

EDITORIALS

A business/government partnership that works

It can be confusing, particularly in a presidential election year, to know where the line is drawn between government and the rest of our lives. For example, politicians love to claim credit for economic and scientific advancements in which their only role was to put up money, or grant tax breaks. Meanwhile, many business people — even those who feed at the public trough — claim their success is entirely of their own making, and would have been even greater if government would just get out of the way.

Of course, both extremes are incorrect, and we are fortunate to have in our midst an example of how private enterprise and government can truly work together to foster job growth and preserve valuable resources. That example is the Twin Stacks Center in Dallas, where an ambitious and entrepreneurial couple has turned a vacant former textile mill into a vibrant, varied workplace for 500 people. They did it with plenty of cooperation from local and county government, but not a dime of taxpayer money.

Lynn Banta and Rick Haas took on a challenge hardly anyone would find appealing — turning a hulking old building filled with 50 years' worth of dirt, grime and possible toxic contamination into a modern office and retail complex that has attracted a signature restaurant, a high-tech company and several other enterprises. Undoubtedly there were times even they thought the challenge was too great, but in the end their persistence and the support of others saw them through.

Rick Haas is fond of saying he and his wife "recycled" the former Natona Mills, and he's correct in that assessment. Instead of a vacant eyesore, or an underused warehouse, Twin Stacks Center is a symbol of the Back Mountain's vitality and one couple's vision. It is a credit to both.

School spirit or silliness?

This is spirit week, when local high schools promote pride and accomplishment in the days leading up to homecoming celebrations. But is cross dressing a positive way to help students feel good about themselves and their school? Today, you see, is Backwards Sex Day at Dallas High School, when students are encouraged to attend class dressed as members of the opposite sex. Monday was Pajama Day, when they were invited to wear their bedclothes to school.

Just good, clean fun, say supporters of these activities, including many graduates of the schools. Maybe so, but it would seem these silly celebrations are more appropriate for grade school children than for teenagers, who receive enough encouragement to focus on the stupid and superficial outside of school. There must be better ways to build school spirit than these.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I had not fully realized the dramatic changes that have taken place in national politics until last week. But when I was watching a segment of the Public Broadcasting Service's series about the war on drugs, it hit me like a ton of bricks. The revelation was about as welcome as that occurrence, too. Here's what happened: By chance I tuned in as the show reached the early 1970s, when Richard Nixon, perhaps the most-reviled of modern presidents, was in office. The Vietnam War was not going well, and thousands of troops were coming back addicted to heroin, which presented yet another public relations problem for the administration. This show included film of a White House conference, with Nixon surrounded at a huge table by advisors as they discussed the problem and potential solutions. Throughout, Tricky Dick solicited opinions from others while making his points firmly and clearly. Not once did he melt into fuzzy compassion or teary sympathy. And he didn't bite his trembling lower lip at all. Here was the man we loved to hate 25 years ago looking downright... presidential!

My knees buckled at a startling reaction, a fleeting thought along the lines of, "Why can't we have candidates that look and act like this?" I tried to come out of it, but couldn't shake the notion that here, for all his faults, was a much more impressive president than anyone in the last 20 years. Then I realized (or rationalized), it wasn't so much that I admired Nixon but that we've seen a wholesale retreat from forceful, plain spoken candidates. It all started with that master in imagery, Ronald Reagan, who often lost the distinction between reality and fantasy, but we didn't care since he played the role so well. After four years of haughty George I, we got Bill Clinton, who's act fooled me once, but not twice. So, what am I to do this year? Vote for George II, or for a man who seems to have the right stuff, but doesn't dare show it for fear of seeming mean and nasty. I guess I'll just have to make my choice, and hope the president is superior to the candidate.

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you can feel good about

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Just hanging around, a symbol of the harvest season. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Air Force veteran wonders why he's ineligible for Legion

Editor,

A few weeks ago you carried a short article on the American Legion, listing the dates of military service which determined membership eligibility. Conspicuously absent were the dates of my active service in the United States Air

Force, September 1956, to September, 1960. This, of course, makes me ineligible for membership in the American Legion, except as a non-voting "home" member.

Even after all this time, and numerous letters to the American Legion and various legislators I

have yet to receive an answer that justifies this kind of discrimination. I served overseas during an armed conflict (the first battle of Lebanon declared by President Eisenhower in 1958), and I was honorably discharged after four long, grueling years. If that isn't sacrifice enough to be a member

of the Legion, then others should start looking more closely at the actual service performed by some more favored veterans who are eligible.

John P. Bergevin
Dallas

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - Oct. 17, 1930

SURVEYOR FINDS BEAVER DAM

Frank P. Plessinger, surveyor for the State Game Commission had just completed a six month survey of 20,000 acres of timberland purchased in Wyoming County by the commission. He stated that his party had discovered a large beaver house and dam in the wilds of the country, six miles from any habitation and almost inaccessible by any road. The pond formed by the dam covered an area of about 15 acres and had developed approximately four years earlier.

60 Years Ago - Oct. 18, 1940
1,500 MEN REGISTER

Ready to win in their country's defence, if need be, more than 1,500 men from Dallas and its six neighboring communities registered for selective military train-

ing and were awaiting the national lottery that would determine which of them would be called to serve in the U.S. Army. "They're the happiest bunch I ever saw," on draft official commented after all of the cards bearing the names of all the men who had volunteered were packed up and dispatched to the Luzerne County Courthouse to become part of the nationwide conscription reserve.

