



Convention Center projects losses; Clarifies "90 commitments"

Interstate Hotels & Resorts, the operations manager for the Hotel & Convention Center, is forecasting an operational loss of \$809,987 for the convention center & shared space for Fiscal Year 2010, it was revealed at the November Convention Center Authority board meeting.

Chair of the Finance Committee Laura Douglas said this was higher than the earlier projection of \$607,000 in losses for the first fiscal year.

When debt service is added, the cash flow loss approximates \$2 million annually.

Also, the November 23 *Sunday News* stated "*Interstate Hotels & Resorts, the company managing the center and the adjoining Marriott Lancaster at Penn Square hotel, said it has more than 90 commitments for conventions, meetings and other functions at the new center.*"

Asked for clarification, Josh Nowak, an employee of Interstate Hotels & Resorts, explained that the 90 commitments are for the complex as a whole, which includes the use of hotel space.

Too soon to judge Sen. Gibson Armstrong's career

It is clear from the *New Era's* Nov. 21st interview "Sen. Armstrong looks back on his political life" that Gibson Armstrong considers the Convention Center - Hotel Project to be the capstone of his public career.

"I was not going to run again but then the convention center kind of fell apart, imploded, and I said, 'Well, I'll stick around for one more term to see if I can resurrect it.' And it was

successful," Armstrong said. "That's the one thing that I felt was worth sticking around for."

His service to his constituents will in time be determined by whether the convention center and the hotel succeed or fail. Thanks in large part to Armstrong's extraordinary efforts and great influence for this mammoth public investment, the very future of the city is at stake.

WATCHDOG: Prisoner Abuse

NEW ERA: On Nov. 17, the first of a series appeared entitled "*Investigative series: A pattern of prison abuse?*" concerning a history of incidents of alleged prisoner abuse at the County Prison.

WATCHDOG: *NewsLanc* broke the story several days earlier with "*County Warden sued in Federal Court for inmate abuse*" and was preparing its own investigation of the prison. The *New Era* series is off to a good start, so the Watchdog will simply monitor from the sidelines.

Getting Use to “stupid”

In the Nov. 23 *Sunday News*, columnist Gil Smart charges that some conservative Republicans rationalize that the Democrats won the August 4th election because "*Obama voters are stupid!*"

In the same issue, the editorial headlines "*An early voting analysis shows that the home-rule charter was torpedoed by the leadership of both Republicans (anti) and Democrats (neutral).*" It continues to rant "*We said after the election that we were disappointed in the GOP's opposition to home rule, which tended toward scare tactics rather than substantive issues, and with Democrats' failure to work for an opportunity to improve the structure and function of Lancaster County government.*" See, those of us who opposed Home Rule on the basis of its terms are also "stupid"!

We at *NewsLanc* are having trouble getting over six members of the Board of Trustees of the Lancaster Public Library spending \$600,000 on plans and studies and turning down a million dollars in state and matching grants rather than proceeding with the renovation of the building. They ostensibly feared not being able to raise \$1.3 million more, despite a feasibility study indicating \$2.5 million in support and without even soliciting grants for the project. We think those six members were also "stupid."

I guess we all need to lick our wounds and make a point to get used to it, and just move on with our important work. Otherwise, we will be the "stupid" ones.

SD of L fails to teach basic typing skills

In this age of computers, it has been observed that most McCaskey High School students do not know how to type. This includes even those in advanced academic programs.

Computer skills are as fundamental as math and English for young people to move on to college or gainful employment. In other

districts, teaching keyboarding is an important part of the middle school curriculum.

A source requesting anonymity has indicated to *NewsLanc* that District officials are aware of the serious problem and will seek to address it in future curriculum.

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LETTER: Public misled about rail yard

I've been following your editorials about the rail yard with great interest. I checked www.TRRAAC.com and found a well-written manifesto.

I am convinced that the public does not understand this issue – which is how F&M wants it.

Visit www.NewsLanc.com daily for news, commentary, letters, and other features. Suggestions and letters welcome at info@NewsLanc.com.