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Vermilion Advantage makes cuts in downed local economy

The group that tries to boost Vermilion County's economy is making cost-cutting moves.

Last week, Vicki Haugen, CEO and president of Vermilion Advantage, announced cost cutting measures designed to keep the organization's finances in line with income.

One of the most noticeable cuts was that of reducing the position of director of marketing and membership services from full to half time.

The position has been held by Glenda Kietzmann since 2002. Kietzmann declined to accept the half time position, which has not been filled.

The change leaves Vermilion Advantage with staff of Haugen and Todd Lee, business development and government relations director, along with Jo Doggett, finance manager, and Machel Dykes, director of business and community service. Kim Kuchenbrod, an independent contractor, handles educational programs Vermilion Advantage coordinates.

Other cuts are being made to cover an projected \$55,000 shortfall in a budget totaling more than \$500,000.

Those cuts include:

- A wage freeze which will be reviewed quarterly against revenues.
- Unpaid furlough days for employees at one per quarter. The number may increase if needed.
- A freeze on employee health insurance premiums. If premiums increase when the existing policy expires in July, employees would make up the difference.
- Reducing costs by changing to electronic billing and e-mailing materials.
- An indefinite elimination of organization contributions to employee IRAs.

Businesses, individuals and municipalities pay dues to Vermilion Advantage, which, in turn, provides services to members.

Area members include the City of Hoopeston, Hoopeston Star Chrysler, Silver Brothers, Hoopeston Regional Health Center, McMurray Insurance, Con-Agra, Hoopeston Foods, Norton Machine Co., Olympic Hardware, Unger's Jewelry and Goodwine Agricultural Services.

Hoopeston health center proposes new Rossville clinic

Clinic would add services, employees to serve patients of Dennis Price

ROSSVILLE—Hoopeston Regional Health Center hopes to build a new 2,000 square foot medical clinic in Rossville.

Plans for the clinic were announced at Monday night's Rossville Village Board meeting by HRHC CEO Harry Brockus.

The green light must be given by Rossville Fire Protection District, which has been asked to sell one

acre of its land north of the fire station for the clinic to be built.

If the district agrees, the new clinic will replace the existing 800 foot clinic.

Brockus told the board that physician's assistant Dennis Price sees about 450 patients each month, causing a need for a new clinic.

Plans call for the new clinic to have four exam rooms, x-ray and lab services, as well as a physical therapy section. The new clinic could add a phlebotomist and x-ray technician.

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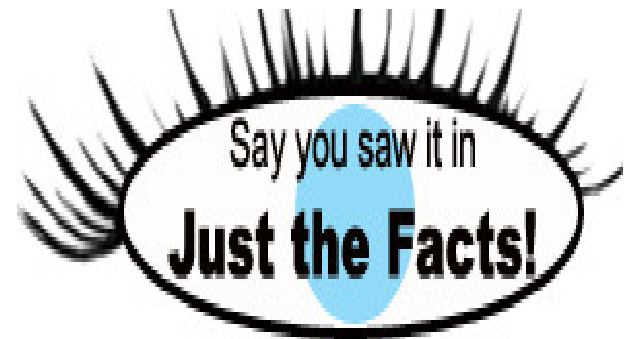
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Guest Commentary

GOP: It's sink or swim in 2010

By J. Matt Barber

Pop quiz:

Kyle and Christina – casual acquaintances fresh out of college – are interviewing for the same job. It's a position each desperately wants and needs, so competition is intense.

While waiting in the lobby, Christina offers Kyle a bit of advice: "Kyle, when you sit down, the first thing you should do is tell Ms. Flumptard that you can't wait to work for such a smokin' hot boss; and be sure to mention that, while in college, you regularly used pot. Oh, and tell her that, from time-to-time, office supplies will make their way home with you. She'll appreciate your candor."

Kyle follows Christina's advice.

Kyle is: a) likely to get the gig because "flattery will get you everywhere"; b) to be admired for his courage and honesty; c) a liberal; d) a bumbling dolt; e) both c and d. (Bear with me. This is going somewhere.)

Now try this one:

Republicans and Democrats are applying for the same

job. Leadership is something they both desperately want and need, so competition is intense. Tim Kaine, chairman of the Democratic National Committee has a bit of advice for his Republican counterparts. He suggests that, to succeed, Republicans should run "moderate" candidates, kick conservatives to the curb and offer voters "Democrat Lite" instead of Reagan Republicanism in 2010 (you know, kind of like in '08 with John McCain).

In a statement addressing the ouster of liberal Florida Republican Chairman Jim Greer, Kaine fretted aloud – genuinely, no doubt: "[T]he GOP's biggest liability this year will be its right wing that sees November's elections as an opportunity to purify the Party – at any cost."

Kaine warned that the "unrelenting drive towards a smaller, narrower Republican Party" would "cost the GOP dearly." (Thanks for the heads-up, Timmy. How thoughtful.) He further lamented that conservatives have begun a "quest to purify the Republican Party, eliminate moderate voices (read: liberal voices) and enact an extreme right-wing agenda (read: conservative agenda)."

