

OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

Pudgy politicians shout, "Surprise that budget!"



Bluegrass Beacon
By Jim Waters

Kentucky's health nanies routinely point out the unhealthy habits of fellow residents. Yes, we Kentuckians do smoke, eat and drink too much. But signs of improvement have cropped up. Not so when it comes to the state's fiscal obesity. If they created a "Biggest Loser" reality show in which states competed at cutting their bloated budgets, Kentucky wouldn't stand a chance of winning. Kentucky's tax-and-spend policies keep it from attracting the fitness fac-

The report ranks states based on 16 categories directly affected by state policy. In six of the most important areas, Kentucky ranks in the bottom 10. In one of those areas, the council's report shows that when compared with Kentucky, only Alaska used a higher percentage of total tax revenue to pay for past debt-ridden budgets. Nearly 14 percent of Kentucky's tax revenue is tied up in servicing our debt. As one now very famous, and very retired, preacher said: "The chickens are coming home to roost." And trust me, these chickens come deep-fried and with enough cholesterol to make

King Kong keel over. Kentucky spends the hard-earned dollars residents dump into Frankfort's tax tills every April 15 faster than someone can say "surprise those fros." We face a lifetime of paying off debts. According to the council's report, one of the things Kentucky's politicians like to "surprise" on each trip to the trough is the size of the state workforce. Only 16 states have more public employees per capita than Kentucky's 580 per 10,000 residents. Trying to cut some of that fat is like trying to get my kids to eat their lima beans.

Former Gov. John Y. Brown tried to address the issue by signing a law capping the executive-branch workforce at 33,000. For 26 years, the cap has largely been ignored. A conservative estimate, based on calculations using information obtained from the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet, shows that failure to abide by the cap cost taxpayers an additional \$1.3 billion. And the meter is still running. As economist Michael LaFave of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy told me, "When the public sector grows, it usually increases the number of people living off a smaller

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Conservative Columnist

Give Ed Commissioner Jon Draud a Yugo and a Compass



Conservative Columnist
By Conway Leland

In a state where teachers have to spend money from their own paychecks to purchase school supplies for their classrooms, it seems a bit distinguishous for our education chief to be driving around in a brand new \$31,000 car paid for with taxpayer dollars. The vehicle in question

to "help him from getting lost" because he drives so much and he needed a bigger car for "safety reasons." I am surprised that the environmental lobby isn't all up in arms about this terrible misuse of carbon. This news comes to us on the heels of Kentuckians being told that we need deep cuts in education funding from kindergarten to post-secondary schools. As a conservative, I don't have a problem with ex-

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2nd Annual Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby Maternity Fair

Our due date's been set! Join the professionals at Harrison Memorial Hospital for our 2nd Annual Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby Maternity Fair on Saturday, June 14, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This FREE event will be held at Harrison Memorial Hospital, 1210 KY Highway 36 in Cynthiana. Registration begins at the former Emergency Department entrance.

Join expectant parents and couples trying to become pregnant as they meet vendors selling baby and maternity merchandise. Best of all, participants will be registered to win more than 25 door prizes worth hundreds of dollars, including the Grand Prize - a complete nursery - to one lucky family.

Personal tours of our state-of-the-art, new Elizabeth Bailey Women's Health Center, complete with spacious labor, delivery and recovery suites and our newborn nursery, will be offered. Child car seat safety demonstrations and installations will be available by certified specialists.

Our hospital experts will be on hand to answer all your questions. Information on baby safety, childcare, breastfeeding, and more will be available. And a book fair sponsored by Books Are Fun will offer great gifts for Father's Day, moms and baby.

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Summer Well Done
Outdoor Entertaining Made Easy

Summer is the perfect time to break out of the kitchen and take entertaining outside. Burgers and dogs are quick and tasty, but it's easy — and affordable — to turn a basic cookout into alfresco fun. Here are some things you can do:

Choose the right tools. Charcoal grills have their place on any patio, complement the traditional kettle with a natural gas or propane model. Today's grills feature more surface area, multiple burners, searing chambers, roasting functions and outdoor ovens. Some even have accent lighting for controls and to illuminate the food so there is less risk of over- or under-cooking. You don't have to spend a fortune on an outdoor kitchen remodel. There are a range of grill choices and some private-label brands that perform like the best, but for less.

Live on the menu. If you're tired of serving the same old thing, it's time to try something new. Wake up your taste buds with bold flavors like jalapeño or wasabi. Cook veggies on the grill, either you'll be amazed at the added depth of flavor. Or try a whole new main dish like salmon burgers. Salmon is loaded with flavo and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, so you get great taste that's actually good for you.

Set the scene. Dress up the table with a pretty tablecloth and inexpensive table accessories. Reusable melamine plates add color and reduce waste. Set out some condiments in jars and a potluck plan at a centerpiece, and your backyard is suddenly a bistro.

Find more outdoor entertaining tips, a new grill and accessories, and fresh ingredients for a family picnic or an all-out outdoor soiree by visiting Sam's Club or samclub.com.

Salmon Burger
Very easy, with a hint of Asian flavors, this is one great burger.
Makes 9 (1/4-pound) burgers

Spicy Mayo
Blend 1/2 cup mayo with 1/2 teaspoon wasabi paste or 1 minced jalapeño chile

Salmon Burger
2 pounds skinless, boneless salmon, cut into 1-inch pieces
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup chopped green onion
1 clove garlic, minced
2 teaspoons grated ginger
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon soy sauce
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Lettuce
Toasted boudin roll or shepherd's bread

Prepare Spicy Mayo and refrigerate.
Grind salmon pieces in a food processor by pulsing until they are a small chunk consistency.
In a bowl, mix salmon with mayonnaise, green onion, garlic, ginger, sesame oil, soy sauce and pepper. Chill for 1 to 2 hours.
Form into patties and cook on hot, clean grill (or in a hot, non-stick skillet) about 3 minutes per side until a crispy crust forms.
Serve on roll with lettuce leaves and Spicy Mayo.



Salmon Burger

Tips on Grilling Corn
Cooking corn on the BBQ adds a delightful smoky flavor to one of summer's great treats. There are basically two methods for cooking corn on the grill, either the husk is left on to protect the corn, or the cob is stripped and wrapped in heavy-duty foil. Some flavoring agents (like herbs and flavored butters or oils) are typically applied to the corn before the wrapping is sealed around it. In both approaches, grill the corn over medium heat for 12 to 14 minutes, turning several times.
To cook corn in the husk, peel husks back (leaving attached at the stem); strip off the silk; apply a light rub of butter, salt and pepper; then pull the husk back up over the cob and tie with kitchen twine to close. Soak in cool water 15 to 20 minutes before putting on the grill.
To prepare using the foil method, clean each ear of silk and husk, spread with softened butter flavored with something zesty like lime juice and ground cumin or chili powder, and wrap each ear in heavy-duty foil, well sealed at both ends.
Grilled corn is great alongside any grilled supper, or you can slice the kernels off the cob and add them to your favorite fruit or tomato salad for a unique side dish.

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