

**STAND UP AND BE HEARD!**

# City Watch

*It's Time*



Volume 4  
Number 1

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2008  
February

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**“It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error.”**

U.S. Supreme Court in *American Communications Association v. Douds*, 339 U.S. 382-442

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## **\$36,000.00 Paper Weight**

Do you all remember back when our new/now leaving City Administrator David Johnson went to the City Commission with the idea of purchasing a new truck for our city? He told the commission that this truck was what we needed here in Valley City for snow removal. It was the best thing since sliced bread, we would no longer have to worry about broken curbs and damage to our infrastructure that were done by the plows used in the past. In the Times Record, Johnson proudly proclaimed his abilities as an instructor on this new equipment and he would teach other employees how to properly use this marvel of technology.

There seems to be a few problems with the truck, with the way it was purchased and why it hasn't been used in the last three snow storms. First let's talk about the way it was purchased. It was bought over the Internet, the truck was never checked out by anyone from our city. Johnson merely assumed it was a good truck??? To you and me, I do not think that we would spend \$36,000.00 dollars on a piece of equipment that we had never looked over, but that is just us. We can not blame this only on Johnson, he did this with the approval of the City Commission.

The cost of the truck was \$36,000.00, I felt that was a bit

much for a truck that was built in the early 90's. So I went down to the City Garage and took about



30 pictures of the truck (by the way Johnson called the police on me and had me removed from the place for taking pictures. Johnson said I had no business on City property) I could say something about that but I don't want to get

*Cont. on inside*

## **New Jail--Current Status???** (CCI)

What is the current status of the Valley City/Barnes County Regional Jail Facility? Depends on who you talk to!!!!

At the last BC Commission meeting there were only questions with no answers. What is going to be built? Is it a 17 bed facility with double bunking capability if needed or a 34 bed facility with double bunking capability if needed? The double bunking would be done with plastic beds that could be moved in if needed! What is it going to cost? Which other Counties are still in the project and who is opting to get out? It was felt that one of the original Counties was getting out and will probably want their investment back.

What is the status of the existing jail? The Sheriff felt it needed to be replaced, but it still passes inspection by the state!!!!!!!

*Cont. on inside*

### **CCI WEBSITE!!!**

**You can be first to read the latest "City Watch" and have access to all past issues, take a poll, see what's new and much much more! Go to [www.valleycitycci.com](http://www.valleycitycci.com) today and add it to your favorites. Regularly updated. 9000 hits in less than a year!**

**North Dakota urges the  
Congress of the United States  
to repeal the REAL ID Act of 2005**

Sixtieth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
Adopted 4/20/07

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION  
NO. 4040**

A concurrent resolution urging Congress to repeal  
the REAL ID Act of 2005.

WHEREAS, the federal REAL ID Act of 2005 man-  
dates an unfunded national driver's license in the  
state of North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, implementation of the REAL ID Act  
may cost this state an estimated \$14,000,000; and

WHEREAS, the REAL ID national data base will  
invite identity theft and invasion of privacy; and

WHEREAS, the REAL ID Act will cost and incon-  
venience the people of North Dakota without the  
proffered attendant benefit of protection from ter-  
rorism;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE  
SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING  
THEREIN:

That the Sixtieth Legislative Assembly urges the  
Congress of the United States to repeal the REAL  
ID Act of 2005; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED , that the Secretary  
of State forward copies of this resolution to the  
President of the United States, the Secretary of  
Homeland Security, the Secretary of the  
Department of Transportation, and to each mem-  
ber of the North Dakota Congressional  
Delegation.

(For more information on this visit [www.valleycitycci.com](http://www.valleycitycci.com))

*(Last month, Montana Governor Schweitzer sent a  
letter to 17 of the Nation's governors seeking their  
support in rejecting Real ID. Governor Hoeven was  
one of the Governors receiving letter because ND  
passed this resolution against Real ID.-ed)*

# Letters to CCI

*Thanks again for coming to Northwood and for helping Annie.  
Like we said, the donation of money is appreciated, but seeing  
your faces and visiting with you is priceless.*

*Thanks, Beth*

*I LIKE the web site--very nice! You guys are doing some  
great work! I wish every town in ND had a CCI. -Have a  
happy New Year!-Charlene*

*I enjoyed your newsletter very much. Very well laid out and  
informative.....on exactly the right kind of issues people need  
to KNOW MORE about.....and take action on. Hope we can visit  
soon. -D.S.*

