

OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

State parks need a new sheriff to tee off on waste



Bluegrass Beacon By Jim Wehrs

Put Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio in charge of Kentucky State Parks. The innovative lawman is reportedly saving Marquette County taxpayers millions of dollars a year through innovative program...

A lot of this money is being lost on golf courses. In fact, Governing Magazine once dubbed government-run golf courses "the most non-essential of non-essential public services."

2007. The more the public pays, the more public golf courses lose. That's also true of the entire system. Since 1995, lawmakers have appropriated \$316 million to renovate and expand state parks. Yet the bleeding continues. Attendance is down. Fewer rounds are being played. Lawmakers in other places have applied their own financial tourniquets to stop the losses at public golf courses.

during the first year after privatization. The city of Detroit receives annual income of more than \$250,000 by contracting with a private company that manages the city's public-turned-private golf courses. The company, which, unlike government, must be profitable, also invested more than \$2.3 million in course improvements.

est in best practices that yield large savings in other states. Our politicians and bureaucrats often ignore ideas that don't originate with them - even if their approach isn't working. Such thinking could earn them some time on Sheriff Joe's chain gang.

After all, why should Kentucky taxpayers continue bailing out unprofitable golf courses? Why doesn't the state sell them, or at lease them, so they compete in the private sector? Why should private courses have to compete with government-backed courses that have the luxury of taxpayer subsidies to offset losses?

Sheriff Joe became known for making inmates live in tents, work on chain gangs to cut costs on public projects, wear pink boxer shorts and eat hotdog sandwiches. He gets the most out of every tax dollar spent at his operation.

Sheriff Joe has his detractors. Just like those of us who want Frankfort to cut wasteful spending feel the heat from big spenders and the government's good-hearted crowd, so the know-sheriff takes flak from bleeding hearts for actually enforcing the law.

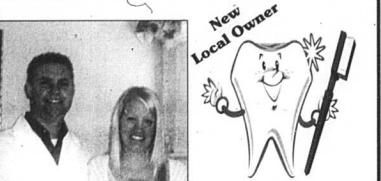
Nevertheless, voters keep reelecting Arpaio. He's up for a fifth term this year. His approval rating is around 80 percent. Frankfort's political leadership could learn a thing or two from Sheriff Joe. He shows that it's possible to do the right thing under fire, save a multitude of tax dollars and get reelected.

If one lone lawman with a few innovative ideas and a "git-'em" attitude can massively reduce spending on local projects, then why can't an entire state government effectively address deficits in a single program like the Kentucky State Parks, which lose \$29 million a year?

A new report by state Auditor Crit Luallen concludes that state parks' financial wounds have progressed from oozing cuts to an all-out hemorrhaging.

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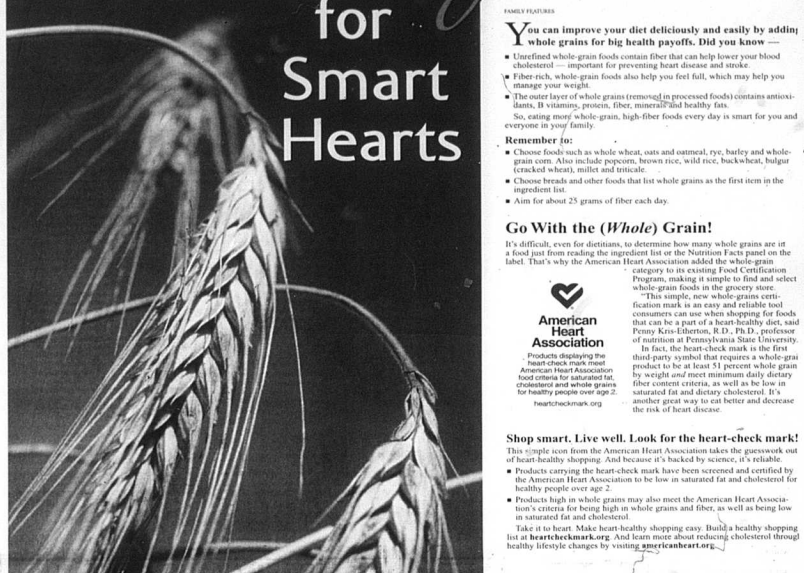
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Remember for: Choose foods such as whole wheat, oats and oatmeal, rye, barley and whole-grain corn. Also include popcorn, brown rice, wild rice, buckwheat, bulgur (cracked wheat), millet and sorghum. So, eating more whole-grain, high-fiber foods every day is smart for you and everyone in your family.

Shop smart. Live well. Look for the heart-check mark! This simple icon from the American Heart Association takes the guesswork out of heart-healthy shopping. And because it's backed by science, it's reliable.

Warm Peach Bread Pudding

Serves 4 Vegetable oil spray 4 slices day-old reduced-calorie bread (whole-wheat or multigrain preferred), crust discarded, bread sliced into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups) 2 1/2 cups fresh or frozen peaches, partially thawed, or fresh apple, such as McIntosh, Jonagold or Golden Delicious, peeled, cut into bite-size pieces Whites of 2 large eggs or 1 large egg 2 to 3 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar 1/2 ounce fat-free evaporated milk 1/2 ounce maple syrup 1/4 ounce dark rum, light rum or bourbon 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg 1/8 teaspoon salt 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger (optional) 4 cups water 1/4 cup (about) fresh fruit or 1/4 cup fat-free or light frozen whipped topping, thawed, for garnish (optional)



Heat oven to 325°F. Lightly spray four 5-ounce porcelain ramekins of glass custard cups with vegetable oil spray. In medium bowl, mix together bread cubes and fruit; spoon into ramekins. In small bowl, gently whisk together egg whites and brown sugar until well blended. Gently whisk in evaporated milk, maple syrup, rum, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and ginger. Pour as much mixture as possible into ramekins, making sure the bread cubes are soaked. Refrigerate 10 minutes so bread absorbs liquid.

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