

# No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

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## THE CAR ALLOWANCE....PERK OR PORK?

by R.W. Nash

I don't know if anyone has taken the time to scrutinize the Rolla City budget that we have placed on the NSN documents web page, but there are some very interesting items in this budget that should cause some concern.

I find one particular item not only interesting, but personally to be an OUTRAGE. This item can be found in the budget expenditures under the heading "Personnel" of the Finance Department, Engineering Department, Park Fund Recreation, Planning Department and City Administrator. What is this item? It is called "Car Allowance." This budget item ranges from \$1200 per year for the Planning Department, to \$3000 per year for Finance, Park Fund Recreation, and Engineering Departments. The City Administrator has nothing budgeted for this item this fiscal year. In past years, City Administrator Merle Strouse received \$3600 per year for a car allowance. During this year's budget hearing, Parks Director Ken Kwantes tried to get his car 'gravy' increased to \$3,600. The City Administrator cut him back to only \$3,000.

Who gets this "Car Allowance?" The Rolla City department heads get it. This has been an established practice in past years and I find nothing that says there has been a change. That's right! We are paying the department heads this money over and above their salaries. Think about this! The City

of Rolla has more than 90 vehicles according to the State Auditor Report, and we are still shoveling annual monetary car allowances to department heads. The worn-out excuse of having to use personal vehicles for City related official business simply doesn't hold water. Remember, they get this monthly perk (\$100 - \$250) whether they use their own personal vehicle for City related official business or not. Let's look at this honestly. This isn't a CAR PERK. IT'S CAR PORK! I wonder, does this pork include regular fill-ups at Petro Card 24, located at 18th Street and Old St. James Road, at the taxpayers' expense?

The United States Government, of which I was an employee for 37 years, does not pay ANY employee a monthly or annual car allowance. This includes the President of the United States. You may use an official government vehicle, or use your own personal vehicle for official business with a reimbursement for mileage. Neither the Missouri State government nor the Phelps County government pay any employee a monthly or annual car allowance. Why does the City of Rolla?

When will the City of Rolla wake up and follow the recommendations made in the State Auditor Report and adopt a formal policy for employee travel and vehicle use? They should change this policy immediately. The Rolla City Council could save the Rolla taxpayers \$10,200 a year by stopping this practice of handing out 'pork' to some managers. This kind of thing can only cause dissension and damage morale among lower-ranking employees. Some private businesses may have policies like this, but it is a very bad policy for any tax-supported government.

The Rolla City Council should go back and carefully review all the budget items. I believe

there are a few more items that can be questioned and perhaps eliminated either now or when the next city budget comes up for review.

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