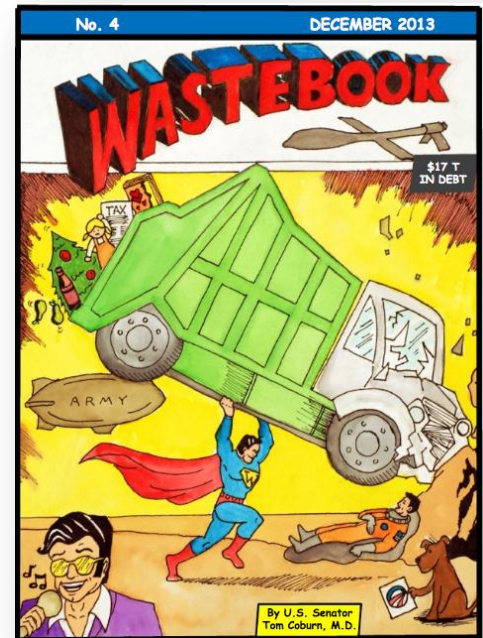


It's a bird.....

it's a plane....

it's a *Superman-themed congressional oversight report?*

Behind The Making of the *WASTEBOOK* 2013 Cover

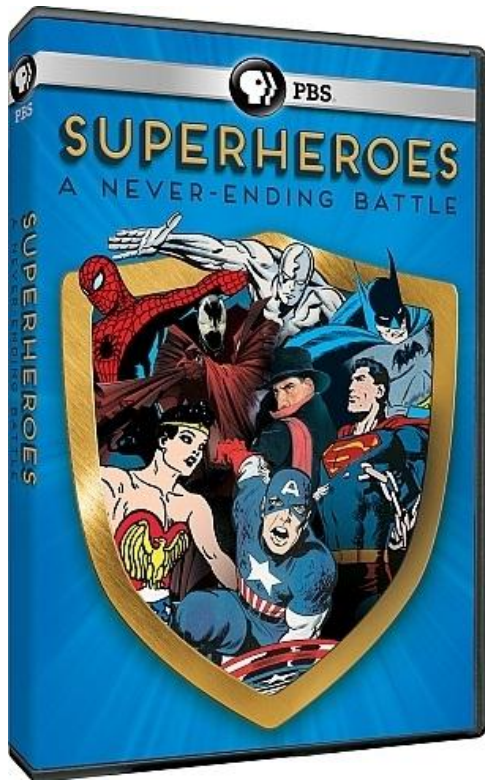


Each year, Dr. Coburn and his staff review thousands of grants, programs, projects, articles, and reports –stuff on which the federal government is spending your money.

The top 100 most egregious examples of wasteful spending by Uncle Sam make it in the annual *WASTEBOOK*.



For the 2013 report, there were multiple examples of super-hero themed projects funded by taxpayers that were clearly not federal priorities. Instead, they ended up just being a “super” waste of money.



One example was two agencies’ spending to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the debut of Superman, considered by many to be the first comic book superhero, in Action Comics #1. The National Endowments for the Humanities and Arts financed the production of a documentary, “Superheroes: A Never-Ending Battle,” looking back at the history of comics and their impact. This *Superheroes* project has received three federal grants totaling \$825,000 over the past three years: A \$125,000 NEH grant; another \$675,000 NEH; and a \$25,000 NEA grant.

Another wasteful example stood out: The Army National Guard spent \$10 million dollars on a “Soldier of Steel” promotional campaign, designed to use the popularity of the latest Superman movie, *Man of Steel*, to increase awareness about opportunities the National Guard.

