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## Builders group cares about itself, not taxpayers

Letters to the Editor

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An additional layer of bureaucracy is about to be imposed needlessly on the taxpayers of Citrus County for the sole benefit of a politically powerful special-interest group, the Citrus County Builders Association.

The county has contracted with a consulting firm to calculate and update impact fees. The contract is in excess of \$200,000.

At a recent County Commission meeting, the builders association, through its silver-tongued mouthpiece Clark Stillwell, proposed an advisory panel appointed by the commission be imposed on this process.

This same builders association during the last impact fee cycle delayed the process by months, thereby costing the county millions of dollars in uncollected impact fees. This group as policy always has opposed impact fees and has fought to the bitter end whenever the question of impact fees arises.

Bear in mind that impact fees are paid only by new people moving into the county and building new homes. The intent is for newcomers to our community to pay their fair share for the additional infrastructure required to accommodate them and to relieve the people already living here of the added burden. Thus it is a fair and equitable way of doing business, and the builders association does not like it.

It is a distortion of truth for it to claim that this advisory panel will somehow enhance the process. It will not. The sole intent of this exercise is to delay the process and minimize impact fees.

Why impose a panel of supposed amateurs on hired expert consultants? This advisory panel is meant for mischief and will be of no benefit to the average taxpayer of Citrus County. Shame on this County Commission if it caves in to this pressure.

-- James C. Bitter, Homosassa

## Council challenged to debate dissolution

Editor's note: This letter was sent to the Crystal River City Council and printed at the author's request.

This letter is to respond to critical comments about the Concerned Citizens of Crystal River Inc.'s petition seeking the dissolution of the city.

You said there were inaccuracies in the group's letter. There were none. It is amusing that one council member learned that there were several special taxing districts in the county to support the ridiculous notion that the county would swoop in upon dissolution and set up its own special tax district.

As the county attorney told this committee and it was quoted in the newspaper, special tax districts are created by people who go to the County Commission to request one for something like sidewalks and street lights.

The county has never aggressively set up a taxing district to discriminately get tax revenues. We do not want to debate this issue in letter writing; therefore, we are challenging the City Council to a public debate to discuss the facts in the letter as well as other issues involving dissolution of the city.

As Greg Hamilton said in a *Citrus Times* editorial, "Dissolution could be the best thing for Crystal River." Residents are sick of double-taxation. When the city is dissolved, no one will hardly notice.

To the extent that the county has to apply more resources to take care of the old city, those costs will be borne by all taxpayers in Citrus County, not the 1,800 or less in the tiny city of Crystal River.

If you accept our challenge, we will set up a time and reserve some place like the Armory that could hold several hundred people and we will pay for it. We will also arrange for a professional debate moderator.

Please give people a chance to hear both sides of this argument and make their own independent decisions. Since the facts are on our side, we do not expect you to show up. Call anyone on the committee to arrange a time and place.

-- Phil Price, Crystal River

## **Politicians help themselves, not veterans**

As you have been reading, they have now uncovered billions of dollars of kickbacks in supplies to Iraq authorized by the Pentagon and the Bush administration, of which some were damaged and some outdated and useless.

Now, the administration has the Veterans Affairs office looking to take away the veterans' service-connected compensation, beginning with post-traumatic stress disorder, of which there are 72,000 cases and more each day from Iraq.

This is only the beginning, as the shortfall from the Iraq nightmare is costing billions more than expected.

They think the veterans are not that important and they can take it from them. Of course they are making more and more veterans every day and no wonder they are having problems filling the ranks.

Our priorities are to our combat veterans who put their lives on the line for all of us and should never ever be neglected. The politicians sure cover their butts with their retirement packages for life and give themselves raises at will at our expense. They should be part of the Social Security system and you would see how fast that problem would be solved along with health care for all.

Who do the politicians think they are? We elected them to work for us, not lord it over us and line their pockets at our expense. Wake up, America. I am tired of getting dumped on, aren't you?

-- **Ray Raphael, Pine Ridge Estates, Beverly Hills**

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