*We'd like to receive your newsletter electronically. Thank  
you -B.R.*

*Hello and thanks for bringing attention to how our city govern-  
ment operates. Would you publish a list of where citizens can  
find copies of your pamphlet? I ask because I have been asked  
the same question. Do you have a subscription service? (You can  
find our newsletter at over 20 businesses around town. If your  
favorite Valley City business doesn't carry our newsletter or are  
out of them ask them and we will bring them some, however you  
can subscribe to our free e-mail newsletter list and you will be  
one of the first to be able to read "City Watch" or visit our web  
site [www.valleycitycci.com](http://www.valleycitycci.com) to read our latest newsletter and all  
previous ones-ed)*

*I enjoyed attending your weekly meeting as a guest two  
weeks ago. It was most informative and keep up the good  
work. Your web site is just great and I check it out every  
week. I want you to know that I openly support your group  
whenever I have the opportunity.*

*- A Valley City Business woman*

*Thank you for your participation in the process and please for-  
ward your thoughts and updates to me. -*

*-A North Dakota State Legislator*

*Awesome job, folks!! The newsletter is particularly well  
done, informative and easy to understand!!!! --D.S.*

**Do you have a question?** Do you want to find something about Valley City? ASK US and we will look into it for you. Do you have a question about our Town but do not want to deal with CITY HALL for the information. We at CCI enjoy working with CITY HALL. So if you want help with CITY HALL, let us know and we will take it from there.

Official publication of Committee for Community Involvement (CCI), City Watch is published approximately every two months. Articles are submitted by members and friends of CCI. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and may not reflect the views of CCI. Past issues of "City Watch" are available or if you would like to receive future newsletters electronically, just send us an e-mail. Contact information: CCI, Box 403, Valley City, ND 58072 or email [valleycitycci@yahoo.com](mailto:valleycitycci@yahoo.com). Visit our web site [www.valleycitycci.com](http://www.valleycitycci.com).

# \$36,000.00 Paper Weight

off track.

I took the pictures to the International Dealership and showed the sales manager the pictures and asked him how much he felt the truck was worth retail. He said that he would sell that truck for between \$5,000.00 and \$7,500.00. I told him that I felt he was wrong in his evaluation and asked him for an explanation for the value being so low. One reason he said this particular truck is a county or highway truck with the belly plow and wing configuration you have to use this truck at speeds higher than 25 mph in order for it to work properly. Two, the box on the back is a gravity feed box, that means that the box has to up to distribute sand to the road and you cannot use that in town because you will tear down your power lines. It was this person's opinion that this truck was a very poor choice for a small town and when I told him the price of the truck he just about fell over, and said someone got ripped off.

You can see the truck that Johnson bought, it hasn't moved in months, it is parked just east of the Wagon Wheel Inn at the top of the hill on the south side of Winter Show Drive, as you can see by the pictures, the snow is up onto the wheels and it is basically discarded equipment. But what the heck we got lots of money to throw around, what's \$36,000.00 compared to the big picture? Chump Change and guess who's the Chump???

By Bob Drake

## 2nd Annual CCI Raffle

Prizes: 1st) Mossberg 835 Ultra Mag 12 gauge 3.5 inch or \$300 Cash; 2nd) \$200 fuel certificate; 3rd) \$100 fuel certificate; 4th-8th) \$25 bucket of Budget Burger Chicken (best in town)

Drawing April 26, 2008 11pm @ Scoot'n Scotty's Bar & Grill, Oriska  
Permit #103 Tickets \$5.00 • Need not be present to win

***Order your tickets today!***

Contact any CCI member or send check to  
CCI -Box 403-Valley City, ND 58072

**Your support is appreciated & needed!**

## New Jail--Current Status??

*Cont. from front*

How then do you justify replacing the jail unless a study is done to support that option?

VC representation was Dean Ross and Dave Johnson.

The next day a Fargo radio station reports that Jon Wagar from VC reported that the Jail Project is still on track and moving forward. He wasn't at the BC commission meeting!

Wednesday, January 16, 2008, at the monthly meeting of the jail project group held at the BC Highway Dept. bldg, Jennifer Feist and George Gaukler presented to the group a jail project estimated at \$4 Million for a 34 bed facility and that everyone should plan on a prisoner cost of \$80-\$85 per day. Currently, Barnes County charges \$55 per day to house a prisoner at the existing BC jail where the actual cost was reported to be \$69. BC taxpayers are paying the difference. Fifty five dollars per day is what Jamestown, Wahpeton and Rugby are currently charging. The group said to Representatives from the different Counties they would have to go back to their Commissions, present the information and then return with the answer of whether or not they would stay in the project. They were also told that they would be responsible for 2 beds whether they used them or not. The feeling was expressed that 2 beds at \$85 per day was unacceptable. The question was asked about remodeling the existing jail but that has not been studied so the cost is unknown. It was asked why that wasn't done to help with the decision on whether or not to build a new jail. County Commissioner Roger Berntson answered that question by saying they hadn't studied it because they were continuing on with the plan of a new jail and until that would fall through, they weren't looking at the current jail.

