

Your turn

Risks must be taken for progress to occur

**Russell Rodenbeck
Colby**

The citizens of Colby have been debating the issue of the building proposed by the college for some time now.

I am 25 years old and have spent the majority of my life in Colby. As a younger resident of this town I feel that I should share my opinions as several others have. As I see it, this issue has been discussed primarily from a monetary standpoint, as well it should. I, however, see this issue as a matter of progress rather than as matter of how much money we are willing to part with. The prevailing opinion appears to be that we, as taxpayers, cannot afford to vote yes in the upcoming election on this proposal. I have a hard time justifying in my own mind why we should vote no on this issue.

I have heard or read several people say something along the lines of the fact that we need more taxpayers, not increased taxes. I wholeheartedly agree with this statement. More taxpayers would help lessen the burden on the rest of the taxpayers. But I would like to know what these people propose we should do in order to keep our current taxpayers and bring new taxpayers to our community. Will a refusal to make sacrifices in an effort to bring change help bring new taxpayers to this town? If this is the argument, I must admit that I don't

understand the logic.

Jerry Downing has expressed his concern that he will not be able to reap the full benefits of proposed state legislation that will reduce property taxes by up to \$600 a year for citizens over the age of 55. Granted, I do not know how much his property taxes will increase if the college's proposal is approved, I have to wonder if having an extra \$50 a month to put in your pocket is worth not helping one of the biggest assets to our community make improvements.

I have heard other people say that the Colby Community Building will become an unused building if this new gym is built. I honestly think that the Colby Community Building can definitely benefit from this new building. Having two larger gymnasiums in town can afford us the opportunity to expand tournaments to include more teams.

The Orange and Black Classic and the Ambassador Classic are just two tournaments that could expand their fields and invite additional talented teams. I would imagine the shopping, lodging and restaurant industries would certainly welcome that added business. In short, the Colby Community Building's use should not decrease at all rather it should increase.

I would also like to address Charles Cook's concerns. In his response to Skip Sharp's comments

he poses the question that if this building is not built and we lose the college, then isn't the leadership of the college inadequate. No, the leadership of the college is not inadequate. It is the support they are receiving from the community that is inadequate. If the community is unwilling to lend its support to the leadership of the college on this issue, then leadership is rendered inadequate by the community, not by its own doing.

Again, I think of this issue as a matter of progress. I am sure that everyone in this town would agree that progress and community growth are both positive things. What if this new building was the first step in making Colby Community College a four year school where we award bachelor's degrees?

The only major addition to the college in the last few years has been the addition of the Bedker Building. Maybe it is time to take the next step in the growth of the college. But as I hear more arguments being made, it appears to me that those who are in the strongest position to exact change in the name of progress are the same people that are staunchly opposed to it. When taking into account some of the events that have occurred in this town in recent years and the comments people are making regarding

this particular issue, I wonder why the motives of our community leaders seem to be governed by personal benefit or gain, rather than the improvement and progress of the community as a whole.

Now I understand that my viewpoint is primarily philosophical rather than practical. And as someone who would like to buy a home in this town in the near future I am very concerned about the added burden I will be asked to shoulder.

Given our economic struggles in recent years with poor crop production, I understand that money is very tight. Money has become tight enough that people seem to want guarantees on their returns before they commit to a project. But there are no guarantees with a project like this, there are only the inherent risks.

Risks have to be taken for progress to occur, and I believe that community progress does not happen by refusing to make sacrifices. Strong communities are built by having strong leaders who are not afraid to take risks. I can't say for certain that this project will bring about great positive changes for this community, nor can I say that it will cause a great many problems either.

I can say, though, that I hope we are all strong enough to accept risks and make sacrifices in order to improve our community.

Let's use money to bring in jobs

**Larry Oren
Colby**

A \$100,000 valuation on a residential property will add \$144.79. Irrigated quarter adds \$53.94. Dryland quarter adds \$45.93 and commercial property adds \$314.75. Take all this times 20 years, folks. And taxes do not stop with the commercial building, but all of the equipment in it. As Mr. Flanagan stated, a lot of people are going to pay \$20,000 to \$30,000 or more.

