

Happy New Year! And Now the Resolutions...

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

Before I started on this week's column, I went back and checked my last column from 2015 to see how I had done on the 2016 resolutions. Let's see, I didn't lose weight but I didn't gain any either. I did increase my activity level, or at least it feels like I did. I did support more causes including a monthly donation to Rotary International's ongoing effort to end polio, a disease that had a major impact on my family in the 20th century. Office cleaned? Well, I regressed on that one through the year but I made a valiant effort this past week so I think it's in better shape now than a year ago. Did I learn one new technology? It's hard to say as all of that stuff just sort of blurs together. So even though I never looked at my resolutions again in 2016, I didn't do horribly with them!!

So what's on the horizon in 2017? (And be forewarned that if I think these are good enough resolutions for me, I also think they're good for you so I may be bugging you about them!) For starters, I resolve to be more energy efficient. The past ten years has brought us from incandescent to compact fluorescent to LED light bulbs with savings in energy and effort at every turn. The lighting industry is being revolutionized by new technology and we should be looking for opportunities to take advantage of this.

But we also need to look at ways to save on vehicle fuel also. You don't have to trade vehicles to save fuel. Just start changing the way you drive. Accelerate more slowly, start to slow down sooner. Not only will you save fuel, you'll be a safer driver. Instead of driving a few mph over the speed limit, try driving a couple mph under the speed limit. Your arrival time won't be that much different and you could be saving a mile per gallon or two in the long run. Most drivers really haven't figured out how little time their speeding saves them. Traveling from Junction City to Topeka at 80 mph versus the speed limit saves you all of three minutes. Leave three minutes sooner!

I resolve to help keep my community cleaner. This goes beyond not littering yourself, but goes towards helping to pick up trash anywhere you see it. If you are walking across a parking lot and see some trash, pick it up and carry it to a trash can. Feel free to scold some one that you see littering. Guilt is an underused motivator! Earth is the only home we have so let's try to not mess it up!

I resolve to show more tolerance with anyone different from me, which in all honesty is pretty much everybody else. 2016 showed the worst of human nature and a very divisive election. Whether your candidate won or not, we're still all in this together and continuing to be divisive isn't going to help. We can't always wait for the other person to meet us half way, we often need to make the first move towards finding common ground and compromise. Those are a couple of things that built this country and we need to re-find those to keep it going.

I guess my resolution for everyone is to be more human in the coming year. All the major religions of the world have the same message of peace, tolerance and love. It's the human nature that brings us all together and helps us find that middle ground where we can all exist together. Let's strive in the new year to not build walls between us and our neighbors but find ways to coexist in harmony so that we all may survive. Happy New Year everyone!