

THINK ABOUT IT

"It is often said that men are ruled by their imaginations; but it would be truer to say they are governed by the weakness of their imaginations."

— Walter Bagehot
English editor and economist
(1826-1877)

Aiken Standard

OPINIONS

Friday | 15A
May 22, 2009

Editorial

Car company, Aiken a fit?

A company that will make vehicles designed for police work is looking to Aiken as a site for its initial production plant.

Carbon Motors Company is looking at Sage Mill Industrial Park as a potential place for the factory that will build Carbon Motors' E7 vehicle, a car

What do you think?

► **What is your opinion about the Carbon Motors police vehicle and the company possibly locating in Aiken County?**

► Write to Letters to the Editor, Aiken Standard, Box 456, Aiken, S.C. 29802 or e-mail to letters@aikenstandard.com

designed from end to end with police work in mind. Currently police departments use factory-made sedans and SUVs and have them fitted out with the equipment police need to perform their jobs. The lights, sirens and

other equipment are all added after the fact.

Carbon Motors proposes to build vehicles that are designed for one purpose only — law enforcement use. Every aspect of the vehicles will be made with law enforcement in mind.

To have Aiken County in the mix to land a facility such as this is exciting for our area. Sage Mill is an exceptional site and has been so noted by regional development professionals. On the corridor between Columbia and Atlanta, it provides easy transportation access to the Northeast as well as westward and southward.

Aiken County is a supportive community of new industry and is able to provide a capable workforce. With the support of institutions such as Aiken Technical College, there will be no problem in training capabilities for an industry like Carbon Motors.

Add all this to the quality of life in our area, and it is not hard to see why Aiken County would be under the watchful eye of Carbon Motors.

We join the people of Aiken County in welcoming the executives of Carbon Motors to our community and hope they like what they see during their visit.

Other views

Voting bill may not pass

Two bills have been debated this year that would make voting both easier and more reliably legitimate in South Carolina. Now they have been combined into one improvement to our state's voting code, but this law may not pass by the time the current legislative session ends due to political gamesmanship.

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved the bill last week by a 14-7 vote.

But the General Assembly is due to adjourn this week, and the law is unlikely to pass. Now the Democrats, led by Sen. Robert Ford, D-Charleston, are saying they won't vote for the bill unless it creates a 30-days early voting session, a ridiculous standard meant only to mask their opposition to the photo identification requirement.

You can't get on a plane or open an account to rent movies from a store without photo identification, and our elections should be at least as secure as our DVDs. Requiring photo identification would make our elections more secure, and allowing early voting would make participating in elections easier.

Democrats should put politicking aside and help pass this bill.

(Spartanburg) Herald Journal

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From the artist's pen



Letters to the editor

Plans for Aiken's business future?

Riding down Whiskey Road, one can't help being struck by the beauty of this town — roan colored horses lined up to gallop through Hitchcock Woods, the Quilt Show being advertised by a banner on the wall surrounding the museum — gracious old gardens and Southern cottages lining the downtown quadrants — and many interesting little shops and boutiques which draw natives and tourists alike to our special home. All of these celebrate what we are today. I have grown to love everything Aiken and it is for this reason — the reason that defines the future — that I write.

The downtown is not only charming, but valuable to our economy and way of life. It is not an easy task to survive as a small business owner during these times. Equally invaluable are the box stores which exist in the various centers out of town. We need all of them to succeed. We need to be certain that we are being exceedingly proactive in ensuring that they do.

We must ask ourselves what creates a thriving community? What draws people here? What makes young people return after college or retirees to leave their lifelong homes? What contributes to the formation of a professional workforce and what fundamental infrastructure must be in place to ensure sustainable growth now and in the future?

It is typically the interaction and vibrancy of several things — business, education, the arts, government and volunteerism. We are most fortunate to have all of these elements here in Aiken, but at the same time we are seeing important businesses leave

the area. Since they have been good corporate citizens, we should be aware that their leaving has a direct impact upon the arts, education and many non-profits. The impact is much greater than the loss of the store itself. It is their role in the community that is the unmeasured loss.

There are several vacant storefronts downtown. Stein Mart is liquidating its inventory, which will leave a significant hole in that center, and we must consider what happens if TJ Maxx and Old Navy decide to do the same. Several retailers have already left the mall. There has been a quiet outcry over this latest closing, but we all seem to be resigned that it will happen. Why is that?

What advanced notification did community leaders have? What did we do and how can we handle the next closure differently? How do we define leadership during these times? Who in our community can lead and inspire most effectively? We don't need reasons why things can't be done, but rather ideas about how to get things done. We need a vision of the real possibilities for Aiken — especially now.

There are some interesting green shoots that deserve our attention. The recently formed Aiken Young Professionals group (which represents the "future" of our town) boasts a few hundred members. How are we working with them to foster entrepreneurship? How are we mentoring them? They are clearly a vision.

