

No Standing News

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

Volume I

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WHY NOT THE "Y"? Check Out The Grand River Area Family YMCA in Chillicothe.

From the Editor's Desk

At the so-called open meeting, held on February 17 to discuss the upcoming bond election for the recreation center, the mayor again made it clear that the meeting was only "open" to the very narrow subject he wanted discussed - the recreation survey. He got mad and shut off attempts by the audience to get answers to non-survey questions about the project. It is obvious that Joe loses it when people don't follow his orders. That's one of the misconceptions with the common myth that businessmen make good elected officials. In reality, business oriented people are usually so used to having their orders obeyed by people they can control that they view free speech as a firing offense.

When pushed into a corner by Bill Brown, Mayor Morgan said that we will have a chance to ask questions again on March 11, 1999, at 6:30 at the Eugene Northern Community Hall. It remains to be seen whether he will tolerate any and all questions, or if he will once again restrict OUR OPEN PUBLIC MEETING to just the topics he feels are "safe" to discuss? It also remains to be seen how long Rolla citizens will put up with being controlled like this by their mayor.

THE YMCA at CHILLICOTHE: Check this site on the Grand River Area Family YMCA center at

Chillicothe, Missouri before you go to the meeting or before you vote. Chillicothe is a town of only 8,600 residents. This January they had the grand opening of the NEW 13,288 square foot addition of their YMCA recreation center, which was first built in 1992. The first fund drive to raise \$300,000 to meet the \$2.5 million for the original 34,000 square foot building (with \$500,000 for the building endowment) went rapidly. Within six weeks they had already raised \$400,000! Five months later, the town had exceeded its goal and raised \$3.1 million with contributions from more than 800 people. This broke the local record by more than \$2 million.

The four Chillicothe banks, businesses and individuals donated a large part of the seed money. Because Chillicothe had enrolled in the state Neighborhood Assistance Program, the business donors received valuable state tax credits. Take note Rolla citizens, that in Chillicothe the local banks and businesses contribute their money to the community, the community doesn't give them money! They probably don't pave their parking lots or give utility rate money to bank financed and operated private industrial parks, either. In Rolla, the rich take from the poor and then want more and more.

The YMCA at Chillicothe not only provides an amazing range of recreation and community activities - you will be impressed with the after school program which even has Missouri Education Department accreditation - but their programs, mission statement and even the fees demonstrate the many decades of YMCA management experience. The YMCA is a Christian based (but with a small "c"), youth and community oriented philosophy which does not

leave anyone out because of economic or social factors. I think that's what bothers many of us the most about this expensive project we're being force fed. The unanswered questions, and the uninspired recreation management we are accustomed to here, could easily leave us with nothing more than an "in-town, country club" that the majority of those paying the sales tax will not be able to afford to use.

What we don't understand is this. Dr. Moorkamp and his committee went to the Grand River Area Family YMCA in Chillicothe! They must have been aware that the Chillicothe facility would be a terrific model to use here, so why have they not followed up on YMCA affiliation or discussed this option with us at any of the meetings? With the passage of the earmarked sales tax for recreation we surely meet the YMCA fund raising and community support criteria. Chillicothe has built a wonderful facility with a pool, many recreation features and excellent professional management for only \$3.1 million. They raised another \$1.6 million for the 13,228 square foot addition for a gym, gymnastic center, weight training area and activity center. What is our city council planning to spend \$11.7 million on? Will the center cost \$11.7 million or just a few million? Is that why they have been so shy with facts and figures? Will we only find out after the April 6th bond election that the city council really has other plans for the biggest part of the tax? It would be typical of the kind of "honest and open government" we have been getting lately to find out the real purpose after it's too late.

Do visit the Chillicothe YMCA web site. Be sure and check out the "grand opening" web page and the article, "Apple pie and the Y". It raises a lot of very valid questions that the mayor probably won't let you ask.

Links:

<http://www.grandriverymca.org/>

<http://www.grandriverymca.org/home.htm>

(New addition grand opening)

<http://www.grandriverymca.org/newadd.htm>

(Article "Apple Pie and the Y")

<http://www.ymca.com/f/olddiscovery/apple.htm>

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