

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise of: or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Cheering for super finish

We do not pretend to be football gurus, but pose this question in closing: With the Packers set to have another strong team, which quarterback would you prefer to be taking snaps in the Monday night home opener Sept. 8 against the archrival Vikings: Aaron Rodgers...or No. 4?

—River Falls Journal editorial, July 24, 2008

The outcome of that bitter dispute 2 1/2 years ago shows that many fans, including those at this paper, clearly aren't football gurus. No. 4, Brett Favre, after retiring, unretying, etc., was sent packing to the New York Jets before he finished his way later to join the Vikings.

Meanwhile, the Green Bay Packers anointed Aaron Rodgers, No. 12, as the quarterback of the future. He played so well that the future became the now.

It was Rodgers who ended up leading The Pack to a home-opener victory Sept. 8, 2008, against the Vikings. He hasn't looked back. Neither have the Packers.

Both kept getting better. They returned to the NFC championship three years after Favre threw his last pass for Green Bay — actually, we must qualify that by saying that Favre threw his last interception for Green Bay. That interception against the New York Giants in the 2008 NFC championship kept the Packers from reaching the Super Bowl.

But in 2011, Rodgers and the Packers won the NFC title by beating the Chicago Bears. Most of us in River Falls — we can't vouch for all of the Viking fans in our midst — will be cheering deliriously for No. 12 and The Pack to finish off an amazing comeback season with a Super Bowl championship.

But win or lose, what a great ride it's been for Packer fans. Again, we're not football gurus, but with No. 12 taking the snaps, we predict many more great seasons ahead for the Green Bay Packers.



Forward thinking River Falls

Just as the Green Bay Packers planned for the future by drafting and then eventually replacing a spectacular aging quarterback with Aaron Rodgers, the city of River Falls is doing the same with a 100-acre-plus land purchase for a future business park.

The city already has a solid industrial park and a newer corporate park. But because there are few vacancies, neither has space to lure a bigger company with needs of eight acres or more. Some prospective tenants have thus been turned away.

Located between county roads M and MM, the proposed new business park just west of River Falls will have decent road connections and be relatively easy to hook up to municipal utilities.

An environmental fund related to a landfill closing can be tapped for the property's purchase. That means the city won't have to plunge into debt to buy the acreage needed to start a third business park.

Industrial/corporate development spurs the local tax base and brings jobs. That kind of development is needed because residential development doesn't add enough to the tax base to support the city's basic needs.

With the Twin Cities so close, River Falls will always have a sizable share of commuters. Even so, having employment opportunities in one's hometown reflects on a community that is growing and vibrant.

Assuming that the environmental fund can be replenished to cover future landfill needs, we say City Administrator Scot Simpson and the City Council have made a wise investment in the future health of River Falls.

■ 10-20: I'd say 'more than 8' cuz the 10-20 is a general example Scot used of land shoppers, but really, if anybody wanted more than 8, RF could not accommodate them — could be way bigger than 20 or a little less than 10 — we'd have to say no either way.

■ One more thing they said repeatedly during this long process is that RF NEEDS this type of corporate and industrial development because residential development does not come close to generating enough tax base to support the city's needs — it might be good to remind people of that.

ONLINE POLL

Show us by winning

The current Green Bay Packers need to win the big one Sunday before fans elevate them to one of the elite teams in team history. The Journal's online poll question asked: **Which is the greatest Super-Bowl-bound Green Bay Packer team?**

As of 1 p.m. Tuesday, early results were: 1996 Packers led by Brett Favre, Antonio Freeman, LeRoy Butler, Reggie White and Desmond Howard, 45.7%; 1966 Packers led by Bart Starr, Jerry Kramer, Herb Adderley, Ray Nitchke and Willie Davis, 34.3%; and the 2010 Packers led by Aaron Rodgers, Greg Jennings, Donald Driver, Clay Matthews and Charles Woodson, 20%.

To vote, go to www.riverfallsjournal.com.

River Falls:

It doesn't get any better

Jaime Allison Rambo

River Falls

My family with two school-aged children moved here six years ago from California.

Never have I lived where the entire community valued and supported education in the way I see happening here. Our oldest child has attended schools in California, Minnesota, even nearby Hudson, but River Falls stands out.

Sure we've had good experiences in other districts with dedicated teachers, but River Falls is different. From top to bottom, there is a level of involvement and engagement that exceeds the others.

I have watched teachers galvanize together no matter the economic challenges. They work as a team and have phenomenal dedication.

