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56th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial  
By: Tom Wiknich

Should the city of Ridgecrest annex land along its southern border and along S. China Lake Blvd. out to route 395?

First, some responses about my last editorial titled: Should doctors ask patients about guns in their homes? Sharon said, “My husband and I both were asked by our doctor if we had guns in the home during our last two visits. The intake form has several questions about guns in the home, gun usage - like do you hunt, and several other questions I felt my doctor did not need to know. When his nurse asked me if I owned any guns, I responded ‘Do you own any guns?’ She looked at me funny and then took my blood pressure. My medical file probably now lists me as a potential domestic terrorist.” Ken offered this comment, “I was expecting that question last check-up, but didn't get it. I would have said ‘none of your business.’” Harry added this statement, “It's none of their business. Parents should be aware that their children will also be pumped for firearm information - be alert...” Thanks for your comments, folks. It seems no one offered any defense for the asking of these questions. I agree with you. It’s none of their business.

Now, on with today’s editorial titled: Should the city of Ridgecrest annex land along its southern border and along S. China Lake Blvd. out to route 395? At the city’s first town hall meeting, Mayor Breeden asked for the public’s inputs for economic development in Ridgecrest. One of the ideas she proposed was annexing territory along the southern border of the city mostly comprising the area along the east side of College Heights Blvd. up to the college. Note that the city border already goes all the way south to the college on the west side of College Heights Blvd. The proposed annexation also extends along S. China lake Blvd. out to route 395.

It seems this idea has spiked some discussion by people in the affected area. Just yesterday, I had two people come in my gun store wanting to discuss the merits of this idea. One person was definitely against the idea. The second person was just wondering about the idea and wanted my thoughts. He was not decided on the idea. While I have not decided on a position on this idea yet, I know there are some people that will not like the idea. As one that has lived in the valley since 1979, I know some people that live in the county area, do so specifically because they don’t want to live in the city, and that’s fine. We live in a free world that allows us to live wherever we want. As we go through the process to evaluate this idea, let’s have an intelligent discussion of the pros and cons of the idea.

Over the years, I have heard many county residents state their reasons for not wanting to live in the city. What I discovered is that some of their reasons for not wanting to live in the city were inaccurate. One reason that I have heard for years on why some folks chose to live in the county is because they didn’t want to fall under the city’s building codes. They liked the county codes vs. the cities.

Here are the facts. The city and county building codes are the same. For those that don’t know yet, the county is our building official in the city. The county does all the plan checks, building inspections, and other functions. Both the city and county adopt the state building codes. Local governments can add to the codes; however, they cannot enact any change that would diminish the state code. I know for a fact that the county has some additional building code requirements that the city does not have. One such building code the county has that we don’t is the placement and use of those sea containers. While the city has some basic minimal requirements on the use of those storage containers, the county has real severe installation requirements, the city does not have.

Another big reason I’ve heard over the years is this one: I live in the county, so I don’t have to pay the city tax. When I tell the person that I live in the city, and I don’t pay any city tax now, they just kind of look at me in wonderment. That answer is: there is no city tax. No one pays city tax. The only thing we pay that could be called a city tax is the sewer fee. Yes most of the people pay a sewer fee, or tax as many call it. However, if you live in the city and are not hooked up to the sewer system, you don’t get charged for it. If you’re on a septic system, and I know there are still some people in the city that are on septic systems, they don’t pay the sewer fee. These are just a couple of examples of misinformation out there. There are more. As we go through the process of evaluating this idea, let’s use thorough, accurate data in making our decision. Let’s not base it on emotion or false information. Again, I don’t know if this is a good idea or not, but I look forward to more information to come out on the idea. Just remember, the people that will ultimately decide on annexation, will be the people affected directly by this. If you live in the areas covered by this idea, remember, the city can’t just come in and annex your property into the city without your approval. There will have to be a vote with majority approval. The county will also weigh in on the annexation. Then the annexation would have to go to the local agency formation committee, LAFCO for short, for their approval. When I was last on the council, I served on LAFCO for almost 2 years. They are the final approving agency on annexations.

In conclusion, i still have not heard all the pro and cons on the idea yet to form an opinion.

However, before we start taking up positions on this topic, let’s make sure we are using accurate information in forming those positions.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to [info@kzgn.net](mailto:INFO@KZGN.NET).