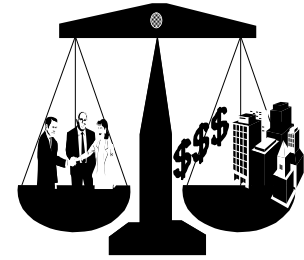


Citizens for Common Sense



Mar 2010

Seeking government that is responsible and responsive to taxpayers in St. Joseph County, IN

MEET THE CANDIDATES!

Citizens for Common Sense will be holding a *Meet the Candidates Night* so you can meet and hear from candidates for contested races in the May 4 primary. Candidates will address why they are running, what they hope to accomplish and why they are qualified, with questions from the audience to follow.

- ◆ *Congressional District 2 (currently held by Joe Donnelly)*
Martin Dolan, Jack Jordan, Jackie Walorski
- ◆ *State Rep. Dist. 8 & 21 (currently held by Ryan Dvorak & Jackie Walorski)*
Dick Pfeil, Mark Schaeffer, Timothy Wesco, Dave Wood
- ◆ *Plus all 8 candidates (Democrat & Republican) for St. Joe County Sheriff*

**Tuesday, March 23 from 7-9 pm
St. Paul's Memorial United Methodist Church
1001 W. Colfax in South Bend**

Coffee afterward. Invite family and friends.

***** Flier and "Summary of Candidates" inside *****

Inside this issue:

Essays by local citizens:

- ***New Jobs – NOT Coming***
by Greg Burkowski
- ***Hoosiers Getting Hosed***
by Steve Leykauf
- ***Portage Prairie Pipedreams***
by Ron Milliken
- ***A Little Rebellion Might be Good***
by Jim Rossow, past CS President

Citizens for Common Sense **SURVEY**

On occasion, we need to poll everyone on our mailing list to determine the direction our organization should go on key issues.

Please take survey inside!!!

New Jobs NOT Coming to St. Joe County

by Greg Burkowski

With the December 21, 2009 announcement of yet another prospective new industrial employer expressing interest in Elkhart County for expansion of their business to the USA, I must ask again: Where are South Bend and St. Joseph County? What have our politicians been doing to attract interest in our county and city for living wage jobs for the masses? What does Elkhart County have that St. Joseph County doesn't have?

The answer to the first question is: ABSENT. The only list South Bend and St. Joseph County are on for prospective new business is the list of localities to avoid. The answer to the second question is: They have been busy writing tax abatement legislation that would be very favorable to the building trade unions and developers that have contributed to their respective re-election campaigns and

insuring that this county and city gets no consideration for new economic development. The answer to the third question is Elkhart County has an attitude by political leaders and ordinances that are favorable for economic development and job creation.

Have you had enough of the economic decay that has swept the county? How much longer are we going to keep re-electing these politicians? Charlie Weis was gone after five years. Tyrone Willingham was gone after 3 years. Bob Davie was gone after 5 years. All were dismissed for poor performance. Our local politicians have been underperforming for decades. Isn't a prosperous and vibrant city even more important than a winning college football team?

Hoosiers Getting Hosed

By Steve Leykauf

While property tax caps are a step in the right direction, the proposed progressive structure will harm Hoosiers. The purpose of tax caps is to protect taxpayers from taxation abuse by government.

Higher taxes on business perpetuates the myth that commercial and industrial entities are piggy banks, or cash cows. Bureaucrats do not want citizens to realize that businesses pass higher costs on to consumers in the form of higher prices for products and services.

Higher taxes on business creates an unattractive climate for siting of new businesses that provide jobs. Due to higher valuations of non-residential properties, business is already burdened on an even-percentage basis. Make caps even at 1% for all properties to encourage job-creating business to site in Indiana, and satisfy the fairness wording of our State Constitution.

Take a cue from the State of California and further protect all taxpaying entities by imposing a maximum 3% year-to-year change in property taxation. For example, a property taxed at \$1,000 in 2009 could not be taxed any higher than \$1,030 in 2010.

Support for property tax caps should not be misconstrued as support for the legitimacy of property taxation. Indiana and other states need to seriously study other ways to generate necessary government revenues that tax consumption rather than private investment. The Speaker of Indiana's House of Representatives has blocked all such consideration in the past, and it is way past time to remove him from office.

