexicans resented this appointment, according to Don Bullis in his book, "New Mexico and Politicians of the Past."

Not only was Pérez not a New Mexican, he was the choice of the unpopular President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, whose name will be forever tied to the Alamo in Texas. Gov. Pérez made things worse by snubbing Santa Fe's prominent families.

Santa Anna had centralized control, so outlying political subdivisions like New Mexico had less control locally. New Mexico's treasury was nearly empty; its only source of revenue was the tax on merchants arriving on the Santa Fe Trail.

One of Pérez's tasks was to raise taxes, a measure as unpopular 172 years ago as it is today.

Pérez's political enemies began circulating rumors that the governor intend-

ed to levy taxes on sheep and pigs, woodcutters, shepherds who drove their flocks through Santa Fe, fandangoes and even on sex between husbands and wives.

Pérez didn't take the unrest seriously until it erupted into an armed revolt. After a lopsided battle, Pérez and his few supporters retreated to Santa Fe, and Pérez fled south, where he was captured and beheaded. The rebels used his head in a game of kickball. Then Manuel Armijo (who may have helped start the rumors) raised an army in Albuquerque, put down the rebellion, and re-established himself as governor.

Pérez never actually enacted a tax.

One reason I love history is learning that new conflicts and tactics aren't so new after all.

Fast forward to 2009: The American Federation of Teachers New Mexico, New Mexico Voices for Children and a few lawmakers have called for a rollback on personal income tax cuts for the wealthiest New Mexicans (\$295,000 or more in annual income), capital gains tax cuts and "tax loopholes for big out-of-state corporations."

But fear not. The present governor has said that in the upcoming special legislative session, he won't repeal his personal income tax cuts.

This is when budget balancing gets interesting. It usually involves voodoo accounting, robbing Peter to pay Paul, miraculous discoveries of money in obscure accounts, bargains with the devil, and some actual cutting.

The governor's plans, so far: Cut agency spending by 3 percent, don't touch public school spending but bolster it with \$91 million in stimulus funds, cash in short-term bonded capital projects, delay increases to retirement and health-care authority funds, cancel some capital projects, and dip into cash balances for \$40 million.

It's designed to minimize pain and political fallout. The governor offers it as a starting point for discussion.

We're now hearing the usual rhetoric about cutting fat and identifying waste. Republicans, who have complained for some time about the increase in state spending over the last six years, haven't gotten much beyond saying I told you so. Moderate Democrats like Sens. John Arthur Smith of Deming and Tim Jennings of Roswell are carrying the ball.

Smith argues that education, which claims 60 percent of the budget, should take a hit like everyone else. That won't endear him to teachers' unions and the education establishment, but it's brave.

Jennings proposes agency cuts of 5 percent. And he's using the word "sustainable." The state's expanding waistline, masked by an expanding economy, was never sustainable in the long run, he says. Some long-term restructuring is in order so the budget won't be the monster in the closet next year and the next and the next.

**Sherry Robinson** is a New Mexico News Services columnist. She can be reached at [robinson@nmia.com](mailto:robinson@nmia.com).



**Sherry Robinson**

Commentary



THE CLARION-LEDGER MARSHALL GINS © 2009 CREATORS.COM



### How to contact your state senators

**2004 Lea County N.M. Senators:**

**DISTRICT 41:**  
Sen. Carroll Leavell, R-Jal  
State Capitol, Room 415 C  
Santa Fe, N.M. 87501  
(505-986-4278  
[leavell@leaco.net](mailto:leavell@leaco.net)

**DISTRICT 42:**  
Sen. Gay Kernan, R-Hobbs  
State Capitol  
Room 415 E  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505-986-4274  
[ggkern@valornet.com](mailto:ggkern@valornet.com)

### Write us

**Send your submissions to: Letters to the Editor**

- by mail to P.O. Box 850, Hobbs, N.M. 88241;
- by fax to 575-393-5724; or
- by e-mail to [editor@hobbsnews.com](mailto:editor@hobbsnews.com)

Letters must have a full name, address and daytime telephone number for verification purposes.

They should be concise, to the point and original — no form letters, please. Letters need to be limited to around 300 words.

Writers are limited to one submission per month.

Content is subject to editorial judgment, and letters will be edited to comply with News-Sun style and standards.

Persons with special training or experience that gives them insights on issues of public interest may submit longer letters for consideration as guest columns.

## Obama failing to control Demo crazies

In the dark days of the Iraq war, when valiant U.S. troops faced down multiple enemies who obeyed no rules of war, President Bush never panicked. Even when his approval rating dropped below 35 percent, the president slugged it out for better or worse, depending on your worldview.

The same cannot be said of President Obama, who is now reeling under the pressure of his collapsing health care vision. The latest evidence of this was a posting on the "Organizing for America" website, which was set up by Obama in January. The message, since scrubbed from the website, said this in part:

"Stay at home for Health Care Organizing Day. Call your senators that day (September 11) ... as we fight back against our own right-wing domestic terrorists who are subverting the American democratic

process, whipped to a frenzy by their Fox propaganda network ceaselessly re-seizing power for their treacherous leaders."

Again, that posting came from an organization created by President Obama. And even though somebody saw the insanity of the words and removed them, if this isn't panic, nothing is.

I believe it is safe to say that many liberals are stunned by the president's decline in the polls and his inability to sell a government-run health care system. It all sounds so compassionate: helping the poor get quality medical care, ensuring that insurance companies do not gouge working Americans. How could you oppose that?

But theory is one thing; actual performance is quite something else. As you know, the president had months to clarify the details of the massive health care program but could not do it. Also, the Congressional Budget Office keeps embarrassing Obama by contradicting his optimistic financial prognostications. Americans may not like math, but they can do it. This health care deal is adding up to chaos.

Add to that the fact that hard-core leftists like Nancy Pelosi and Howard Dean are almost hysterical in pushing federal health care, and a deep distrust has set in. Seniors in particular are skeptical that they may go to the end of the line when the feds begin calling the medical shots.

And then there is the senseless viciousness on the part of some who support national health care mandates. Calling those who oppose your health care point of view "domestic terrorists" is a slander no spin-doctor could deny.

There is no question that the Obama administration has been severely damaged this summer, but it can still regroup if it doesn't panic. Most Americans want a fair health care system and are worried about protecting their families from devastating illness.

But at this point, they may be more worried about a White House that is not only losing the health care debate, but is failing to control the crazies on their side. Not exactly a healthy situation.

**Bill O'Reilly** is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor."

## News-Sun

[editor@hobbsnews.com](mailto:editor@hobbsnews.com)

**GENERAL MANAGER** KENNETH NORRIS  
**EDITOR** DANIEL RUSSELL  
**DESIGN EDITOR** SCOTT JONES