



Comments at Utilities Board meeting 11/16/05

Dick Anson Executive Director, SaveTheSprings

Honorable Mayor and Board Members,

I would like to express my appreciation to those of you who have researched and deliberated on many important issues facing the city pertaining to our utilities, infrastructure and growth.

I thank you for attention to the Storm Water Drainage issue, and the thought and research that has gone into it.

I also thank those of you that voted to maintain the city's position on the Banning Lewis waste water plant issue, and the thought and research that went into that.

I thank those of you seeking to balance the utility and infrastructure costs of current businesses and residents with bringing in new residents and businesses-at the possible expense of our taxes, utility rates, and services. I especially thank those that have taken their position, time and resources to research all facets of this issue.

As you are all too aware, cities across the country and the world fight quite aggressively to land the best jobs and employers. These cities use everything possible to 'polish their apple' and appear to be the best new home for these jobs and their citizens.

And cities change strategies to stay ahead of competing locations - one of which is Colorado Springs. New incentives are deployed to bring home the best employers of today and the future.

So how does this relate to today's Utilities topics?

Yesterdays strategies- which may have marginal attractiveness to potential new employers, will be considered negative to our current employers as their utility rates are increased thousands of dollars annually to cover the subsidy to their competitor. Yesterdays strategies that also increase the utility cost to current residents by hundreds of dollars a year.

So I am sure that most Colorado Springs citizens, voters and ratepayers will join me in thanking you for researching the newer incentives for potential new employers.

Many development experts have reached the conclusion that giving out subsidies on the "any job is a good job theory" is not a good investment.

So what are other cities doing instead?

Cities such as Omaha, Houston, and San Antonio, increasingly have incentives tied to higher wages and health care, taking the load off of taxpayer funded assistance programs.

Corpus Christi and Roanoke, VA offer highly subsidized use of their public transportation system, something that Colorado Springs could also do at great competitive advantage and fairly low cost.

Lastly, expanded utility programs show new and current businesses ways to decrease their utility use and utility bills, while maintaining a high quality reliable utility service. We have an outstanding Utility, one that can easily show business how to lower their bills by lower usage, at very low cost to all.

In closing, I would like to thank those of you in advance that vote and work to find ways of bringing in new employers with good jobs, and keeping our current employers, without penalizing our current voters, citizens, ratepayers and businesses.

I know this will take some of your time, but the paybacks are significant to the city. And we all thank you in advance for taking the time to analyze new incentives to employers that bring Colorado Springs the competitive advantage with no penalty to those already here.

Thank you