Bureaucrats who play politics with taxation and tax controls are out of step with their support of irresponsible and incompetent government spending that is has become oh so common.

In the mid-1900s, Indiana changed from being the cradle of the U.S. Automotive Industry as all assembly except Studebaker moved to SE Michigan. Indiana's proximity enabled it to morph into the major auto parts manufacturing state, with high-wage industrial jobs. As availability of living wage jobs continues to decline with the deindustrialization of America in general, and the ebbing of an iconic industry in particular, Indiana needs to once again be an attractive state for siting high-paying industrial jobs. And those employers may much prefer fair and moderate taxes over a tax abatement circus that has become a real joke.

Look inside for survey question on a proposed Constitutional amendment to make these property tax caps permanent.

Portage Prairie Pipedreams

By Ron Milliken, reprinted from 11-29-09 *Tribune*

South Bend Mayor Stephen Luecke's Oct. 22 *Tribune* Viewpoint promoting a U.S. 31 interchange at Adams Road is a thinly disguised plan to waste public money for a private developer's pipe dream, and a refutation of representative government.

The Indiana Department of Transportation spent taxpayers' money this year to build two bridges over U.S. 31 south of South Bend in order to *restrict* access, so adding a third interchange north of South Bend (less than a mile from an existing interchange) makes no sense. Perhaps that is why state funds won't be made available.

Saying the project has broad support from Holladay-supported politicians and their un-elected cronies while belittling the taxpaying area residents was meaningful only in its revelation of how far Luecke will go to make up to Holladay Properties President John Phair, who switched to the Republican side in the last mayoral election.

Also, Luecke tossed about the names of U.S. Sens. Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh, as if these two gentlemen were knowledgeable about Portage Prairie or even able to locate it on a map. A letter from their offices isn't that hard to get. It is a shame the people living in the area, who signed a petition against the interchange, have no say in what happens and can be so easily ignored.

The billboards for the original pipedreams for Portage Prairie which Holladay peddled to get the cornfields annexed into South Bend are fading like the promises. Several years ago, during a Prairie historical home tour, Holladay erected a tent and told visitors that new houses, a grape arbor and an organic farmers market would be on the old Waggoner Farm site. Lots were promised by November. Since several Novembers have passed, I guess new plans will have to be drawn up for the post-interchange sales pitch.

As to Holladay's Huron building amidst the soybean fields, those "For Lease" signs are starting to look worn, too. Beyond the air-purifying crops, the area does get use on weekends as some people bring their radio-controlled airplanes to the fields south of the building. Of course, after the next airport expansion and the subsequent historical drop in carriers, the South Bend Regional RC airport should be available.

Luecke mentioned "orderly growth to spur economic development" as if he, Project Future, airport executive director John Schalliol and the Airport Authority have spent the last 30 years in a parallel dimension where South Bend has grown and prospered rather than stagnated, declined and decayed.

Yes, Schafer Gear Works Inc. and PEI Genesis are winners in the Blackthorn area. They have gotten out of

downtown South Bend, but that is not growth. For every job in the outlying areas, how many more have been lost in South Bend proper?

Are so many jobs pouring in that the Airport Industrial Park, Blackthorn, Cleveland Road West, and Ignition Park will be filled in the next 10 years? The people at Project Future have been saying so for over 20 years and all they have proved is that they can keep their jobs without having to be accountable. Luecke says the area "will be the central hub of commercial activity... one of the fastest-growing areas in our region." Where does that leave downtown South Bend or Notre Dame's Eddy Street?

Luecke didn't mention the hundreds of thousands of dollars the city already gave DLZ Corp. for project studies, one of which the overworked DLZ farmed out to a group from Chicago to do historical studies on Portage Prairie. As a rural historian, I was happy to help the young lady from Chicago who asked me about the area. I informed her that one of my late neighbors had already written the history of Portage Prairie that could have been gotten free at the St. Joseph County Public Library!

Concerning funding, South Bend residents may lose some police officers, firefighters or parks, but DLZ is safe.

The one thing Luecke did state straight is that the funds he is seeking *cannot* be used for general maintenance of infrastructure. So, who is going to maintain the infrastructure while it sits unused and decays? City residents should go out to the years-old, unused Dylan Street and see the fancy inlaid brick logo and four brick walkways that lead from bean field to bean field. They are a waste because the opossums, raccoons and deer prefer to walk on the smooth pavement, and if there is ever money to re-pave, they will probably be paved over.

