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70th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial
By: Tom Wiknich

Last night, Mayor Breeden asked for the people to not only let them know when they are doing something wrong, but please also let them know when they are doing something right.

First, a comment from the last editorial titled: Is the road ending for Hillary Clinton’s run for president because of email gate? I had made a comment that no one wrote in defending her. I had a reply to that comment I’m happy to share. Ethan wrote, “It would be illogical to assume that because no one posted a defense of Clinton that somehow vindicates the editorial opinion. In a previous thread, I gave an opposing opinion to the editorial, and I was met with a thinly veiled threat from one of the members. Being an independent politically, I have seen how the extreme of both the left and the right have chastised even the slightest opposing perspectives. This board is no exception. So when there is little to no opposition to the views of the editorials please don't assume that translates into total agreement.” Thanks for your comment, Ethan. What I would add is that a few people have asked me to include opposing views to my editorials, and I am willing to do that, as I am doing right now with using your comment. I want to encourage opposing views to be posted. I respect opposing views and will provide them here. The KZGN Facebook discussion group is the means to have the discussion. So, thanks for your comments.

Last night mayor Breeden asked for the people to not only let them know when they are doing something wrong, but please also let them know when they are doing something right. She included concern of the derogatory comments some people make on social media, like Facebook. To you, mayor and council, please make sure and read to the end of this editorial. I will compliment you on a well-made decision. I agree with the sentiment of her plea. As one that has sat up there, 90% of the time, and maybe even more than 90%, all you hear from the people is criticism when they don’t like what you are doing. Rarely do you hear compliments. That’s the way it is and it’s hard to get used to. We are human, and we do need affirmation from time to time that we are doing well. You have to have a thick skin and not take criticism personally. That is not easy, especially when sometimes people make comments that hit you personally. Sometimes things are said that aren’t even true.

But once said it’s out there and can never go away. Often times, family members of the elected official also get offended at things said against their loved one. But, the mayor is right. We should take the time to let them know when they are doing things right. I have done a few editorials complimenting the mayor and council on things they have done correctly, in my opinion of course. I realize that I have also provided editorials when I felt things were not being decided as I felt they should be. That is my right.

To you mayor Breeden, here is what you did right last night. Even though you agonized in the decision on how to fix the budget deficit, you made the right decision. By voting to not reduce the police department work force, you did more than you probably know:

1.  You sent a message to the people of Ridgecrest that their safety is of prime importance for the city to provide.

2.  You sent a message to the fine officers of the police department that the council appreciates the work they do to keep the people of Ridgecrest safe.

3.  You sent a message to the potential criminals that are here, we are not going to make it easy for you to make the citizens of Ridgecrest, victims of crime.

4.  You helped the moral of the officers of the police department.

5.  You let them know they are important, and that we want them here.

As far as Facebook comments are concerned, we live in this new age. I read a column from a political motivator. In his dissertation, he warned all elected officials to get used to the internet and social media. It is where a large portion of your constituents now get their information. You need to not hide from or shun these internet sites. But participate and engage your constituents. These are the people you represent. So to you mayor, councilman sanders and Acton, you are doing the right thing by participating in the new internet world. Can the people on these sites be rude and insulting? You bet. To those that are rude or personally insulting, just pass them off. But let them know you are perfectly willing to discuss things with anyone, as long as it is a respectful and courteous dialog. To those that are respectful, and sincere, engage them. This is the prime focus of the KZGN Facebook discussion group. We allow discussion on either side of an issue, as long as the comments are respectful, sincere, and informative. Swearing or personal attacks are not permitted. My wife, Shannon, monitors the KZGN sites every day to make sure they are something we can be proud of. One of the most important things you need to do is to break away from your regular core of friends and contacts for opinions. If you really care about getting the public’s inputs to make decisions, you need to reach out to people you normally have no opportunity to engage. The internet allows you to do that outreach. Embrace it and use it to communicate with your constituents.

In conclusion, you are doing some good things. It is sometimes painful to receive 90% criticism. Remember, it’s not that 90% of the people disagree with you, it’s the percent that want to be heard and usually have valid opinions that many people share. If you listen and engage all the people, you’re doing a good job. I thank you for your service to the city.

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.