By approving a school-finance plan of about $480 million on Day 108 (June 5) and overriding Gov. Sam Brownback’s veto of a $1.2 billion tax package on Day 109, the 2017 Kansas Legislature finished attaching two legs of the three-legged stool it had been building throughout one of the longest sessions in state history. As of this writing (June 7), adopting a state budget remained.

In other news from the Statehouse, the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) successfully accomplished one of its major 2017 legislative goals earlier in the session. Both chambers passed and the governor signed into law HB 2095, an increased weight limit for six-axle vehicles on non-interstate roads and highways. That now is 90,000 pounds.

KSA President Lucas Heinen, Everest, testified in support of the weight-limit proposal, first in the House transportation committee, then in the Senate transportation committee. There was strenuous opposition in the House from labor unions and Kansas railroads. Gary Reser, KSA’s legislative consultant, personally lobbied the majority of House committee members before they worked the measure Feb. 16 and recommended it for passage.

Before the Senate committee hearing, the agricultural groups backing the new weight limit developed an amendment to which the railroads agreed. It made the bill applicable to agriculture only, and soybeans are covered in the section stating “shall only carry … raw or processed agricultural commodities.”

Soybean farmers avoided a problem when KSA, three other commodity groups and Kansas Farm Bureau presented written opposition to a $120 annual water-for-irrigation fee added to other utility fees in SB 251, the Senate’s school-finance formula. KSA lobbied seven of the nine committee members, receiving commitments from all to vote against the irrigation fee. The committee adopted an amendment May 23 to remove all utility charges from the measure.

After the House initially rejected a school-finance formula and its companion tax proposal raising $500 million per year over the next two fiscal years, it was adopted June 5 on a 67–55 vote in the House and 23–17 in the Senate. The finance bill included all-day kindergarten, increased early-childhood and at-risk-student funding, and vouchers.

Late June 6, the tax-proposal veto was overridden 27–13 in the Senate and 88–31 in the House. It included the addition of a third tax bracket, the rollback of the income-tax exemption for limited-liability companies (LLCs), removal of a handful of sales-tax exemptions and the termination of the “march to zero” income-tax effort.

### Emerging Leaders Academy Class 4 is forming

The Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) and Kansas Soybean Commission are accepting nominations and applications for their Emerging Leaders Academy (ELA). It is a three-part training program that works to instill a select number of agriculture professionals in Kansas with leadership skills and provide successful mentoring opportunities.

ELA’s three phases are scheduled to be completed over the course of 18 months. Each teaches participants different subject matter and provides unique opportunities.

**Phase 1, Aug. 11–12.** Kansas Soybean Building in Topeka. Topics will include the history of Kansas Soybean, the growth and development of soybean as a crop and product, leadership training, and opportunities to be involved in the soybean industry.

**Phase 2, Nov. 15–17.** Statewide tour of Kansas. Stops will cover all things agriculture, including research, transportation, processing, products, equipment, education, livestock, food and consumer issues, and a KSA Board of Directors meeting.

**Phase 3, 2018 dates TBD.** Mentoring and professional development. Each participant will choose an organization about which to learn and accompany a current farmer-leader to one of its events. The goal will be to gain more in-depth experience and insight into industry involvement.

Interest forms must be submitted by July 7. The sooner KSA receives a nomination or application, however, the greater the chance of that person’s being selected for this year’s class. More information can be found at http://KansasSoybeans.org/ela on the web.
Farmers play role in keeping America great, making it even better

March 24 was a milestone in my Kansas Soybean Association membership. It was the first time I stood as president, with gavel in hand, and called a Board of Directors meeting to order.

For the next few moments, we all faced the flag and said, “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

No matter our thoughts on the presidential election, the upcoming farm-bill debates, the state’s taxing and spending policies, or what have you – when we all turn toward the flag, put our hands over our hearts and recite the pledge – we are (or, at least, should be) united. The flag covers us all, and the pledge is a routine with much collective significance. Before any debate begins, we stand side by side as Americans.

Next, I read the American’s Creed. William Tyler Page wrote it in 1917, and the U.S. House of Representatives accepted it a year later.

I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people: whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed, a democracy in a republic, a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag and to defend it against all enemies.

The creed is not about selfish interests because there is nothing selfish about our democratic republic’s principles. Their successful development has been a good influence on the whole world. Meanwhile, we Americans always can learn more about them and their application.

