

FROM MY BACKYARD

By Byron Higgin, Mascot Publisher



Some might call me an outsider. After all, I've only been in Minneota for nine months. Or, maybe you'd call me a new face in town. Either way, maybe I bring a fresh perspective to the community.

The other night the Minneota City Council wanted input on whether or not to put in new street lights.

I'm afraid I had too much to say about it.

After thinking about that, I decided to put my thoughts down on paper.

Here's what I came up with.

The city council, like so many other small councils, is caught in a vise right now. They've got to think about very thin budgets in a time of financial stress. We expect them to do their best and be prudent. We want them to be careful when spending our money.

However, there's something that scares me even more than not guarding our money — and that's disregard for our future.

Somehow, in these stressful times, we have to find ways to keep improving our community.

I've said many times Minneota is a beautiful town with great people and a tremendous school district.

But let's face it, our downtown area looks old and worn. I believe getting the old clock back up again and chiming and new street lights will help a lot.

There's something about pride that makes business owners want to fix up their own buildings when the community is also doing something to spruce up the town.

We could have this financial stress for a long time. If we continue to cut expenses and never put anything back into our community, it won't be long before we simply have nothing but an eyesore.

It's not easy, gosh, I know it's not going to be easy. But we've got to somehow find a way to

beautify and improve as well as watch expenses.

One person at the council hearing last week said she knows when she drives through a community that they've put a lot of pride into their town.

She mentioned Olivia, and how the look of the town makes you want to live there.

That should be our goal as well. If folks who drive through Minneota say, "What a nice little town. I'd love to live here," then we're going in the right direction.

This is not going to happen just because we get new street lights.

Folks have to fix things up when they can. We need to keep bringing new ideas for beautification to the community.

If Minneota has more of one thing than any place I've lived it's "pride."

I know you can't build things with pride alone — but it can take you a long way.

Another thing Minneota has is a "Never give up," attitude.

With these two factors in mind, I believe it can be done. Let's keep watching where the money is spent, but we need to keep working toward a better future, for Minneota's sake — which is also, for our sake.

LAUGH A LITTLE: Driving Award

John was driving when a policeman pulled him over. He rolled down his window and said to the officer, "Is there a problem, Officer?"

"No problem at all. I just observed your safe driving and am pleased to award you a \$5,000 Safe Driver Award. Congratulations. What do you think you're going to do with the money?"

John thought for a minute and said, "Well, I guess I'll go get that drivers' license."

Judi, sitting in the passenger seat said to the policeman, "Oh, don't pay attention to him -- he's a Smart Alec when he's drunk."

Brian from the back seat said, "I TOLD you guys we wouldn't get far in a stolen car!!!"

At that moment, there was a knock from the trunk and a muffled voice said, "Are we over the border yet?"

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: As my Ole Pappy used to say: "Retirement is a time to enjoy all the things you never had time to do when you worked."

Pappy didn't get a chance to find out. He sorta retired, but I can't remember ever seeing a time when he wasn't working on something.