Republicans should, therefore: a) follow Democrat Kaine's advice and drive the GOP further leftward; b) ignore Kaine altogether; c) do exactly the opposite of what this crocodile-teared partisan hack suggests, moving – post haste – to "purify the Republican Party, eliminate [liberal] voices and enact a [conservative] agenda."

If you answered "b" and "c," then Cornhusker Kick-backs to you.

To both take and implement the advice of those who seek your political destruction is a fool's errand. In many states, such as New York, Florida and elsewhere, the Republican establishment seems to get that. They're responding wisely to an unprecedented grass-roots groundswell (a "tea party," if you will) that demands both a return to the GOP's conservative roots and adherence to the Party platform.

Unfortunately, like Kyle, obstinate RINO leadership in other states, such as Illinois, appear determined to play right into Democrats' hands. They're obtusely heeding Kaine's duplicitous counsel, throwing establishment weight behind candidates who appear as though hand-picked by the DNC.

Take Illinois Rep. Mark Kirk, for example. Kirk, who seeks to fill President Obama's old Senate seat is, based

on his voting record, about 49 parts Democrat and one part Republican. In fact, a "Sen. Kirk" would, politically speaking, be largely indistinguishable from "Sen. Obama."

According to Illinois based ChampionNews.net, Kirk: voted against a ban on the horrific practice of partial-birth abortion, having supported every demand of the pro-abortion industry;

- voted "yes" on cap-and-trade;
- voted "yes" to fund ACORN;
- voted "yes" to shut-down Guantanamo Bay;
- voted "yes" on CAFE standards;
- voted "yes" to prohibit drilling in ANWR;
- voted "no" on the successful surge in Iraq;
- voted "no" on school prayer;
- received an "F" from the National Rifle Association on gun rights; and
- publicly supports the U.N. "Convention on Climate Change";

But that's just the tip of the "oops-it's-not-really-melting" iceberg. Multiple media reports also indicate that this tax-and-spend liberal is widely rumored to be a practitioner of the homosexual lifestyle (à la Bawny Fwank). Although Kirk recently denied the charge, he has, nonetheless, eagerly supported nearly every legislative aspect of the extremist homosexual agenda.

For example: Kirk has opposed a constitutional amendment to protect natural marriage. He also both co-sponsored the speech-chilling and freedom-killing federal "hate crimes" law and voted to grant homosexuals preferred government status through the so-called Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

So, you have to ask: What business does Mark Kirk have even calling himself a Republican? And why is the Illinois GOP backing this Democrat in Republican's clothing rather than, say, Patrick Hughes (endorsed by

Mark Levin), one of Kirk's solidly conservative primary opponents?

If Kirk wins Illinois' Feb. 2 primary, voters are left an illusory choice. Republican vs. Democrat becomes a distinction without a difference: a dream come true for Tim Kaine.

Did we learn nothing from 2009's conservative GOP sweep (Gov. Bob McDonnell, Va., Gov. Chris Christie, N.J., and AG Ken Cuccinelli, Va.)? Seriously, even in liberal New York, Doug Hoffman – a last-minute conservative, third-party dark horse – came out of nowhere to nearly defeat Democrat Bill Owens in the state's 23rd Congressional District. Remember?

We remain a center-right country. In fact, a recent Gallup poll established that Americans identify as conservative vs. liberal by a nearly two-to-one margin.

So, whose advice will Republicans follow in 2010? Will it be that of a fork-tongued Democratic emissary like Tim Kaine? Or will it be that of the GOP's highly motivated, itchin'-to-vote, grass-roots Party faithful?

More importantly: Whose advice will you follow, Chairman Steele?

Matt Barber is an attorney concentrating in constitutional law. He is author of the book "The Right Hook – From the Ring to the Culture War" and serves as Director of Cultural Affairs with Liberty Counsel. Send comments to jmattbarber@comcast.net.

WGFA radio personality dies

Justin Kaiser, operations manager and president of WGFA radio's breakfast club, has died.

Mr. Kaiser, 33, of Sheldon, died at 3:05 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, at Provena St. Joseph Medical Center, Joliet.

A native of Rice Lake, Wis., Mr. Kaiser also owned and operated Creative Identity Group.

He is survived by his wife, Diana, of Sheldon; his parents, of Cameron, Wis., and two brothers, Shaun and Devon, both of Eau Claire, Wis.

Funeral service for Mr. Kaiser will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Glenn Raymond gymnasium. Visitation was 4-7 p.m. Tuesday at Segur-Knapp Funeral Home, Watseka. Private burial will be in Oak Hill Cemetery, Watseka.

Memorials may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.



Mr. KAISER

Weather

Freezing rain likely today and tonight. High 33, low 30. Tomorrow, chance of rain, freezing rain late. High 35, low 30.

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