

It seems that everyone wants good roads, and no one seems to like the speed bumps that are created by the potholes! It only makes sense that we must create a long term solution that truly addresses the ongoing problem. Hopefully, this will lead us back to good roads with the firm understanding that our poor road conditions did not just occur over night. The fact is that the decision to drop the street maintenance program about ten years ago has taken a toll on today's condition of the streets.

The message is not about what the city is going to do about this delicate situation, but instead what you as citizens can do to help address the issue at hand. With all the activity in the manufacturing sector and an active oil business in our community, we are major importers of dollars. These new dollars are driving our local and state economy.

The secret is to see just how many times the dollars can be turned over in ones local economy. That is where the citizens take control of the total dollars that impact the economy of Duncan. Simply put, "We must purchase our goods locally." When a consumer spends his or her money in another city, it never seems to make its way back home. It is understandable that Duncan does not have everything that Oklahoma City or other larger markets have in ways of products, but we should buy everything we can locally first, and then if necessary go to another community.

When you buy locally, the sales tax collections for Duncan will increase. As the increase occurs, retailers that are not currently in this market begin looking to expand towards Duncan as their next location. Once our community gets above 25,000 in population, new companies start looking at the community in a whole different way. It is also important to our economy to get our monthly sales tax collections above 1 million dollars on a consistent basis.

Under the current conditions Duncan is poised for significant growth. The sales tax collections have been increasing about 6 percent per year for the past four years. If we continue to grow our economy at its current rate, Duncan will be consistently above 1 million a month in sales tax collection within two years.

Another way to boost the revenue stream for improving the streets is to recruit employees to the area. With the overall economy doing so well, many of our local businesses are in great need of a diversified workforce. These companies are not asking for much, they just want workers who are trainable, show up to work on-time, do a good job and are drug free. Attracting new citizens to the community will grow the population base and sales tax collection.

Finally, Duncan, like many communities, must bite the big bullet and solve the issue at hand. For our community the issue is the condition of the streets. As prospects are driven around the community, certain streets are avoided as to not leave a bad image in the minds of our visitors. Therefore, having a plan of action that addresses the major streets of our community is the first step. The second step is leveraging our resources to make as much of an impact as possible. If we wait the problem worsens the costs of repair will continue to climb. As a Duncan area citizen, you can choose to invest your hard earned dollars into solving the problems facing us today. We can make a significant impact on the roads in the next several years by working through the problem together.

If you have questions, I can be contacted at the Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation office at 580-255-9675, or just send me an e-mail at lyle@ok-duncan.com. Visit our website at www.ok-duncan.com to let us know if you want to come home to Duncan and are looking for a job opportunity.