
Director's Corner - A Little Light "Reiding"

On page one of our Chamber Bylaws, it says "this organization, in its activities, shall be non-partisan and non-sectarian. It shall not by resolution or otherwise be committed to the support or endorsement of any candidate for public office." The very next section sets the strict rules for endorsement or promotion of any public issue or political measure. Specifically, such actions require the approval of our Board of Directors.

I tell you all of this so you know these matters are not taken lightly and because this past month we took a position to support the school bond measures in both Warrenton and Astoria.

Higher property taxes are undoubtedly a burden for most of us and both bond measures will raise rates in the years to come. A larger threat, though, comes in the form of under-performing or even unsafe schools. There is no doubt that good schools support good economies and poorly-performing schools hurt everyone.

Both districts do an admirable job with what they have right now. Both are excellent stewards of their facilities and public funds and have been for years. But buildings age, demographics shift, and student needs evolve. These changes generate capital needs that cannot be addressed in biennial budgets, so bonds are really the best and arguably the only means to provide needed capital.

In Warrenton, overcrowding is already a serious issue at the grade school and trends indicate the WHS isn't far behind. Warrenton's bond request addresses capacity. The Warrenton bond also starts to address tsunami inundation concerns and school safety. Add in improved career and technical education capabilities and that bond really creates a large impact very quickly for our students and our economy.

In Astoria, safety and security are being addressed, career and technical education at AHS and a long overdue project to replace middle school classrooms that never really were suited to their task and are now suffering foundation and slab failure. This will be a vast improvement that can only help kids.

Both of these bonds address serious issues that, unaddressed, will hamper our students' educational success. The costs will not go down if we wait, and it will not get easier to pass these bond measures, so we believe the time is now for both. We also know that there are no frivolous or wasteful components to either of these bonds. Both address immediate problems that impact kids today and tomorrow.

I encourage you to read the bond measures and learn about the issues and plans -- then vote.



David Reid
Executive Director, AWACC