I would like to know how many college students that are planning on voting have on their car Thomas County plates. Larry McDonald says the college brings in \$13 million, I would like to see where that number comes from and break down of where it went. I see that Mr. Kreider is offering free baby sitting

at the college for your vote. Really now, are our tax dollars paying for that?

As for the dorms, a lot of homes in Colby are well over 30 years old and not being torn down. Is our leadership so bad that these are not taken care of, and if so will the new ones have any better care?

If we want Colby to grow we need industry to bring people to our county and help pay taxes and bring in new funds. I feel this money would be much better spent in this way, rather than another unit adding to our taxes rather than helping pay them. If we are going to spend more tax dollars at the college, let's use them for some young people that we can hire right here. Very few hire sports people to come play sports in their business here in Thomas County.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest.

Money needs to be used for all citizens

**Jon Friesen
Colby**

A facility like this wellness center is a high maintenance facility. From the physical plant, to the equipment and fixtures within. Also, this equipment needs to be updated on a regular basis to stay competitive.

Our initial investment of \$20,000,000, along with cost overruns, will only be a small portion of the cost to us taxpayers over time. Even the best laid plans are subject to change along the way, and the figures for economic growth in this case are only estimates at best. We're realistic and we know that

things are ever changing.

As taxpayers we are not against increasing taxes. We just want to make sure that our investment will pay dividends to our community in true and lasting economic growth and that it truly meets the needs of all the tax paying citizens of Thomas County, and that it doesn't become another liability for those left here to pay for.

Let's be careful that this project is not just entertainment and that a specific group of businesses and individuals are the only ones profiting. Taxpayer's money needs to be used to build the community for all of its citizens and we all have a dif-

ferent opinion as to what that entails.

Investing in a community from within and investing in its citizens and businesses that truly serve the community and thus bring about lasting economic growth are a good investment. There are many small business owners that are not eligible for taxpayer assistance. These are the backbone of Thomas County as they stand the test of time. This is what we want for the next generation and what we hope will encourage our college students to come to Colby and stay after graduation.

Yes, we need ways for our citizens to come together and we must

keep up with the needs of a changing younger generation in order to maintain growth and prosperity; however, lets make sound, self-sustaining investments for the future, because this next generation will have to take over and accept this responsibility in good times and in bad.

We need to make sure that we recruit students for the right reasons and that we build our college's reputation on the values that will enable our community to grow through the efforts of hard work and a strong sense of fellowship and community responsibility.

County needs to work on road









**Darlene Soukup
Salina**

My husband and I were back in Colby last weekend (March 24-25) to visit family and friends. We stayed out north of Colby on LaHacienda Drive. Now this road to my understanding, is just a few feet out of city limits, so that makes it the county.

Why on earth hasn't the county been out there to sand this road? It is probably less than a mile. I was told that several people have called the county and no phone calls were returned. We had to park our car in town because of the rain. What a mess.

So, I'm hoping maybe this will get the county out there to do some-

thing about it. A lot of country roads are a lot better than that one is. Please do something about it.



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


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Vote for Jim Smith For Mayor

Jim is a long time resident of Colby and has the public interests in mind. He has been self employed since high school besides holding outside jobs, some of which are mechanic, city policeman and postal employee. He owned and operated his own trucking company before becoming a licensed real estate sales person and then becoming a real estate broker and auctioneer and opening his own office. In running for the office of mayor of the City of Colby, he believes that the elected mayor and council people of the city should be more responsible to their constituents. If elected to mayor his door will be open to all the residents of the city and will encourage the council members to listen to the people who elected them to office from their respective wards. A vote for Jim Smith will bring you closer to having a say about Colby. He encourages everyone to attend city council meetings and let their feelings be known and see what their council representatives are voting for and against.

Jim will appreciate your vote on April 3rd.

Political ad paid for by Citizens for Mayor Committee.

• • **Vote April 3rd** •

**William
(Bill) Biel**

for

**CCC Board of
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Your vote will be appreciated!

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