
Opinion: Champagne Taste on a Beer Budget

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I don't know how many times I've been told this by the County's elected, "We are a poor County and must make every effort to operate with being poor in mind". Yet, it never fails to amuse me when local politicians go into a frenzy of congratulatory fever over the receipt of any source of grant funding, AKA, other people's money.

I'm not quite sure what planet the elected in the County live on when local politicians fail to realize that Grant funding is simply someone, somewhere, paying the County's bills and not by choice. It is not enough to rationalize this practice by saying, "...if we don't spend it someone else will!"

Ludicrous!

It is disrespectful to those that foot the bill for a COUNTY, Del Norte, or the CITY and HARBOR which live beyond their means and cannot seem to grow up and act responsibly.

Far be it, our local leadership would find it in themselves to think about what is absolutely necessary for a functional governing body and focus on the basics. Perhaps be a bit more fiscally responsible and forgo the bells and whistles other more well-funded governance can afford. Not a chance! Get the Grant writer to plead poverty to cover our local government's excesses.

But what happens when zip code 95531 has been thoroughly vetted and exceptionally fortunate in the proverbial grant lottery and the feds and state decide to spread the wealth? How is the County going to fund grant employed positions? How is the County going to maintain and refurbish the castles and palaces built in the feverish delight of money from the tree named “Grant”.

California during the past six years of foolhardy spending will, without doubt, be unable to facilitate local governments who continue spending beyond their respective needs. The relative ease of reckless spending to be covered by hitting the grant funding jackpot will come to a grinding and screeching halt for the local witless. Del Norte County has already learned that federal grant dollars are going to be hard to come by, in a report from the County’s lobbyist this past summer, yet the spending continues.

Granted, (pardon the pun) there are many problems locally which require attention where grants funding can be the solution. Yet the County, with its current representation, appears destined to try consuming champagne on its beer budget. To follow the imprudent spending practices of the State of California and the Federal government, is the pathway to financial ruin. Del Norte County cannot afford champagne and for some, not even beer.

The County of Del Norte, the City of Crescent City and the Crescent City Harbor District leadership can no longer afford to lavish money on programs, departments, and employees that do not understand the “grave train” may just be on its last railroad trip for a very long while. California has been driven into a financial ditch by the current Governor and does not appear to be able to change course for the welfare of its population. The federal government appears to be less willing to open its wallet in the near future and the behavior of our State’s governor is likely to make matters all that much more difficult.

While it is unlikely that our current batch of crash-test dummies will heed the warning of financial austerity for the coming years, perhaps forced moderation of their respective appetites for champagne will visit beer drinking upon them as the ‘new” county past time and the continued acquisition of grant funding will become less imperative.