50 Years Ago - Oct. 20, 1950
BUSY-BEES ARE SHORT ON HONEY

Local beekeepers predicted that honey would be in short supply because the bees had not been able to stock their hives as well as they had in more seasonable summers. During the peak of nectar season, late spring and early summer, it had rained almost every day. Although the rain did not add up to a significant amount, it was enough to dampen the bees' wings and confine them to their hives. The remainder of the summer was cold, missing the frost mark by only a few degrees. Ralph Rood, veteran Dallas beekeeper, and Rev. Charles Frick, Pikes Creek, said that they wouldn't be able to take any honey from the supers this year because the bees probably had enough to keep

themselves healthy during the winter, but none to spare.

Now playing at Himmler Theatre, "Three Little Words" starring Fred Astaire and Red Skelton.

40 Years Ago - Oct. 20, 1960

YOU COULD GET:

Gleem toothpaste, 1.75 oz. tube, 31¢; Golden Fluffo, 1 lb. can, 31¢; Kraft Marshmallow Creme, 7 oz. jar, 19¢; Pillsbury pancake mix, 2 lb. pkg., 39¢; Starkist tuna fish, 6.5 oz. can, 31¢; Nescafe instant coffee, 10 oz. jar, \$1.39; Royal pudding, 4 pkgs., 39¢; Tetley tea, pkg. 100, \$1.23.

30 Years Ago - Oct. 22, 1970

NOXEN TO HAVE 6-MAN POLICE FORCE

Noxen residents presented a petition to the Township Board of Supervisors requesting police protection. Supervisors planned to establish a six-man force at their regular meeting when an ordinance creating the police force would become effective. The six officers had already been selected and only a formal appointment was needed. An annual salary of \$1 was to be paid each man, and expenses such as motor vehicle, uniforms, badges, sidearms, etc. would be reimbursed.

A one car accident resulted in \$1,000 worth of damage to a 1971 Dodge coupe. According to the driver and witnesses, a blue Falcon station wagon forced the driver off the left side of the roadway as he was traveling north on Route 309 near the Kunkle intersection. The driver lost control of his car, swerved across the road, went into the berm on the right side and struck a tree. The driver of the coupe was not injured, but the car had to be towed from the scene. The station wagon's driver failed to stop at the accident site.

20 Years Ago - Oct. 16, 1980

INMATES LEARN FUNDAMENTALS OF FLYING

Inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas were learning the fundamentals of flying. Two inmates at the Dallas Institution who were both licensed pilots, approached the institution's superintendent, seeking permission to conduct an F.A.A. oriented aviation ground school. Superintendent Glen Jeffes, after reviewing the program of instruction and being assured that the inmates would not request an airplane for any advanced flight training, agreed to the class.

The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

While many people do not like the idea of mergers and consolidations of local governments, there are other ways to approach this issue which provide opportunities to improve delivery of services while maintaining the identification and governmental structure currently available in Pennsylvania. Some of these techniques are Councils of Government (COG), joint delivery of services through intergovernmental compacts, and professionalizing the delivery of service through municipal managers. In recent months, several articles have been written regarding proposals for municipal joint delivery of services including, but not limited to, fire protection and police services.

Councils of Government continue to spring up in places across Northeastern Pennsylvania. Many opportunities exist to explore different approaches to the delivery of services which are important to

Cooperation can help local towns

citizens of municipalities in the Back Mountain, in the Abingtons, and in other places where growth and development are important concerns.

Councils of Government vary in power and prestige across the Commonwealth. They require strong municipal governmental leadership to enable what has been a traditional mode of service delivery to become intergovernmental in scope and quality and, most importantly, in a manner beneficial to the citizens of the municipalities served by the COG.

Currently, there are nearly 20 Councils of Government in Pennsylvania. Many exist within the Northeastern Pennsylvania region but not all are as active as they could be, and the best examples may exist outside of the region in such places as Centre County (State College) and municipalities surrounding that borough and the Northern York Regional Police Force which includes eight municipalities, two of which are not even contiguous.

In Allegheny County (Pittsburgh Area), there are 13 Councils of Government. Each municipality in Northeastern Pennsylvania should consider ways by which townships, boroughs, or cities can join together, and cause a better delivery of service with-

out interfering with the independence and prerogatives of each local government. For example, it would make great sense for local governments in the Back Mountain to think about ways that each could join together to study and evaluate how services can be more effectively delivered, yet retain traditional values of local control.

The Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, long available as a tool for intergovernmental activities, has been reinforced by the Commonwealth Municipal Shared Services Program administered through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The work originally pioneered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs is now managed through the Governor's Local Government Service Center headed by Deputy Secretary of the Department of Community and Economic Development Kim Coon, a former county commissioner and a person originally raised in the most rural county of Northeastern Pennsylvania - Pike County.

Councils of Government can be established quite easily in areas of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Assistance can be provided by many different types of organi-

zations including, but not limited to, the Pennsylvania Economic League, county planning commissions, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and others.

One activity which might benefit all municipal governments would be a regional intergovernmental analysis to examine how these kinds of activities currently take place and then develop a long-range strategic plan to enhance the intergovernmental delivery of services in various parts of the region.

For further information regarding Councils of Government and other opportunities to enhance and improve the delivery of local governmental services contact can be made with the Scranton Regional Office of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, 464 Forum Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120 or the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, PA 18640. Telephone: (570) 655-5581, Fax: (570) 654-5137, E-mail: info@edcnp.org, Internet: www.edcnp.org

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