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NEWS	SPORTS	OPINION/EDITORIAL	OBITUARIES	CELEBRATIONS	CLASSIFIEDS
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A Really Bad Idea

Friday, FEB 27, 2009

- Calendar of Events
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VIDEO

• Video Files



Weather Forecast

A graphic with a gold piggy bank on a laptop keyboard, surrounded by stacks of money. The text reads: '@ttention! LAST YEAR 181,971 OF YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS SPENT 30,637 HOURS AND 45 MINUTES ON OUR WEBSITE! IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN AD ON THE SITE, NOT A SINGLE SECOND OF ALL THAT TIME'

Russell Frantz, Shawnee's new chief of police, needs to find additional funding anywhere he can. Everyone understands that. But Chief Frantz was looking under one rock too many when he brought a representative of an Ohio company to town to talk about recovering the cost of working traffic accidents in which out-of-town drivers are at fault while granting free passes to equally reckless drivers who happen to live in Shawnee. That may make a little sense in states which give municipalities broad access to property taxes, but that's not at all the case in Oklahoma.

The fact is that Oklahoma law effectively denies property tax revenues to towns and cities. The taxes you pay on property go to support the schools, the county and a number of other non-municipal agencies such as the library system and the health department. Cities can tap that revenue source only by court order or though a public referendum, something that almost never occurs. Only a sliver of ad valorem money goes to towns and cities and many municipalities get none at all.

Yet the entire rationale for exempting locals under the plan offered by Cost Recovery Corporation is that residents already pay for these services through their taxes and when asked, the representative who came to Shawnee acknowledged that those references were to property taxes. In Oklahoma, municipal costs that are supported by property taxes back east are almost exclusively financed by sales taxes here. What are Oklahomans to do? Give that free pass to everyone who can produce a sales slip?

Nah. A better idea is to forget the whole thing and welcome out-of-town shoppers with open arms, even if a few of them aren't the best drivers. Chief Frantz ought to do that as well. Maybe he will once he figures out exactly how much of his department's budget is already underwritten by neighbors who drive into town (however imperfectly) and contribute between \$4 and \$5 million a year toward running the City of Shawnee.

Beyond that, these valuable guests also provide employment for a lot of people who do live in town. It's the advantage of being a regional shopping center and Shawnee has worked hard to become one of Oklahoma's finest.

Want to give all that up, chief?

- Today's Highlights
- Realizing A Dream
 - Sustainable Shawnee To Hear Speaker On Coal Burning
 - Tecumseh Police Report
 - Tecumseh 4-Hers Win At Local Show
 - Eads Named To County Post
 - Shawnee Chamber Honors Leaders At Banquet
 - Huffman Elected Chairman Of Safety Center Trust Board
 - THS Seniors Of The Month: December
 - Shawnee School Board Ready To Make Use Of Stimulus Money
 - OU Honor Roll

A business card for Brauser Roofing Company with contact information and a website URL.

A logo for the First Baptist Church of Tecumseh, established in 1893, with the website first.com.

A sign for Bethel, featuring a phone number and location information.

A logo for Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance, featuring the name Todd Colburn.



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Opinion: (5,000 characters)

[input field for opinion]

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- 26.FEB.09 [THS Senior's View Of Online Poll](#)
- 26.FEB.09 [A Really Bad Idea](#)
- 26.FEB.09 [Cool But Fuzzy](#)

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