



Convention Center Authority delays access to disputed invoices

Over the course of planning the Convention Center, the law firm of Stevens and Lee was paid over \$7 million dollars by the Authority, all on the basis of invoices that disclosed nothing other than *"For professional services rendered."*

Authority board members and critics have long sought and been denied the usual information that accompanies legal invoices, to wit: Dates and times worked, rate per hour, person performing the work, and a very brief description of the purpose (as little as a few words.)

Ted Darcus, then Authority Chairman, had evoked ongoing litigation as a reason not to permit access to the requested normal information. Critics believed this to be disingenuous, since confidential information was unlikely to appear on invoices and, if it were, could be readily redacted.

All litigation came to an end during 2008. In January, 2009, *NewsLanc* filed a Right-to-Know request with the Authority requesting the long sought after information. Earlier this week *NewsLanc* received notification that the LCCA was exercising its legal right to extend the deadline for response by 30 days.

Controversy is not new for the Reading law firm's activities in Lancaster County. Serious questions were raised concerning the amount of its invoices pertaining to the sale of Conestoga View.

NewsLanc concurs that access to the records is indispensable to achieve the public's lawful right and need for transparency.

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Stimulus Bill is a lost opportunity for downtown library

American Libraries Online reports: *Stimulus package will fund libraries. The \$787-billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (PDF file) signed by President Obama February 17 includes several economic-stimulus provisions that could directly benefit libraries.*

Last November, Karen Haley Field, then president of the Lancaster Public Library (Duke Street), urged that the remodeling and expansion of the library be broken down into two phases: (1) Remodeling funded by major state and private grants already on hand and other donations would move forward immediately;

would move forward immediately; (2) Expansion would follow within a year or two, likely spurred by anticipated federal funding for "shovel ready" projects.

Nevertheless board members panicked and turned her down along with a million dollars in grants and despite over \$400,000 spent on "shovel ready" plans.

The worn and over crowded Duke Street Library, one of the busiest in the country for its size, will indefinitely stand as a monument to board member's ignorance and folly.

Hard times come to local restaurants

A frequent patron was surprised to see only one other party at a popular ethnic restaurant which normally is half full even during weekdays and normally enjoys a large evening take out business. By the time the first course arrived, he and his son were the only customers.

Exchanging information with the proprietor

while settling the bill, he learned that business is off by 60% not only at this normally thriving establishment but also at similar restaurants.

Both patron, a hotelier, and proprietor agreed that they had never experienced such a sharp drop off in business. If indeed "*misery loves company*," that was about the only comfort they could offer one another

Questions Lancaster Newspapers' journalistic integrity

The following message to a reporter of the *New Era* was forwarded to *NewsLanc.com* by a representative of TRRAAC:

"Jack [Brubaker] - why did Economic Development Company of Lancaster County (EDC) finance claim they had a commitment of \$1 million from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) when DEP now denies any commitment?

"Three Manheim Township commissioners have now publicly come out against any further tax funding of the Dillerville project.

"Some people are saying the paper won't report these developments because of the Lancaster Newspapers' financial involvement with the EDC, whose staff filed the application with the Department of Community and Economic Development containing the false statements."

INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL

A startling heading over a Feb. 16th Letter to the Editor: *"Time to honor George W. with holiday."*

WATCHDOG: We thought it was from someone on the right wing fringe until we

discovered the subject was George Washington, not George W. Bush!

Appears it was a 'gotcha' by an editor. If intentional, a wag of the tail in tribute!

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