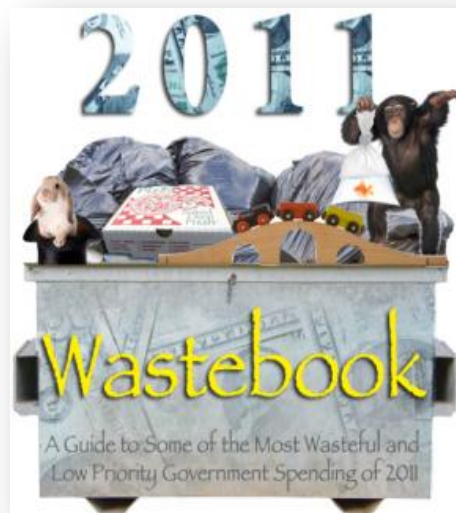
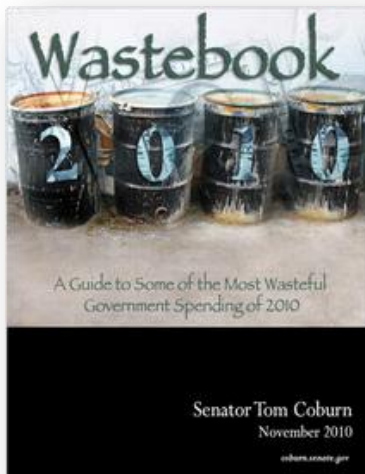
This money could have been better spent on the real life supermen and superwomen in the Army National Guard who are courageously risking all in the fight for truth, justice, and the American way. This example was so silly and wasteful that it was decided it should be featured on the cover of *WASTEBOOK 2013*.



With the multiple examples of Superman-related government-funded projects, the team decided to spoof the first appearance of Superman (from the now-defunct *Action Comics*). But the designer also wanted it reference to integrate more modern renderings and references to the hero, so they decided to integrate the more modern and distinct Superman lettering, rather than adopting the lettering style from *Action Comics*.



Because the annual *WASTEBOOK* report focuses on government funding that is low-priority, silly, embarrassing, duplicative, and wasteful, the cover of previous editions had a garbage-themed approach.



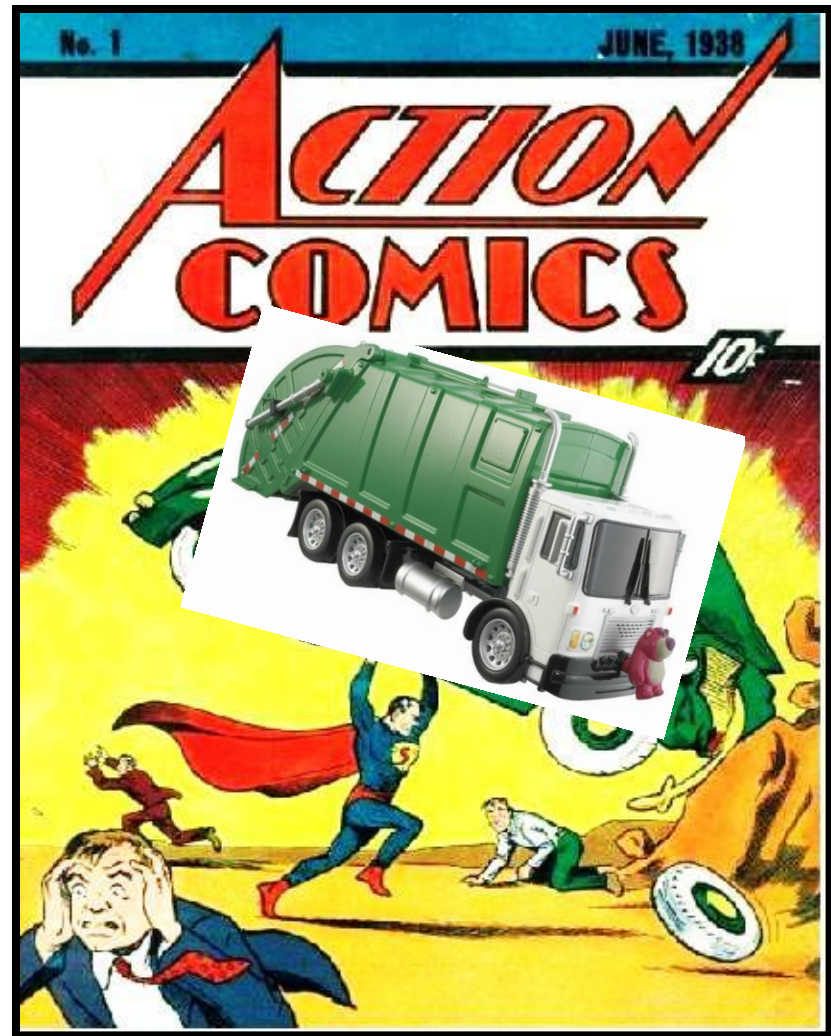
The editorial team sought to combine the Superman theme with one of the most recognizable symbols of waste – a common garbage truck.



The editor settled on a design which would have a hero who would crush a garbage truck against a rock.

The implied message?

