

## Community = Cash Registers Ringing?

More isn't always better. Sometimes it's just more.

This notion that quality of life equates with an ever expanding economy, that community equals cash registers ringing faster, is a perversion spread by a few in the business community. Often it's those with the most that are greedy for more.

The Chamber of Commerce, along with pop-up strong-arm groups like 'Think About It JH' and 'Jackson Hole Working' has convinced our town and county leaders that a healthy community has an ever-expanding economy.

But the message has gone far beyond what's healthy. Constant promotion of Jackson Hole has superheated our economy. We are growing so fast our infrastructure can't keep up.

For instance, housing has always been a challenge here. But now, job growth is so out of control that housing cannot possibly keep pace.

The sensible solution would be to require new commercial development to fully house all of its employees. It's the least they should do. Yet, opponents of the proposed 100% mitigation (JH Working, the *News&Guide*, the Chamber of Commerce) say this would be too hard on big hotel chains and other major employers. "More affordable housing will get built by the private sector if government actually requires less of developers," they say.

Really? Who believes that? How's it been working so far? It doesn't work; it's self-serving nonsense.

Another answer to the lack of housing is to build up density in town. Once tranquil neighborhoods in Jackson are being asked to make room for 3-story triplexes and apartment complexes as the county preserves land for its second

home McMansions by transferring some 1,800 additional units to town.

Goodbye backyard swing-set. Hello loud frat house parties as seasonal employees, aka 90-day wonders, blow off steam next door.

These are major issues facing town and county electeds. Yet instead of listening to the concerns of residents, our leaders follow the advice of outside consultants — hired guns paid to produce big-growth solutions predetermined by

the council and commissioners. The outcome is known from the get-go. Bigger-and-Grander is the agreed upon end game, even though it's against the wishes of the majority who live here.

Big growth has already taken a toll. Our wildlife is suffering. Struck and killed on roadways at an alarming rate. Our local streams and rivers are degraded to the point that Wyoming DEQ has classified at least two — Flat Creek and Fish Creek — as impaired. Yet, in the words of *News&Guide* columnist Paul Hansen, "We have known about this problem for decades, but have not fixed it."

Our local leaders have ignored some of our most dire needs to promote growth; more, always more. Instead of following the will of the people they seek social engineering accolades. It is more important to our government officials to 'look the part' rather than 'act the part' as they chase down international issues like declaring Jackson a sanctuary city and joining the Paris Climate Accord on global warming.

We should not be reliant on rapid growth. It is not sustainable and often runs counter to a healthy community — one that lives with nature rather than trying to dominate it.

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*Our rapid growth  
is not sustainable*

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