

The *C*entral *C*hamber of *C*ommerce's

CA Report – Tell Our Story!

The saying goes, if you don't tell your story – no one else will! If we haven't learned anything else over the last year of endless campaigns, we've learned that if you don't tell your story, someone else will. Even if you do tell your story, others will still make one up!

Over the last couple of years, as I travel around, I keep running into two common scenarios. First goes something like this:

"Hi, I'm from the City of Central."

"Oh, do you live in Alexandria?"

"No, I live in THE CITY OF CENTRAL."

"Where is the City of Central?"

"In the North East part of East Baton Rouge Parish."

"Really? I've never heard of your city."

Nothing against Alexandria but hello, we are about to celebrate 10 years as a City!

Far more troubling is the second scenario that goes something like this:

"Hi, I'm from the City of Central."

"Oh, I've heard about your city. You are the people that...." Off they go to make some ludicrous statement that they've heard from someone somewhere that most likely was upset about the way some issue was handled. What is even more disturbing is when they have been turned off by one of us.

Do we have some issues to be dealt with? Yes, you'd have to be an ostrich with your head stuck in the sand to not come to that realization. We are still wrestling with economic development, smart growth, permits, signage, codes and enforcement, zoning etc. etc. the list goes on. Again, give me a break! We are only ten years old! These things will work themselves out but it is not a reason to hang our heads, throw in the towel and let others tell us how rotten we are.

For siblings to argue and fight with each other, however undesirable that might be, is common. However, if you are not a family member you better leave the sibling alone! Siblings stand up for each other. Now that politics are aside for a while, it is time for the siblings to take care of each other! Believe it or not the future growth, sustainability and quality of life in and of our city depends on it! So if someone is tempted to spin a tale to you, consider this.

Watched or read the news lately? We don't have a local congressman getting caught kissing someone they shouldn't. Crime, gangs and drugs are not about to take over our city. Our mayor and police chief aren't being arrested for inappropriate actions. Our mayor and city council members aren't involved in a recall petition. We are not going bankrupt but instead have millions in budget surplus. Our schools are not being closed down or taken over by the state but instead they continually pull top rankings in our state. We don't have hundreds of homes and apartments abandoned but instead have people wanting to move here. We citizens continually support "Shop Central" efforts and to top it all off, we raise millions of dollars for charitable efforts, through our many civic organizations, every single year! Really, how bad can we be?! How bad are we?

Citizens of the City of Central, I challenge us all to be ambassadors for our city. We have a great story to tell! Let's get out there and tell it, before some else does!

We are moving towards our ten year anniversary, so if you have an ideas on how we can do a better job of telling our story, drop me a line at broron@cityofcentralchamber.com. I would appreciate hearing from you and remember to Shop Central and TELL OUR STORY!

Ron Erickson Sr. IOM

President

Central Chamber of Commerce

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