

## Fund all the requests

NORFOLK — Several organizations have come before the Norfolk City Council's Finance Committee in recent weeks requesting financial help. All are certainly worthy causes.

Our economic development groups — both Northeast Nebraska and Elkhorn Valley — need to be able to continue their much-needed work to encourage business and industry to come into our community. The Norfolk Area Recruiters have certainly shown their value in bringing new families to Norfolk. The Community Health Care Clinic has shown to be a much-needed part of our city. Not having health insurance for all citizens is tragic. We are fortunate to have people who are able to address this issue and we all need to support their efforts.

The Great American Comedy Festival is just what Norfolk needs to make a name for itself and should have city support to keep it going. Every town needs to be known for some type of celebration. What better than a tribute to our native son?

Thankfully, we have the Handi-Bus, which I'm sure the gas price increase has really affected. They certainly need all the financial help possible.

The last organization that presented before the Finance Committee is the NorthFork Development Foundation. This is one with which I have been personally involved. I have watched this project from the beginning in February 2007. I can think of nothing better that can change the shape of Norfolk.

It will create a community of retail, business, recreation and housing along a controlled waterway. It will be a draw for tourists as well as industries and workers. And it will show the country we are a forward-thinking community and a great place to live and work.

All of the organizations that have asked for financial help are, as I said, worthy. Their total asking price is about \$240,000.

If we took the approximate number of property tax bills (9,000) sent to Norfolk residences and divided the requested amount of \$240,000 among them, the average tax bill for Norfolk would only go up about \$2.25 per month.

Actually, if you have a minute, look at your last tax bill and see how much you pay for just the city portion of property

taxes. It's on the second line. Truthfully, don't you think we are getting a lot of value for all the things our city provides? I would bet most of us could double the amount we pay in city taxes and not pay more than an extra \$10 a month.

Let's encourage our mayor and council members to finance all of the worthy requests. Let's get back to a city which has the amenities for which we can be proud.

JEAN ATWOOD

## Poised to prosper

NORFOLK — I have been following, with interest, the progress that has been made by the river walk committees.

As a local architect I look forward to working with HDR, an internationally known design firm, that will do wonders at using what is already here and transforming it into upscale development for the Norfolk river corridor. This will provide multiple economic opportunities for local professionals in the building industry. Quality design and architecture are among the things white collar industries look at when considering where they will locate. These industries traditionally pay the standard of wages which provide their employees with the disposable income necessary to supplement the sales tax this city relies on for a good portion of its revenue.

As a senior citizen, I am excited by the conveniences multi-function development can provide to the elderly by creating an atmosphere where they can easily access the senior center, library, post office, art center, museum and shopping without needing to drive. This will promote better health and energy savings.

This new development can come with standards that address issues of sustainability and provide the opportunity to utilize the considerable progress made in "green" architecture. Using green methods in the construction slated for this river development is not only environmentally responsible but is a great sales tool for promoting our city to the growing number of young people who show increasing concern for the environment.

Let's all get together and communicate to city fathers our commitment to building a city which is not only beautiful but is poised to prosper in the coming years.

LEON LAUVER