

Reed can move the city of Corning forward

THE ISSUE | The race for Corning City mayor.
OUR OPINION | Republican Tom Reed offers a vision to move the city forward where the incumbent does not.

The race for Corning City mayor comes down to two different outlooks.

Would the city do better with "more of the same" for the next two years as is being offered by Mayor Frank Coccho?

Or, is it "time for a change" as is being promised his challenger, Republican Tom Reed?

Based on Coccho's record that he's urging voters to examine, we think it's definitely time for a change.

Reed, a Corning attorney with a fresh outlook and new ideas, is *The Leader's* pick to be the new mayor of the Crystal City.

Although he has never run for public office, Reed, 35, is well versed in government, serving as corporate counsel for about a dozen local municipalities. If elected, he has promised to pare his practice back to accommodate the demands of the mayor's office.

What sets Reed apart from Coccho is he offers a vision not just for today or tomorrow, but for 10 years, 20 years and more down the road.

He stresses the need to relieve the burden of property taxes. He's repeatedly said taxpayers are broke and emphasized the need to expand sales tax revenues and find new sources of income.

As an example, he's suggested lowering the interest rate on city loans to businesses that generate higher levels of sales tax money. Not only could that attract more business to Corning, it would bring in more money from sales.

Reed has also stressed the need to look beyond the city's limits and aggressively begin finding ways to consolidate and share services. It's a notion being promoted at the state and county levels as an effective way to help eliminate duplicated services and reduce the demand on taxpayers. So far, there's little evidence the Coccho administration has attempted to find ways to save money in a meaningful way.

Road repair is one of the city's most pressing needs and Reed has suggested it can

ENDORSEMENTS

- 2nd Ward councilman** | Lee Welles, Democrat.
- 4th Ward councilman** | Rich Negri, Republican.
- 6th Ward councilman** | George Spisak, Independent.
- Mayor** | Tom Reed, Republican.

be done without total reliance on taxes. Shared services is part of this plan, as is including streets and other infrastructure in financial packages used to lure new business.

Another way to ease the burden on taxpayers that Reed has offered is for the city to encourage the formation of a nonprofit organization to help maintain and improve city parks. Fundraising could help alleviate the strain on the city budget and, considering the City Council approved spending a whopping \$18,000 on park signs, it's an idea worth looking into.

Those are just some of the new ideas Reed has discussed on the campaign trail that we feel improves the city while keeping costs in check.

As for Coccho, 63, we have no faith that promising more of the same that his administration has produced in two years will be progressive for the city.

More of the same?

We take that to mean:

- Continued average annual property tax increases of 5 percent.
- Increased spending by the council on things like mass trips to Albany, lapel pins and velvet ropes.
- Little or no movement to share or consolidate services.
- No new revenue streams.
- A contentious relationship with city workers.
- More unfunded or partially funded mandates like fluoridation.
- A deeper divide on the City Council.
- More confrontation.

That is not a promising outlook. But based on what Coccho has said and done in two years as mayor, we see no reason to expect any different.

NATIONAL VIEW | MIAMI HERALD

Mexico drug war deserves U.S. help

The \$1.4 billion proposal unveiled by the Bush administration on Monday to combat narcotics trafficking in Mexico deserves speedy approval in Congress. Some members of the House are miffed that lawmakers weren't consulted about the contents of this package, but they should not let pique overcome common sense. The United States shares a 2,000-mile border with Mexico and has a huge stake in boosting Mexico's ability to overcome the death-dealing gangsters who have turned parts of Mexico into arenas of violence. There was a time when Mexico viewed the drug trade only through the prism of geography. It was merely a conduit for traffickers who sought to profit from the insatiable U.S. demand for Colombian cocaine, which was none of Mexico's business. It had nothing to gain by getting in the way of South American traffickers. But Mexico has now learned the hard way that turning a blind eye to drug-inspired violence doesn't work. The narcotics trade destroys everything it touches.

Today, from Nuevo Laredo to Tijuana to Acapulco, Mexico's police forces and soldiers are engaged in a deadly battle against Mexican drug cartels for control of cities. The dead

number in the thousands, and the violence is intensifying.

The U.S. interest in helping Mexico could not be more self-evident. Controlling the traffic in Mexico keeps drugs off U.S. streets. It allows Mexico to bring its own territory under control. And it provides an opportunity for the United States to strengthen the bonds of cooperation with an important neighbor.

The package crafted by the White House and the government of Mexican President Felipe Calderon is designed to provide cash, training and equipment, but carefully limits direct U.S. participation south of the border. State Department officials have said there would be no U.S. planes or helicopters on the ground. Interdiction over Mexican airspace will be handled by Mexican authorities.

The case for helping Mexico is strengthened by the vigor with which President Calderon has undertaken the fight against drugs. No Mexican leader has devoted as many resources to this cause, nor been so quick to extradite Mexican drug gangsters wanted in the United States. The drug cartels know that they are in the fight of their lives. So is Mexico. The United States can stand by and watch, or it can help. The choice is obvious.

ARTIST'S VIEW



NATIONAL VIEW | NEWSDAY

High time to regulate fertilizer

It shouldn't have taken Congress 12 years after Timothy McVeigh blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City to regulate purchases of the type of fertilizer he used to make that deadly bomb. But better late than never.