I believe it starts at the top. We have an amazing superintendent who asked us, the public, which included business owners, educators and parents, for input and ideas and over 400 community members responded to the call.

This community has what it takes!

The small university town of River Falls is a Mecca of talent, magnanimity and expertise. We have dedicated community members — parents, police officers, business owners, educators and students — who volunteer their time and expertise to continue the effort to improve our schools and make them the absolute best they can be.

Thank you, River Falls. We're glad to be here.

Help for homeless

was stupendous

Carole Mottaz

town of Clifton

I like to close my Christmas letters with the phrase, "Best wishes for a happy, healthy new year."

Thanks to the generosity of almost 400 individuals and organizations throughout Pierce and St. Croix counties, 2011 will be happy and healthy for a number of homeless families in our community.

We raised enough money to meet a grant and loan match to purchase a four-plex on West Cedar Street for our homeless shelter.

Current renters will be moving out this summer and we will be refurbishing the property before our first guests move in. (This will replace the four apartments we are currently renting on Johnson Street.)

The outpouring of support from individuals, civic organizations, churches and the city of River Falls has been humbling, to say the least.

I am proud and grateful to live in such a wonderful, caring community, where neighbors really do care about their neighbors.

Mortgage burning, here we come!!

Anti-business laws hurt

Pierce County

Tony Huppert

Spring Valley

The results of the January 2011 sales tax return to Pierce County was announced. The 1/2 percent of sales tax collected and paid in by businesses in the

county generated \$116,000 for January.

That \$116,000 collected offsets the property tax of homeowners. It would take the property tax of additional 50 homes for the year to generate the equivalent of the 1/2 percent for one month.

The total 1/2 percent tax collected by businesses in Pierce County in 2011 compares to around 750 homes-worth of property tax.

The reason I bring this up, is when local boards consider restrictions and laws concerning Pierce County businesses, pay attention. Policies like, "Parking lots cannot be seen by the public, adjacent land owner, or from a navigable stream," mean get your checkbook ready to offset the loss of tax dollars from businesses that just hang it up.

There's a reason Pierce County has lost over 40% of its businesses in the last 10 years.

Claims school data doesn't always compute

Peggy Steffi

town of Clifton

When I first started investigating the proposed \$39-million school referendum, I was reminded several times by Superintendent Westerhaus that "Brighter Minds" had been preparing this referendum for several years.

Well, that might be comforting for some, I guess. However, I would feel a lot more at ease if the school district could answer simple questions in a more forthcoming and timely manner.

For example, recently the school district mailed out a brochure entitled, "Reinvesting in Our Schools"

that includes a bar graph highlighting an astonishing elementary population growth rate (Page 9).

The problem with the brochure's bar graph is that its questionable "growth" numbers conflict with those from the school district's own demography report.

The actual student population numbers from the demography report indicate that there has been no growth at all in the elementary grades from the years 2000/01 to 2009/10.

When I asked for clarification regarding why the brochure's bar graph doesn't coincide with historical enrollment numbers, and if I could see the data supporting their graph, I was told it would take several days to obtain that information.

Granted, I know school administrators are busy, but data supporting a publication that they, themselves, just sent out should be immediately available. It's not unreasonable to assume they could retrieve that information within a few minutes.

At a recent school board meeting I attended, the board agreed that questions regarding this referendum should be answered in as few words as possible.

Does the board assume people can't handle details? Or do they realize the more details taxpayers obtain, the more likely they are to say, "Hey, wait a minute, we don't agree with that!" or, "Couldn't that be done more efficiently?"

The district's taxpayers deserve accurate information and a most cost-effective plan! Vote "No" on April 5.

RIVER FALLS JOURNAL

Established in 1857
A Division of Forum Communications

River Falls Journal (USPS 466-640)

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
RiverTown Newspaper Group
2815 Prairie Dr., P.O. Box 25
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022-0025
(715) 425-1561

Periodicals Postage paid at
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022



YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
\$48 per year in Pierce and St. Croix Counties
\$69 per year elsewhere

Postmaster: Please send address changes to:
River Falls Journal,
P.O. Box 25,
River Falls, WI 54022-0025

PUBLISHER Steve Dzubay
EDITOR Phil Pfuehler

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CUSTOMER SERVICE Pat Hunter

BUSINESS HOURS: Mon.-Fri. 8a.m.-5p.m., Sat. by appointment
After hours, see our convenient drop box located near the front door for submitting news

ADVERTISING AND NEWS DEADLINES: Monday at 11 a.m.

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EDITORIALS

The Journal's editorials are labeled and are the institutional voice of the River Falls Journal's editorial page staff.

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