

September 15, 2005 Editorial Page of the Nebraska Journal-Leader

We weren't able to scan and post the actual NJ-L editorial at this time, but should be updating this page to include it in the near future. Meanwhile our response is below.

Out of state bond agitators hardest hit by Y2K news world didn't end

It appears the Editor has removed a page from his playbook. As was his practice in past issues, he fails in this issue to make any blatantly false allegations that can be readily disproved by local citizens. We congratulate the Editor for the improvement of his journalistic standards. Unfortunately, he has a long way to go before he can restore credibility to the Nebraska Journal-Leader. Apparently still in the playbook are exaggerated and unsubstantiated claims. In this issue, the Editor claims he learned from "other newspapers" (no mention of which ones) "outside bond agitators" (again, no names) were predicting "anarchy, pandemonium and starvation" at the turn of the century. He associates these unnamed individuals with "flat-earthers" and does his best to paint them as radical kooks driving around with "Honk if You've been Abducted by Aliens" bumper stickers. What is obviously lacking from this editorial or, for that matter, any editorial from the last several months is any real discussion of the issues facing this community raised in the last two bond proposals:

- Why the citizens of the Ponca school district should pay for a school at a cost per pupil that far exceeds the cost of schools in comparable communities?
- Why are some considering pushing a vote on the citizens of this district for a bond proposal that has twice been rejected by them?
- What happens to the already overtaxed citizens of this district when the burden of a ten million dollar school and housing project is added to their property taxes?
- What effect is the school board's refusal to put forth an affordable proposal to the voters having on our students who are patiently waiting for better facilities?

The Editor apparently feels his ink is better used to attack those calling for fiscal responsibility and common sense than to address these issues. His insistence on unfairly attacking the ABCs and anyone he fears may be associated with them is opening a door we, honestly, hoped would have stayed closed. To date, we have resisted the temptation of bringing into the public discourse on this issue the personal beliefs of the proponents of the bond, the financial entanglements many of the proponents have that would make building a high-end school with a housing development very profitable to them and the personal and professional histories of some of the consultants the proponents have hired. We have not done so because we believe this would further divide this community and would ensure the solution to our student's needs would be pushed even farther down the road. Unfortunately, the Editor does not seem to share our views. If he continues this harmful course, however, we may be forced to answer. We now ask the Editor to cease accusing a nameless man and get back to the matter of what is best for the children and taxpayers of this community.