

OPINION

TO BUILD A BETTER
WORLD, START IN YOUR
OWN COMMUNITY

Vote yes on transportation tax extension

Boulder County is seeking a 15-year extension of a .1-percent sales tax for transportation improvements.

Voter approval of this extension — which is expected to generate more than \$57 million — will allow the county to take advantage of more than \$33 million in matching funds and to address many of the practical needs of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians in eastern and northern Boulder County.

Most important on the “proposed project list” are the expansion of Colo. Highway 66 to four lanes between Main and Hover, a pedestrian underpass at the intersection of Hover and Ken Pratt Boulevard, added shoulders to area roads and support for the Bolt and J bus routes between Longmont and Boulder.

Colo. 66 is the primary east-west route on the north side of Longmont, and as the city expands north of this highway, the traffic load will increase. Half of the \$4.08 million cost of this expansion

would come from a federal match, making this the right time to make improvements.

The pedestrian underpass would be an important safety addition to the southwest side of Longmont. For employees of most businesses in the area, reaching the bus stop near that intersection requires crossing multiple lanes of traffic, a situation

that led to a pedestrian's death there two years ago. This underpass, and another at Airport Road and the Diagonal, would draw matching federal funds that would pay for two-thirds of the cost.

Adding shoulders to area roadways will be key to keeping motorists and cyclists safe. Niwot, Hygiene and County Line roads, and 63rd Street all are on the proposed project list.

The county's transportation infrastructure requires continual work to keep traffic flowing and motorists, cyclists and pedestrians safe. County Issue 2B is a request that makes sense for residents. Vote yes.

EDITORIAL

Sen. Harry Reid and his glass house

By Tom Fitton
Judicial Watch

“The public understands these (corrupt politicians) felt that they were above the law. They felt that they could ignore the rules. They felt that the government was not there to serve the people's interest, but to serve their own special interests or the interests of their cronies. What the public has seen is a Republican culture of corruption that has distorted government priorities...”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-N.V., issued this statement on the floor of the U.S. Senate in March 2006, while touting the Democrats' Honest Leadership and Open Government Act. The web of scandals involving convicted felon and former lobbyist Jack Abramoff had reached fever pitch, thrusting the issue of corruption onto the national stage during an election year. Both political parties attempted to wash their hands of the mess quickly, fearing the wrath of the voters.

Democrats ultimately won this battle and both houses of Congress, during the 2006 elections as the public punished Republicans for allowing corruption to thrive on their watch.

But can the Democrats really claim the moral high ground on the issue of corruption? More specifically, is Harry Reid really the right man to carry the mantle for clean and honest government?

Even a cursory review of Reid's record yields a fast and firm response: Absolutely not. Despite the image he attempts to project, Reid is far from a paragon of honesty and openness.

Last year, of course, Harry Reid found himself on Judicial Watch's list of the “Ten Most Corrupt Politicians in America” for failing to accurately report his stake in a \$700,000 land deal. He may have also done favors in exchange for some of Jack Abramoff's tainted campaign contribu-

tions.

And now this: According to the Los Angeles Times: “Over the last four years, Reid has used his influence in Washington to help (a) developer, Nevada super-lobbyist Whittemore, clear obstacles from Coyote Springs' path... As the project advanced, Reid received tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from Whittemore.”

Whittemore also hired one of Reid's sons (Leif) as his personal lawyer and then promptly handed the junior Reid the responsibility of negotiating the real estate deal with federal officials. Leif Reid even called his father's office at one point to talk about how to obtain the proper EPA permits!

In light of this scandal uncovered by the Los Angeles Times, and Reid's statement on the Senate floor, it is fair to ask the following questions: Did Sen. Reid feel the government was not there to serve the purpose of the people, but rather Reid's special interests and those of his contributor, Whittemore? Did he, himself, distort the government's priorities when he used the instruments of power to grease the wheels for a real estate development project that enriched his friend and maybe his own son?

It has been my experience that sometimes the most crooked politicians sling the most mud on their opponents to deflect attention away from their own foibles. Sometimes they'll even go so far as to take up causes publicly that they disrespect personally. Harry Reid looks to be just another in a long line of hypocritical politicians casting stones.

Neither political party corners the market on corruption. This is not a Republican problem or a Democrat problem. And the sooner we figure that out, the sooner we can actually address the problem in a meaningful way.

Tom Fitton is president of Judicial Watch, a nonpartisan educational foundation that fights government corruption.



Coverage of band night was disappointing

Re: “Music Break,” Oct. 4, Page B1

I sure wish you would have given better representation of the St. Vrain Valley Band Night in Thursday's paper.

I got up early Thursday to see what kind of write-up and pictures you would have.

How ironic that the only picture you showed was not even of a band.

Not only that, you put your one mention just below an article acknowledging the value of our art, music and physical education teachers.

Your lack of coverage shows your failure to value those very people.

The band night represented hundreds of hours of work by band directors, students and parents. The music was stirring, and the shows were eye catching.

I can think of no better melding of the three disciplines than to see kids performing beautiful music while keeping in step marching all over the field to paint moving pictures.

Not only was the show spectacular, the camaraderie and good sportsmanship displayed by the bands shows that these kids have great instructors.

We sat near several different bands and heard the cheers of appreciation when competing bands executed especially difficult or beautiful sets.

Our district is blessed with many dedicated and talented band directors.