I sometimes wonder if we recite the pledge often enough. I’m certain we don’t reflect on the creed much. If we did, maybe labels like “conservative,” “moderate” and “liberal” wouldn’t influence our conversations and decisions so much.

In its mission to serve as the voice and advocate for soybean farmers, may KSA always remember its members are good neighbors, Kansans and Americans first.

Directors tackle spring chores

What follows are highlights from the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) Board of Directors meeting convened March 24 in Topeka.

- Conversed with American Soybean Association staff in Washington, D.C., about the farm bill, trade, biodiesel, tax policy and regulatory reform.
- Heard Jerry Murphy announce his upcoming retirement from Bunge and, consequently, the KSA Board sometime this year.
- Accepted the fiscal year 2018 membership and corporate-relations plans.
- Scheduled the Board’s agribusiness tour for July 13–14, the summer meeting for July 15 and the fall meeting for Nov. 17.
- Discussed filling the District 6 (south-central) vacancy.
- Tentatively agreed not to change the yield and value contests’ rules this year and to submit quality-contest entries to a national analysis.
- Continued planning for Kansas Soybean Expo 2018, Jan. 10 in Topeka.
- Approved the confidential employee-compensation package.
- Supported Program Manager Jancey Hall’s application for the Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership program.

Association members can contact any director or Kenlon Johannes in the office to suggest agenda items for the next Board meeting.

Milford Lake watershed proposes project

A Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) initiative encourages farmers and their partners to restore and sustainably use soil, water, wildlife and related natural resources. Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), NRCS and partners help farmers install and maintain conservation activities. More information about RCP can be found at http://bit.ly/nrcs-rcpp on the web.

The Kansas Water Office (KWO) is the lead partner for a new proposal to address water-quality concerns in the Milford Lake watershed. The Kansas Soybean Association plans to become a participating partner.

To learn more about the Milford Lake watershed project, contact Matt Unruh, matt.unruh@kwo.ks.gov or 785-296-3185.
Corporate partners and advertisers are extremely important to the overall effort of the Kansas Soybean Association. They provide the Association with financial support and are links to the allied industries that provide soybean farmers with inputs and capital to manage our enterprises. KSA also relies on corporate partners to keep us up-to-date with the latest breakthroughs in production technologies, and we all work together to create and implement environmental and trade policies that benefit the soybean industry.

Thank you, corporate partners
Niemann, Reschke retire from KSA Board

Northeastern farmers have had two stalwart representatives on the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) Board of Directors. After a combined 33 years of service, however, Bill Niemann, Nortonville, and Terry Reschke, Hiawatha, retired as directors earlier this year.

Niemann joined the Board in 1999 to represent Atchison County. He served as treasurer from 2004 to 2010, and he has attended 15 national meetings of the American Soybean Association.

“The biggest changes since I joined the Board are the financial situation, which is much improved, and our involvement in national and international programs,” he said. “Our greatest accomplishments have been hiring Kenlon Johannes as CEO and building a new office facility in Topeka.”

He was born into farming and has been in production agriculture for 60 years. His farm produces soybeans, corn and pecans. Although he now hires others to plant his crops, he still enjoys running the combine.

Niemann also has been involved in Farm Bureau, notably as vice president of the Young Farmers program in 1970. He has served on his church board, Agriculture Department county committee and conservation-district board of supervisors.

He enjoys visiting with other farmers, especially at farm sales and over coffee in Nortonville or Atchison. He is an avid FFA supporter. He is proud of his family; he and Mary Ann have four children, three of whom are involved in agriculture.

Reschke was a director since 2002, representing Brown County. He joined the Board when a retiring director asked him if he wanted the position. He went on to serve as president in 2013 and 2014 and as chairman in 2015 and 2016.

“KSA is the voice for all soybean producers in the state, and I think it is important that we support our commodity organization,” he said.

“One of the biggest accomplishments in the years I served on the Board is the new building. I also think we have an excellent relationship with the Kansas Soybean Commission,” he added. “This has led to a great work environment.”

He started farming with his family in 1980. They raise soybeans, corn and cattle.

“I am proud of the fact that we are family-oriented and try to keep everyone involved, including seven grandchildren,” he said.

Reschke also has served on the Ag Partners cooperative board of directors and his church council and as a trustee for the Hiawatha Community Hospital. He coached high-school boys' basketball for 25 years and continues coaching girls' youth-basketball teams.

The new directors from Atchison and Brown counties, respectively, are Scott Gigstad, Everest, and Greg Strube, Horton.

