

Opinion: Einstein, Microgrids, and the Lemus Effect

February 20, 2025

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Seems like there is always one on every governing board who thinks his giant intellect will make for instant success when all we are really talking about is a giant ego, no intellect to be found. Too often politicians, such as our local Einstein, Supervisor Chris Howard, become easy targets for the unscrupulous selling fantasies, geese laying golden eggs and a solution for every nonexistent problem government need not solve.

It is not as if Del Norte County hasn't had its share of snake oil salesmen come to town and sell the proverbial "pile of excrement" to a board, council, or commission. Locally referred to as the "Alex Lemus Effect". It's how snake oil salesmen make their living. Far be it for the politician, in this case Supervisor "Einstein" Howard, to make the effort of due diligence to see if the snake oil salesman, in this case, SitelogIC, has the cash, real investment money, or a guaranteed public source, AKA other people's money, to accomplish the promised project. In this case clearly no money is evident, spinning fairy tales, yes, lots of planning, yes, just no money.

In case you are unfamiliar with the "Alex Lemus Effect", Mr. Lemus slithered into town a few years back, promised the Crecent City Harbor Commission, the proverbial "Golden Egg", then failed to deliver. When Mr. Lemus slithered back out of town a couple of years later, the Harbor's RV parks were near emptied and needing hundreds of thousands of dollars of restoration. The Harbor's solar project turned into near disaster

and left the Harbor saddled with maintenance costs the harbor cannot afford. Finally, Mr. Lemus, not to belabor the point, exited owing the Harbor more than \$300,000. What a prince!

Back to SitelogIC, a consulting company nothing more, who targets rural communities in an effort to convince those communities into building or refurbishment projects for the most part the community neither needs, can maintain, nor can afford. SitelogIC is a company opened in 2019 just before the Biden Administration took office and began promoting “Green New Deal” projects being funded by State and Federal governments with massive amounts of taxpayer dollars.

The project slated for Del Norte County is a solar based microgrid with battery and diesel generated backup. It is advertised to be a secondary source for power should a repeat of the events in August of 2023 where the entire county was without power for a bit over a week. Currently the plan to be developed is to provide power for the Sheriff’s Office/Jail, the Flynn Center, the Veteran’s Hall, and the Road’s Department on Cooper Street. Like I said at a recent 5-0 Eastern Island Statue’s meeting, “a few County buildings”. And the rest of the County pray tell?

Further along in this planning, yes, \$35,000 to the vendor, SitelogIC, is the possibility the school district, the city offices, and the hospital, also known as the place which has a backup generator yet cannot perform surgeries, is to be added. So, where is it the remaining 99% of the County’s population gets at least some benefit out of an infrastructure project expected to cost north of \$3 to \$4 million? Sorry Walmart shoppers, Supervisor Einstein Howard, hasn’t gotten around to us yet, government comes first. Certainly not the people, those pedestrian types. Charming!

I suppose, the real question to asked of our Einstein, “What good would the buildings to be powered by the proposed microgrid be during 2023’s loss of power?” Not much! They certainly do not sell groceries, or gas. Have an ATM for cash? Maybe sell personal sized generators? And the new fantasy will change local citizens situations, HOW?

Emergency services provided the county’s residents with thirteen seconds of silence followed by a dial tone. Swell! Ah, we were expected, all 26,000 of us, to appear at the Veteran’s Hall for lunch and dinner, maybe charge our cell phones, sixty or so years from now when the next “emergency event” takes place. Clearly, the County’s “Walmart Shoppers”, were left adrift until Pacific Power restored electricity. And the County did what exactly? Oh, yes, this County microgrid will save us all sometime in the future.

Why is the County responsible at all for supplying the local residents, the school district, the city, Sutter Health, or even the airport with power redundancy? Just maybe, when the lights go out, it falls on those, Pacific Power, to “save” us not the County of Del Norte.

Keeping in mind, Brookings is a mere twenty miles to the North. In 2023, groceries, gas, health care, NO PROBLEM! And you were saying the microgrid is vital? To whom exactly?

Of course, why didn’t I think of it? The County just might be able to save a few bucks on the taxpayer’s power bill in a few County offices. And, it checks a few boxes in the County’s Strategic Plan, what more can

the local population ask for? Is the County's 5-0 Board of Supervisor's that gullible? Snake oil is on sale this week! The genius speaks, the imbeciles listen. After all, it is only money. The heck with sheriff's deputy's salaries, and SEIU minimum wage workers!

What else can we expect from our Board? Perhaps a luxury cruise to Philly? Maybe the genius and the Consolation Prize can float this boat in Philly next summer at NACo?