

Municipal Consolidation – Is Bigger Always Better?

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Attached is an interesting and timely study by experts in the field of consolidation of cities which raises some important issues. When read in its entirety, I found this very credible and balanced analysis to be something I can count on to better understand the consolidation issue.

Of particular interest, the experts point out:

“The evidence seems to suggest that larger governments do not provide labor-intensive services (which make up the bulk of local government spending) at a lower per capita cost than smaller governments do.”

And:

“...the evidence from various studies has led many researchers to conclude that the least expensive local governments are found in complex systems of small and medium-sized municipalities that both compete and cooperate with one another.”

The authors have figured out what motivates the people who make the ultimate decisions on all of this, the voters. I think this is especially true here in Sun Valley and will be the case when all is said and done:

“The voters seem to be saying they want their government to be both small and local, where they can more easily influence its policies and monitor its activities. And they want it to operate in the most cost-efficient manner possible.”

“The voters seem to know instinctively what the political scientists and economists are telling us about the benefits of smaller and more flexible governments.”

I have far more faith in what authors of professional papers like this have to say than in the marketing and promotional materials prepared by those who support a predetermined outcome. These experts clearly understand the role of government in providing for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens.

Others in our city are working diligently to gather and analyze substantive data on the core underlying economic differences between Sun Valley and Ketchum and how, in a consolidation with Ketchum, the citizens of Sun Valley might take on unexpected economic burdens. Work is also underway to analyze information from failed consolidation efforts to help us fully understand all the potential issues we may face.

If you know others in Sun Valley you think should receive this, please forward it on to them. Also, please let me know and I'll add their name to the email list for future mailings. If you wish to be deleted, let me know and I'll be happy to do that, as well*.

Great thanks.

Nils

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