Luecke said "a key function of local government is to develop and maintain the community's infrastructure," but the people in the Portage Prairie area have no local government. And the people who elected Luecke have a large tract of land across from the police station that isn't going to be planted in corn to produce ethanol. In a representative government he would be taking care of those people's needs, but it is all about power and greed.

South Bend has been playing the "if you build it they will come" game unsuccessfully for decades. It hasn't worked for Schalliol's airport legacy dreams; it didn't work for former Mayor Joe Kernan's College Football Hall of Fame, and it won't work at Portage Prairie, either.

Phair may honestly want to create another Granger on the northwest side of South Bend, but the demographics don't make sense for us to spend dollars for him to gamble away what little remaining productive cropland we have.

A Little Rebellion Might Be Good for St. Joe County

By Jim Rossow, reprinted from 2-14-10 *Tribune*

"A little rebellion now and then is a good thing."
-- Thomas Jefferson 1787

A revolution is coming. It started on January 19 of this year, somewhat appropriately in the state of Massachusetts, with the election of a Republican senator to a seat held by the Democrats for over four decades. It was a clear signal to those in Washington that what they were doing, and have done for so long, is not what this country needs.

A little rebellion might be a good thing for St. Joseph county, too. Our current state of affairs is due to those in power for decades, whose adherence to a self-serving agenda over the years has led us to where we are now: high unemployment, declining population, empty buildings, businesses and homes, crumbling infrastructure, and governments in financial crisis.

They promise leadership, but all we get is a shuffling of all-too-familiar faces between commissioner, treasurer, prosecutor, state representative and other elected positions. Anything necessary to retain the status quo. And so it does remain.

They don't listen. When citizens protest a twice-the-price jail in a long abandoned model, it's shoved down their throats. Taxpayers who got too serious in their protests found themselves in court for their efforts.

Desperate for something that looks like progress, they bring us the Football Hall of Fame. Citizens protest, citing its failure in a larger metro area. Not to worry our leaders assure us, it won't cost taxpayers a dime! It was never self-supporting, and taxpayers ultimately picked up the costs. Now as we debate the future of this white elephant in the heart of the city, I wonder how many additional millions of dollars it will take to renovate it for the next occupant. I smell a bond issue here.

We are told that the expansion of Portage Prairie is vital to our future, that it must have 31 Bypass access to be so. Take a drive through Nimitz Parkway, an older industrial development which has both 31 Bypass and Toll Road access. You stand a better chance of being hit by a deer on the parkway than you do being employed there. More people play soccer there than work there. Empty buildings abound, even in the prestigious Blackthorn area. Yet with the allure of more bond issues in the offing, the focus is on Portage Prairie.

And lately I have read that a proposal has been made to upgrade the Covaleski Stadium area at a staggering cost considering the few that use or benefit from it. Promises made when the stadium was built have never been fulfilled, but how we love bond issues in St. Joe County!

We are given the illusion of progress by the constant building of hotels, fire stations and other government buildings, which provide little but temporary construction jobs. Even the much touted Eddy Street Commons development is showing signs of strain before it is even completed. None of these ballyhooed projects will substantially change our state of affairs.

We need leadership that will promote the half-empty spaces we have already developed, and stop spending money to create new ones we cannot maintain. We need leadership that does not pin its hope on the arrival of the ND crowd six times a year. We need new ideas to attract business to these developments, and keep them after the tax-abatements run out. But what have we to offer, other than every tax known to mankind?

We need a rebellion that will rid us of the sock puppet politicians and greedy sheriffs whose only purpose is to get reelected and maintain their status quo. It is our only hope. *Vive La Revolución!*

Urgent Alerts: What you may be missing!

A month ago we sent you an urgent e-mail that State Rep. Dave Niezgodski was pushing a bill to create a Regional Transportation Commission involving St. Joseph County. Thanks in part to your response, that bill went nowhere.

Just days ago, we sent you an urgent alert about a State Senate Conference Committee that was considering eliminating township governments without the public voting on it. As of this writing, we don't know how this came out.

Did you get this opportunity to voice your opinion?

If not, then sign up by sending an e-mail to CitizensforCommonSense@gmail.com

Or include your e-mail on the enclosed survey and circle it before sending it in!