The House voted Tuesday to require the Department of Homeland Security to check all buyers and sellers of ammonium nitrate fertilizers against terrorist watch lists — a bill sponsored by Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y. Companion legislation in the Senate was co-spon-

sored by Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., and passed in July as a part of the appropriations bill that funds the department.

The fertilizer legislation deserves President George W. Bush's signature, but he has threatened to veto the Homeland Security bill, which he says is too costly. If need be, the Senate should go back and pass a stand-alone fertilizer bill.

Ammonium nitrate-based fertilizer is readily available, and its sale is unregulated. When combined with fuel oil and a detonator, it becomes a powerful explosive. It was

used in the first World Trade Center attack as well as to blow up U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Two years ago, in an undercover operation called Operation Kaboom, New York City police bought a ton of ammonium nitrate at retail outlets to show just how easy it still was to get.

Regulation of the fertilizer stalled when it was part of broader efforts to regulate other chemicals. But ammonium nitrate is a proven killer. We need to know who buys it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Coccho a diamond in the rough

TO THE EDITOR | It is with a great deal of confidence that I would like to take this opportunity to offer my support for Frank Coccho to continue as the mayor of Corning.

In his brief tenure as our mayor, he has truly proven to be a man for all people, rich or poor, young or old. He has reached out to all factions of this community and continues to do so. He plays no favorites and that's what makes him real. He listens and then acts. He pays attention and then does what he thinks is best for the City of Corning.

Has he improved this community in the last two years? In my opinion — yes.

Is Frank Coccho rough around the edges? No question. We all know that but does he care? You bet he does.

I will vote for Frank Coccho this year just like I did two years ago. I hope all my friends in this community will do the same.

Joseph N. Ruocco
Corning

Need change? Vote for Reed

TO THE EDITOR | I join past council members Tom Yorio and Warren Blackwell in their support of Tom Reed for mayor.

In the last election I was hoping to see the new council and mayor be professional and have a successful administration, but what I see is disharmony in city departments and on the council. It is my understanding, two of the three unions are backing Tom Reed. They want a change. That is telling me things are not going smoothly at City Hall.

I believe Tom can bring leadership, change and a new vision on how our city can prosper and move forward. That is why I am supporting Tom this November with my vote, and ask you

to do the same.

Avery Acly, former City Council member
Corning

Welles has energy, vision for change

TO THE EDITOR | I would like to encourage the residents of Corning's 2nd Ward to support Lee Welles this Nov. 6.

As a retired member of the Corning Fire Department, I am familiar with the functioning of the City Council and firmly believe that Ms. Welles has the qualities to be an excellent representative for the 2nd Ward. She is intelligent, open-minded, and hard working. Her energy and vision is what we need for the future and I am confident that Lee will put what is best for the city ahead of party politics. With her talents and experiences, Lee Welles will be an asset to the council.

Gary C. Brown
Corning

Reed running negative campaign

TO THE EDITOR | Thursday, Tom Reed involved me personally in the mayor's race when he implied that Mayor Coccho's support of me cost the citizens of this city funding for critical projects. This was reported in this newspaper.

He implied that voters should select him because of his relationship with Randy Kuhl. Tom Reed just lost any consideration he had for my vote.

Reed has run a negative campaign failing to articulate any positive reason for his election. First, he executed a perfect Tom Delay/Randy Kuhl attack on Mayor Coccho. I believe that Reed's negative attacks show his real motivation. Then Reed campaigned on taxing nonprofit organizations. The largest, Pathways, employs several hundred and gives

Tweddell might have the answer

Sheriff Dick Tweddell said last week he'll throw illegal aliens in jail who try to obtain a New York state driver's license in Steuben County.

Their offense, of course, is that they are here illegally

CITY BEAT



Je Dunning

and should be deported back to their country of origin. Forget that Gov. Eliot Spitzer's new policy in December encourages illegals to come forward to get licenses. Tweddell and many other believe their presence in this country violates law and should be dealt with accordingly.

Hard to argue with that logic. Why should illegal aliens be afforded any privileges, short of life-saving ones?

Tweddell's statement last week was a sobering note to a controversial and complex issue. And it just might be the answer those who are fighting Spitzer's policy are looking for.

I'd expect Tweddell to repeat his views Tuesday at a public hearing in Rochester hosted by the Assembly Republican Conference. They make sense and could be the best way to protect the public.

Corning Mayor Frank Coccho has been criticized in the past for taking credit for accomplishments he had little or nothing to do with. Thursday, I witnessed this firsthand.

Before a room full of Rotarians, Coccho and his mayoral opponent, Republican Tom Reed, gave brief speeches and answered a few questions from the audience.

Coccho cited as one of his accomplishments the absence of the term "comic council" since he took office two years ago.

The "comic council" was a phrase coined years ago by *Leader* columnist Bob Rolfe to describe the Corning City Council when it would slip into its bizarre mode during public meetings. As an alderman, Coccho was often a contributing factor to the outlandishness.

But the more recent omission of the term "comic council" is in no way a reflection on the performance of the current council as Coccho seems to feel.

Quite the contrary. Instead, it was purely an editorial decision by the hierarchy of this newspaper to abandon the term and use other ways to describe the goings-on in council chambers. It was not the most popular decision, but one we have stuck with.

Believe me, there have been plenty of instances when "comic council" would have been completely accurate to describe the Coccho-led council. We just chose not to present it that way. Sorry, Frank, can't take credit for that one.

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LETTERS POLICY | THE LEADER

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■ Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. No letters will be published unless verified with the author in person or by telephone.

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