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Regional Landfill?

Submitted by editor on Sat, 04/17/2010 - 02:32.

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By: Fred Johnson



A request for a zoning change to allow a regional landfill in Morgan County is akin to asking for help in assisted suicide.

The number one problem is its location within five miles of downtown and within two miles of restaurants, hotels, truck stops, Lowe's, a gated community and a Super Wal-Mart. This is crazy.

Look at landfills in other counties and you will find them located in remote areas far away from populated areas.

The second problem is that a regional landfill accepts garbage from a 90-mile radius and can attract over 220 trucks a day filled with garbage, sewage sludge or whatever neighboring counties want to send out of their own county. Those 220 trucks must also exit Morgan County after they dump their loads. The majority of the trucks to a regional landfill are tractor-trailers. The thought of an 18-wheeler full of sewage sludge waiting for the traffic light to change on Main Street next to diners sitting at sidewalk tables would detract from the ambiance of our "Number One Small Town in America's" image.

Don't let anyone tell you that landfills do not produce odors. Google "Regional Landfill Odor" and you will receive 396,000 pages of stories. Change the search to "Regional Landfill Odor Problem" and the page count expands to over 700,000. The stories of communities fighting with landfills for years over "noxious odors" make for interesting reading. Not only do you have odors, you have noise pollution as back-up warning horns of huge earthmovers serve as wakeup calls at 4:30 a.m. to nearby residents. In Madison, this would include truckers overnighing at truck stops and tourists at nearby motels.

The third problem is a loss in tax revenues in our county caused by the landfill. There are some reports that the landfill will produce revenues for our county.

Are they crazy?

Property values will fall for miles around the landfill as well as countywide. Hotel and sales tax receipts will fall as visitors vote with their noses and move on to better places.

Shoppers will move on to the next town to buy their groceries and supplies.

Companies looking for sites to expand will move on to other counties (maybe those that ship their garbage to Morgan County).

The problem of landfill water pollution has already been addressed very well by Celia Murray in the Citizen, so I will not



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address it again other than to add an "amen."

It is pretty safe to assume that opposition to the landfill from local residents is huge. But here is the scary part. The typical way that landfills are approved is through the courts that overrule the "No" vote from county commissioners and award the zoning change anyway. So the fight to save our county must go on.

Hopefully, the courts will realize that locating a regional landfill adjacent to hotels, shopping centers and a historic town is pure folly and will put a stop to our assisted suicide.

Fred Johnson is a member of the Morgan County Republican Party.

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