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Left: KSA CEO Kenlon Johannes (left) and President Lucas Heinen (right) present Bill Niemann with his retiring director's plaque. Right: Terry Reschke goes to work on his family's Brown County farm.
The Kansas Soybean Commission (KSA) is an organization of active soybean farmers that works to grow the soy industry in our state — and nationwide. As soybean farmers, we’re focused on farmers’ priorities and make checkoff decisions that help to grow farmers’ bottom lines.

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Increasing the utilization of soy in livestock feed and finding innovative uses for soy in human nutrition ensure future success.

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Helping to develop and commercialize new industrial uses for soy means more demand for farmers’ soybeans.

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Expanding international customers’ use of soy in markets like China, Mexico and Japan has the potential to create record-level demand for your crop.

Apply now for ’17–’18 Young Leader program

Since 1984, the DuPont Young Leader Program has identified and developed farmer-leaders who continue to shape the future of agriculture. The program provides industry-leading training that develops participants’ leadership potential while fostering collaboration among farmers throughout the United States and Canada.

The Kansas Soybean Association (KSA), American Soybean Association (ASA) and DuPont currently are seeking applicants for the 2017–2018 class.

Young Leaders benefit from a challenging, educational two-part training. Phase 1 takes place at the DuPont Pioneer headquarters in Johnston, Iowa, Nov. 28–30. Phase 2 is Feb. 25–28, 2018, in Anaheim, California, in conjunction with the Commodity Classic convention and trade show.

“One of the best things about the experience is the relationships you build with other farmers around the country,” said Brandon Geiger, Denton, who completed the program this year with his wife, Blair. “You network with them. You hear their concerns and day-to-day problems, and you can work out those issues together.”

Brett Neibling, Highland, also was a member of the latest class. “We learned a lot of different things about agriculture, and we got to work on our communication skills,” he said. “We farmers need as many voices as we can get to speak our message. The Young Leader Program does a great job of preparing us to articulate our stories.”

KSA encourages applications from farmers and farm couples who want to learn about leadership, communication and ag information and develop a strong peer network. It will work with ASA and DuPont to decide who will represent Kansas in the program then have a seat on the KSA Board of Directors for the next three years.

The application deadline for Kansans is Sept. 15. More program information and the application are available via http://KansasSoybeans.org/dyl on the web.

Editor’s note: Congratulations to Brett Neibling, who was selected to participate in Phase 3 of the Young Leader Program. He will attend the ASA Board of Directors meeting in Washington, D.C., in July for advanced training and Capitol Hill visits.

This member benefit is in the bag

Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) membership offers a number of tremendous value-added benefits. To take advantage of them, you just need to belong.

The most popular member benefit is a choice of seed coupon from one of the following partners:

- DuPont Pioneer
- Midland Genetics
- Integra Fortified Seed
- Ohlde Seed Farms
- AgVenture
- Croplan
- Fontanelle Hybrids
- Hoegemeyer Hybrids
- Phillips Seed Farms
- Taylor Seed Farms
- Willcross Seed

For more information, visit http://KansasSoybeans.org/membership on the web.
Calendar of events

June 17  National Festival of Breads, Manhattan
June 19–21  National Biodiesel Board meeting, Washington, D.C.
June 20–23  National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, Kansas City, Missouri
July 11–13  American Soybean Association Board of Directors meeting, Washington, D.C.
July 13–15  Kansas soybean leaders’ agribusiness tour, northeastern Kansas
July 15  Kansas Soybean Association Board of Directors meeting
July 17–21  United Soybean Board meeting, Chicago, Illinois
July 21–23  Four State Farm Show, Pittsburg
July 31–Aug. 2  CommonGround conference, Saint Louis, Missouri
Aug. 1–2  North Central Soybean Research Program meeting, Saint Louis, Missouri
Aug. 7–11  Soy Transportation Coalition board of directors meeting, Vancouver, British Columbia
Aug. 11–12  Emerging Leaders Academy (Class 4, Phase 1), Topeka
Aug. 12–15  American Society of Association Executives annual meeting, Toronto, Ontario
Aug. 14  U.S. Soybean Export Council board of directors meeting, Omaha, Nebraska
Aug. 14–15  No-till on the Plains board of directors meeting, Salina
Aug. 15–17  U.S. Soy Global Trade Exchange, Omaha, Nebraska
Aug. 17–18  Risk & Profit Conference, Manhattan

See more at http://KansasSoybeans.org/events