
Opinion: The BOS and Its Traveling Road Show

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It is becoming a regular piece of the Del Norte Board of Supervisors continuing effort to look to Sacramento, or Washington DC for money or legislation to solve our problems as if DC or Sacramento really cares about what happens in the poor, thinly populated, and powerless remote northwest corner of the State of California. Sure, Del Norte County may get the crumbs of funding when it suits Sacramento or the federal government on occasion, but do the centers of power in this Country really give Del Norte County much attention? I think not.

If you are talking to the Consolation Prize, Supervisor Valerie Starkey, or our resident genius, Supervisor Chris Howard, waving Del Norte's issues in front of the powers in Sacramento or DC is critical to getting our message heard. Making connections by traveling far and wide is essential to the County getting what exactly in return? Word salads without the dressing.

I suppose "What exactly?" is the real question to be asked. Recently the Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 to send TWO representatives to the city of brotherly love, Philadelphia, this summer to a National Association of Counties. 3,000 plus counties will be in Philly, Summer of 2025 to vie for attention on the national level. We, the County's residents have been assured it is both necessary to send two representatives, Supervisors Howard and Starkey, to form essential relationships, learn about potential solutions to the county's issues and gain notice of Del Norte County's needs on a national scale.

At the March 11th meeting of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, our own “traveling man” Supervisor Chris Howard, informed the few public members in attendance, he had spent a weekend in Vancouver, Washington and a week in Washington DC on the taxpayer’s dollar to press the flesh with all manner of important personages just in the past two weeks. The claim was it was essential for Supervisor Howard to be there in person to ensure Del Norte County’s woes were heard.

For years we have experienced various members of the Board making the same claims, spending countless dollars on travel for exactly what? Revise a 1973 forest plan to open up federal lands to logging and lumber production. Sure! Lobby personally at this year’s proposals for commercial fishing of ground fish and salmon. A clear nonstarter! Convince Pacific Power, Oregon and California legislators to shell out near \$90 million dollars for power redundancy when the need is once every sixty or seventy years for a relatively brief period of time. Another Clear winner I underscore with the highest level of sarcasm I can muster!

While Supervisor Howard and Starkey are swanning around the country on taxpayer funded luxury junkets, (you don’t expect them to stay at Motel Six, do you?) what are the residents who pay the bills getting out of all these connections to important personages. Are local residents of Del Norte County expecting changes in the near future? Not much hope there, I’m afraid. .

Are there issues to be addressed right here in Del Norte County which do not require cross country trips? ABSOLUTELY YES !!! How about the Sheriff’s inability to provide effective safety and security within the county for starters? Addressing the rapid growth of the number of local citizens becoming dependent on the services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and DHHS’s inability to reverse the trend. How about reducing the tax burden on goods and services to stop the bleeding to our North?

But NO! it is not the priority of the Board to take care of business at home. It is so much more fun to schmooze with our legislators, and bureaucrats in Sacramento or Washington DC, maybe Philly, or Fort Lauderdale, the further the better. A real ego builder. Names to be dropped galore. The “Walmart shoppers” at home will be none the wiser. Get elected and see the world.... or at the very least, all the pleasure capitals of the USA. Not a dollar out of pocket. The Del Norte County traveling road show at its shameful finest!