Are we optimizing the use of the Small Business Administration and preferred bank lenders to help spawn new, recession proof businesses here? Do we know what kind of businesses those might be? That is a vision. How are the Chamber of Commerce and City government currently

positioned to support small business owners as well as taking a proactive role in petitioning some of the larger box stores to not give up on our community? That is a vision.

What partnerships exist with higher education to provide a reservoir of students to meaningful internships in our community? That is a vision.

What kind of statistics do we have regarding pent-up demand of retirees from various parts of the U.S./Canada to relocate here when the economy gets back on track? How will employment at the SRS potentially bolster the economy again? Those are visions.

Yes, these are difficult times, but they are also times which provide an opportunity to rethink what we can be. The importance of the Winter Colony is invaluable to Aiken, but we must remember that it is often everyday people, living and working here year round that have the most critical responsibility for what we will become.

They must be the workforce on behalf of our future. I love everything Aiken, that's why I want us to think about the future and what we might be. Looking back is wonderful — looking forward is survival.

Laura DiSano
Aiken

The writer is a former executive who has retired to Aiken.

Letters

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► Send e-mail to: letters@aikenstandard.com

► Send to our fax line at 648-6052

Letters

Customer service was outstanding

I seldom find occasion to write to a newspaper, but I could not let the superior service that I have received from the staff at Allstar Rents Inc. go unnoticed. Having worked in a customer service environment for more than 20 years, I consider myself quite an authority on how customers should be treated in a retail establishment. Mary Beth and the staff at Allstar treated me and my family with the utmost courtesy and respect.

I never imagined that my son and his bride's small wedding plans would warrant the individualized attention that they have gifted us with. This staff respected our very small budget and worked accordingly, and they acted as if we were the biggest client that they had at the time.

In a world where big money rules and little customers are not always valued, this business went out of its way to dazzle my expectations. As you can tell, I am thoroughly impressed and will use them whenever I can. I will urge my friends and associates to do the same. Thanks Mary Beth!

Annette Holloway
Johnston

Is American capitalism going?

Mr. Welch may be correct when saying that conservatism is on its last leg. He should have also added capitalism.

Evidently the majority of our citizens, and most illegal aliens, believe as does Mr. Welch that liberalism is best for them.

Gone are the days when the majority of our citizens felt as John Kennedy did when he said, "My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Today it seems the majority is asking, "what can the government do for me?"

Our government can only generate money by printing, borrowing or taxing. China has stopped buying our debt, Japan quit awhile back. Excessive printing of money brings major inflation/worthless money so the only thing left is taxes. Thomas Jefferson said that a republic will fail when the majority of its citizens decide to vote themselves money from other citizens. My friends that is where we are today.

The federal government has made slaves of millions and millions of able bodied people with entitlement programs. Generation after generation of strong, healthy people sit at home waiting for the government handouts. All that is required is keep voting the liberals back into office.

These people make it very hard for the sick and elderly to receive help even though it is badly needed.

These able bodied people feel that there is no need to go to school because the government will take care of them and their children. One day the money will run out, and it will. These people will have no idea how to make a living.

Charles Cushman
Aiken

Other views

McMaster helped publicize Craigslist

Craigslist CEO Jim Buckmaster is a tad upset with South Carolina Attorney General Henry McMaster. But he might want to thank him. McMaster threatened to sue the website for its adult-oriented ads for the Greenville area (there were fewer than 10 ads, according to Buckmaster). McMaster got a little overzealous and said, *The Greenville News* reported, that he "might charge Buckmaster with aiding and abetting prostitution if the company didn't remove ads soliciting prostitutes."

Until McMaster came up with his crusade, tailor-made for a gubernatorial campaign, most people likely didn't even know Craigslist had adult ads. Our AG has done nothing but give the site more publicity. ...

McMaster set a deadline for all the ads to be removed and when the deadline went unmet, he issued a statement that he "had no alternative but to move forward with criminal investigation and potential prosecution."

But wait — he does have one alternative: Knock off the publicity ploys and put his efforts toward other concerns, things like scams on the elderly, fake warranty robo-

calls and people who prey on others in financial difficulties with "get-out-of-debt" schemes.

There's plenty of garbage on the Web, adult-oriented and otherwise. But anyone who wants to clean it up has a full-time job — and plenty of overtime — ahead of him. There won't be much time left to be attorney general — and surely not enough time to run for governor.

There's really only one solution to online trash: Don't seek it out.

Anderson
Independent-Mail

Quote

"The lack of a comprehensive, well-thought-out plan led to a predictable political backlash on Guantánamo. Instead of unifying Americans behind a plan that keeps us safe and honors our values, the administration's course of action has unified the opposition to moving forward and move forward we must."

— Sen. John McCain after the Senate refused to close Guantanamo Bay prison until the Obama administration delivers a satisfactory plan for what to do with the detainees.