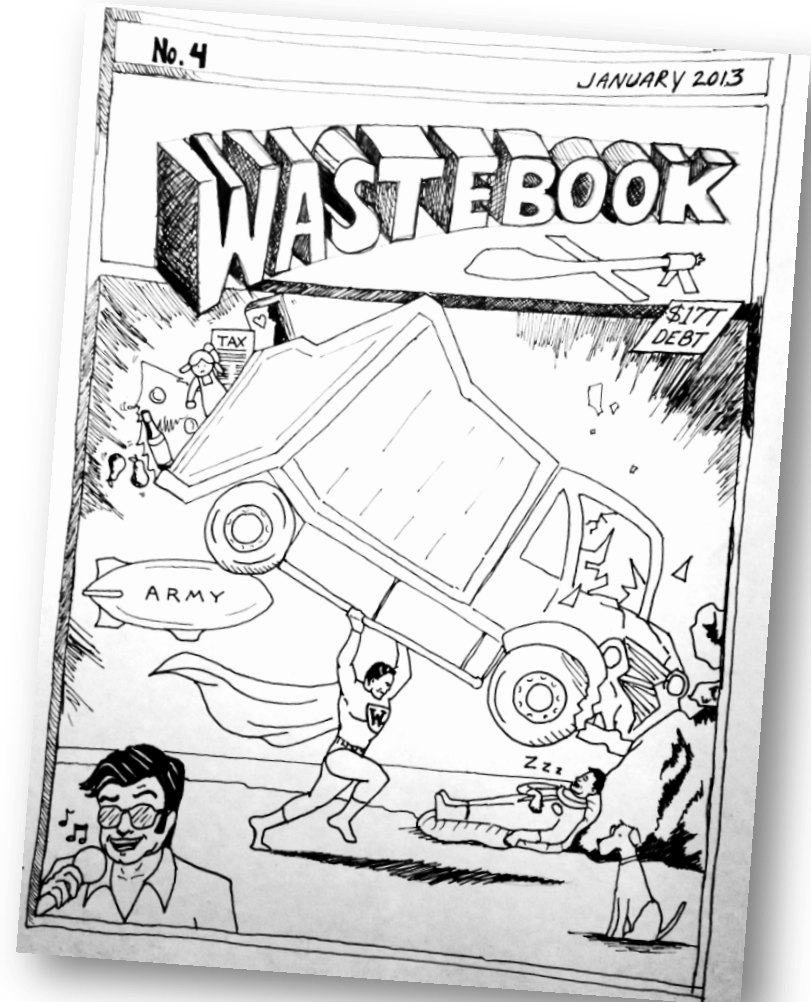
Congress should fight for the right priorities for America and throw out the wasteful spending.



The editorial team a rough sketch of the cover pulled together. This cover spoofed government waste and integrated each of the following:

- Superman's first comic appearance (Action Comics)
- Iconic Superman lettering
- A garbage truck symbolizing waste
- Some of the most silly, wasteful, and downright embarrassing examples of projects and programs that the federal funded in 2013.

Then, a final version was hand-drawn and colored.

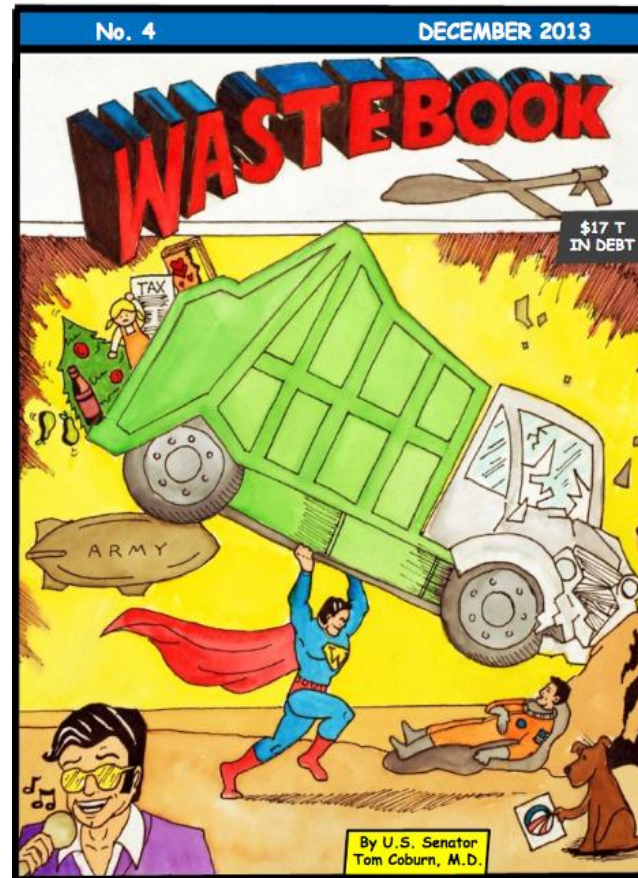


Each example included on the cover referenced a story inside:

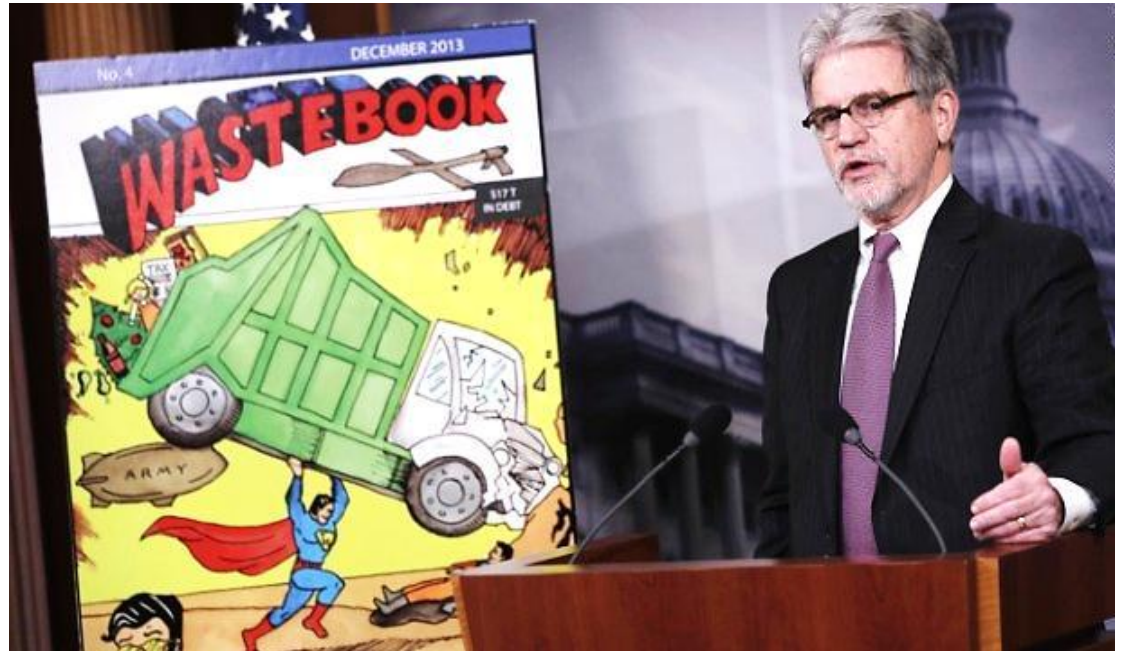
- The U.S. Geological Survey spent \$15,000 counting sheep with a drone (pg. 49)
- NEH spent \$914K on romance novels (pg. 7)
- IMLS spent \$225K on dolls and games (pg. 72)
- USDA promoted Christmas trees (pg. 38) and spent \$415,000 serving wine (pg. 46)
- The Army spent \$297 M on a blimp (pg. 20)
- NASA spent \$360K on “pillownauts” (pg. 22)
- HHS and states paid for an Elvis impersonator to promote Obamacare, but instead of attracting consumers, enrolled a dog in Obamacare (pg. 19)



With a little digital color adjustment and the addition of some computer-generated lettering, the artwork came together as a final product.



On Tuesday, December 17, 2013, at a press conference in the U.S. Senate press studio, Dr. Coburn unveiled the year's *WASTEBOOK 2013* to Americans and the media. The report on 100 examples of wasteful government spending has become a bit of an end-of-year annual tradition on Capitol Hill.



The report generated national media attention. With 172 pages and 930 footnotes documenting egregious, silly, and examples of wasteful federal government spending, the new installment to Dr. Coburn's annual *WASTEBOOK* project once again focused American's attention on how Washington tends to "see no waste, speak no waste, and cut no waste."

