

Eye on Del Norte: Is it the right time to merge the city and county?

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The time may be soon approaching to consolidate city and county government.

With the recent resignation of city councilor Beau Smith who applied for one of the three open captain positions for city fire, the challenge to replace the highly qualified Smith remains daunting. May I remind you the city dismissed its past election because the only applicants running were the three incumbents seeking office? Firemen should not be prevented from running for local political office.

This begs the question: Should Crescent City and Del Norte County begin merger discussion?

Consolidated governments is not rare. Mostly situated in the Midwest and Upper South, consolidated governments address deficiencies in services for both city and county, respectively.

The City of San Francisco is a good example of consolidated government. Irrespective of your personal opinion of the City by the Bay, consolidated partnership governing the 47 square mile city-county has been

the practice for over a century. San Francisco remains the only city-county consolidated governance in the Golden State.

Sacramento attempted consolidation twice, once in 1974, and again in 1998. Voters rejected both referenda.

The City of Las Vegas and Clark County, Nevada enjoy a healthy and relevant consolidated government.

The City and County of Philadelphia is the largest consolidated government in the United States.

The question lingers: Would services in both the city and county improve if consolidated?

Examples of deficient services may include past problems operating the dog pound, inconsistencies between city and county planning, lack of harmony between both governance and the heretofore challenge attracting viable candidates to serve on the city council. As for harmony, Del Norte County aggressively pushed forward on the purchase of the Coastal Inn and Suites in the city, for transitional homeless shelter, despite strong, widespread opposition from the city.

The purpose of consolidation is multi-fold: efficiency of operations, cost savings.

Reasons for opposition for merger are some of the same arguments noted above, with one gigantic exception: Who will surrender authority each presently enjoys?

Let the process for consolidated government discussion begin. What say you public?

EYE ON DEL NORTE

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