### Other jail points:

The Edgeley, ND newspaper reported that the commissioners in LaMoure county had voted to drop out of the jail project.

The VC Home Rule charter was extended to the proposed jail last summer. That provides an avenue to tax for additional revenue or to move development money to the jail project without a vote.

Originally the jail project called for an 84 bed facility at an approximate cost of \$5 Million. That figure then went to \$7 or \$8 Million.

The largest payer into the project is Barnes County at \$380,000, followed by Valley City at \$125,000. Valley City might average one inmate a day for an entire year at the most. 1 inmate x \$85 a day x 365 days a year = \$31,025, yet under present plan VC will pay \$125,000 annually. How can anyone say that this is a fair deal for Valley City. Also Valley City pays part of the County's share, so it is even worse than this!

Ransom County is about 1/2 the population of Barnes County. Why do we have over 6 times as many inmates per year as Ransom County?

Now it is why, when, what and how much? A lot depends on who is talking!!!!!!!!!!

# There is no free lunch ?

There is no free lunch, well not for most of us there is no free lunch, but for a few here in Valley City there is and guess who picks up the tab? That's right, we the tax payers. Some local businesses in Valley City are receiving money from you and I, the tax payers, to buy signs for their businesses. This has been going on since 2001 and so far local businesses have received over \$100,000.00 of our tax dollars to buy signs for their businesses .



This money that our elected officials are giving away to local businesses comes from what should be property tax relief for us. However our local leadership believes that new signs for local businesses is more important than property tax relief for the rest of us.

I have been to many City Commission meetings complaining about this and it comes as no surprise that nothing is being done differently because our local elected officials have an agenda and that agenda does not include you and I! Their agenda is building a community for those folks that might come here to live rather than building a community for the ones that already live here!

I have talked to some businesses owners who got the money for new signs and I flat out asked them, "Can't you afford to pay for your own sign?" The response is always, "Sure I can, but the money is there why not take it?" And I say, "Because it is not yours." They look at me funny and walk away.

So I have decided that if city hall is not going to do anything about it, I'll do what I can on my own. So I have decided not to shop at those businesses that got their hand in my pocket. It is hard enough to make ends meet these days without subsidizing local business and their new signs. What line of thinking from the leadership of this community could justify such a corrupt and unprincipled use of taxpayer dollars to take our money that WE pay in taxes and give it to local businesses for signs. That is why, we the people, must put a stop to this kind of corruption, and we can do that by not shopping at those businesses that are on the take.

Let's think about those businesses that did not take the money, yet have to compete with those that did. How fair is that? Does that mean that in order to stay competitive you must take a hand out from the local government? How fair is it for the tax payer? I'm a tax payer and I'll tell you it chaps my you know what, that my hard earned tax dollars are going to buy signs for local businesses. So if you are thinking like I am thinking, let's all pull together and put a stop to this, by not shopping at those businesses that are causing our property taxes to go up. Better yet go and speak your mind to those businesses in town that got the so called free lunch and tell them you are tired of picking up the tab!!(List of businesses <http://www.valleycitycci.com/drakesletters.html>) We can make a difference in our community and send a message to city hall and those businesses that have their hand out, all at the same time by supporting those businesses that have not signed up for the free lunch deal.

## CCI POLL

- 1) What should the City Commission do with the vacant City Administrator's position?
  - a) Eliminate position
  - b) Hire someone locally
  - c) Hire another one from out of State
  - d) Scrap the position and hire a Public works director
  - e) other
- 2) Do you think Jon Wagar and the new jail committee were acting responsibly spending hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money without a firm financing commitment in writing from the USDA?  
\_\_Yes \_\_No \_\_I don't know
- 3) Would you favor dividing Valley City into 4 wards (example: NW-SW-SE-NE sections of town) and there would be one commissioner elected from each ward with the Mayor elected at large?  
\_\_Yes \_\_No \_\_I don't know
- 4) Concerning the jail, what should Barnes County do?
  - a) Don't build a new facility at all.
  - b) Find another facility that would be willing to house inmates from the seven counties either individually or collectively.
  - c) Scale the project back to accomodate just Barnes County/Valley City.
  - d) Put some money into the current jail and forget about a new jail.
  - e) Other

## Mission Statement

The COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT is an inclusive nonpartisan coalition of Valley City area citizens working together for the following purposes:

- To encourage local government to listen to and implement the wishes of the citizens
- To encourage local government to provide accurate and complete information to the citizens
- To encourage citizen involvement in local decision making
- To encourage all members of local government to maintain high ethical standards and to remember always their accountability to the citizens they represent
- To strengthen our community by protecting the individual liberties of citizens and their posterity.
- To provide citizens with a means to:

STAND UP AND BE HEARD