Maybe they and their colleagues would feel more valued if their hard work was acknowledged when such natural opportunities present themselves.

I hope that next year the Times-Call will feature this event as it deserves.

LAURA STROPE
Longmont

OPEN FORUM

Bush and Musgrave do not care about children

Several years ago, President Bush created “No Child Left Behind” and yet many children are left behind because he failed to adequately fund his own program. Now we come down to health care for children whose families cannot afford to pay for health care. Once again, G.W. would rather fund a war than helping American families. The old saying, “Prevention is worth a pound of cure” should be acknowledged, as it is easier to prevent a problem than fix it. It is a proven concept that, if we can prevent an illness through vaccines, proper nutrition and healthy living, then we will not need as much health care, thus lowering the cost to each and every family. Not all diseases, however, are preventable, and good health care does not come without a price. Therefore, it is imperative that the people of this nation stand and tell the president that we want affordable health care for our children and for all people who struggle to pay for health care.

The people of Colorado need to speak and be heard over this health-care bill (CHIP). Please write or e-mail President Bush and tell him that we disapprove of his veto on the children's health-care bill, that Congress worked very hard to write. While you are at it, call Marilyn Musgrave at her office, 202-224-3121. She doesn't care about children either. She voted against the bill. Guess whose side she is on — not yours, not mine and certainly not children's.

MARILYN WRAY
Longmont

Concern about the Twin Peaks Mall study

Let's see, \$6,000 for a study to see if the Twin Peaks Mall is blighted. This revelation rais-

es eyebrows and raises questions. For starters, how about the fact that City Council itself is acting as the Urban Renewal Authority board? No attempt here to appoint some board to shill for council's wishes, they just appoint themselves, quick before they're voted out or retire. Second, council member Lange says, “I think we're all concerned about the future of the Twin Peaks Mall.” Oh, really? Were you listening when Longmont residents criticized council's decisions to build Wal-Mart Supercenters precisely because they bankrupt existing businesses? Third, I haven't been able to figure out from this article just how “(the) blight would pave the way to funnel future tax revenue from the mall to help finance its makeover.” Is this like how Iraqi oil was going to fund the war and reconstruction?

And how about the developer planning to build an open-air mall, similar to the Twenty Ninth Street mall in Boulder?

Sounds like more than just a “makeover.” And has any study been submitted to see if Twenty Ninth Street is even pulling a profit?

Finally, at least Phil DelVecchio is considering trends when he says that “enclosed malls are pretty much antiquated.” Perhaps council should read the Oct. 2 Wall Street Journal headline article: “Wal-Mart Era Wanes Amid Big Shifts in Retail.” Wal-Marts also are antiquated, and Longmont will have two of them flanking the outskirts of our city like mammoth tombstones, sucking the life out of existing business, promoting low wages and standing as mute testaments to a dearth of vision, flexibility and integrity.

Halloween is here. Election Day needs to follow.

ANN KROHN RICK
Longmont

VIEWS FROM THE NATION'S PRESS

Resolution on Turkey potentially dangerous

It's easy to dismiss a non-binding congressional resolution accusing Turkey of “genocide” against Armenians during World War I as frivolous. ... How many House members can be expected to carefully weigh Schiff's one-sided “findings” about long-ago events in Anatolia?

The problem is that any congressional action will be taken in deadly earnest by Turkey's powerful nationalist politicians and therefore by its government, which is already struggling to resist a tidal wave of anti-Americanism in the country. Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, called President Bush on Friday to warn against the resolution. Turkish politicians are predicting that responses to passage by the House could include denial of U.S. access to Turkey's Incirlik air base, a key staging point for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Turkish parliament could also throw off longstanding U.S. constraints and mandate an invasion of northern Iraq to attack Kurdish separatists there, something that could destabilize the only region of Iraq that is currently peaceful.

No wonder eight former secretaries of state, including Henry A. Kissinger, James A. Baker III, George P. Shultz and Madeleine K. Albright, have urged Pelosi to drop the resolution, saying it “could endanger our national security interests in the region, including our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and damage efforts to promote reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey.” ...

The Washington Post

Television's big switch-over

On Feb. 17, 2009, it could snow all across America. Not outside, but in living rooms, on TV sets. That's the date when broadcasters will switch to digital transmission, rendering millions of standard analog TVs useless. Consumers can avoid this whiteout, but only if they're prepared.

And there's the challenge: How to inform the roughly 20 million households relying exclusively on analog sets that pull in their reception for free, through rabbit ears or a rooftop antenna. ...

... With fewer than 18 months to go, ... 56 percent of viewers with analog sets have never even heard of the switch. ...

The options for consumers are fairly straightforward. Starting with the least expensive one, they are: a) buying a converter box using government coupons b) subscribing to cable or satellite TV services, which will make the transition on their end, or c) buying a digital TV.

But sharing this information is anything but simple. Because it has only \$5 million to get the message out, the government is turning to the private sector for help with public-service announcements and educating consumers in stores.

... Other serious issues remain. One is whether the converter boxes will be uniformly available in stores. Beginning in January, households should be able to apply to the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration for up to two \$40 coupons to offset the costs of converter boxes expected to be priced from \$50 to \$70. But some retailers may not stock the boxes if they don't have much demand for them.

... More than anything, what's needed is oversight and coordination of the conversion. ...

The Christian
Science Monitor

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YOUR LETTERS ARE WELCOME

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