

From: Jan Ridenour
Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2007 10:06 PM
To: Jack Moyer
Subject: Please Read - Domestic Partnerships

Dear Jack,

Last night the City Council took a huge step in bringing Eureka Springs in alignment with so many other towns. Over 9000 companies in the US offer domestic partner benefits and all are watching the AP wire this morning. The news of last night is being picked up by many news agencies.

Eureka has a chance to add yet another star to our ever increasing shining galaxy.

But this in the media is going to turn into a circus that Eureka tourism does not want. If the pastors are allowed to go forth with their petition for referendum, the media will keep this a top story as opposed to a "news today, gone tomorrow" item. Yes, it is hitting coast to coast, but the real damage is coming from the 3 churches that are contacting media and church groups as to the controversy.

Media loves trainwrecks. It is what sells ad space and increases readership, viewers online, on-air, and in print. As long as the referendum idea stays alive, it will stay in the media. The leaders of this are the pastors who spoke in opposition at Council. And it will get worse.

While I support the democratic process, there is never a time when an election serves any good whatsoever when it is calling for citizens to vote on the worthiness of other citizens. Even if the ordinance is upheld by a 60/40 split (as in most Eureka elections) you then have horrible community relations as a portion of the community..be it gay/single/elderly knows that 40% of their neighbors just voted them unworthy enough to purchase a piece of paper..a symbolic, no rights, no benefits piece of paper.

And the media goes wild. Given that and the timing of such a referendum, you are looking at this media trainwreck for most of the upcoming season.

That is not the type of publicity that Eureka wants or needs. There are far too many wonderful things happening in town with the art colony, Crescent Park Condos, etc.

Kim and I have seen this type of thing before. We were contracted in Colorado in 92 when the voters voted to allow discrimination of gays and lesbians. Here's a couple of links of media from that era.

<http://www.denver-rmn.com/millennium/1130mile.shtml>

***link above no longer works. Here is the referenced page in Google cache:

<http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:KHYKjXaQFEUJ:denver-rmn.com/millennium/1130mile.shtml>

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=travel&res=9E0CEEDD123DF930A35751C1A964958260>

We were also under contract to cover Vermont in 2000 - and they have been prospering ever since.

These aren't my opinions Jack, we been there and done it before..we know the outcomes. We are more than willing to chat with whomever.

But at this point in time, it would be a good thing for the business people not allow Wilson to continue with this petition for referendum.

As long as the Wilson gang are going to contact incoming groups and tell them untruths, the bigger businesses in town will see cancellations. Wilson is directing a self fulfilling prophecy of sorts. He will use cancelled groups as his proof that people won't come to Eureka because of the DPR. That is not true. By now, I would imagine he has the Chamber phone ringing and Jeff Feldman is probably at a loss for words.

There are some wonderful opportunities right now. Don't let these 3 churches take control. I do know

that ATT is sending out an internal message to employee groups that Eureka Springs is now one of the places to register for DP's. Most of the 9000 companies who offer DP benefits notify their employees groups on such things. There is tremendous business to be gained.

I'm happy to meet and discuss any of these issues with you, other businesses, or the Chamber. Time is of the essence. Grab the golden opportunity that Council just handed you. It's time for you and the other leaders in Eureka to stop the referendum. Eureka does not need the tag of Hate city..a term I have already seen used on some internet sites nationally.

Thanks for your time,

Jan

From: Jack V. Moyer
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2007 9:54 AM
To: 'Jan Ridenour'
Subject: RE: Please Read - Domestic Partnerships

Jan

This is a compelling letter. Both the hotel and our friends are extremely concerned.

Shrinkage in our market is not new as related to diversity. In fact three of our most primary markets have been stung by diversity marketing – (weddings, Families, Religious Travel). It may be easy to blame these three churches today but certainly we are painfully aware that this challenge is not a new arrival.

My question to you is what is next? What is the next step towards making Eureka Springs more of a diversity destination? If you are asking for us to support you today, you should be willing to share the next level of impact whereas we can make a solid business decision of how to proceed forward.

Using the impact on business is probably not a good argument as **personally** I support the registry and civil unions but **business-wise** am opposed to the efforts to position this town so prominently slanted towards Gay friendly and watch our family, religious and wedding markets slide on a rapid pace downwards.

What is the middle position here and what assurance do I have from you that the next steps will not be more severe than those of the last five years.

Jack

CC- Coop

From: Jan Ridenour
To: Jack Moyer
Subject: RE: Please Read - Domestic Partnerships
Date: Wed, 16 May 2007 1:55 PM

Jack,

Thanks for your response.

I do realize the shrinking market and while it's easy to blame it on diversity over the last 5 years, I think that folks need to look beyond the walls of Eureka and understand a bigger picture. Consider first that whatever diversity has happened here in the last few years, the marketing of that was done by private individuals with essentially no budget, actually less than no budget. And if national numbers are anywhere close, the GLBT market only represents 10% of the population..but for the sake of argument, let's say it's 20% . Given the CAPC, the Chamber, other group CO-OP's are pooling their monies into advertising outside the diversity market, then it becomes painfully clear that their efforts are not being productive if you are saying they can't override the efforts of a man from Hot Springs

(Sparky) and a local woman (Deb Rose) who own the two diversity sites geared towards less than a 20% population base.

I think businesses need to look overall at trends, competition, neighboring efforts, etc.

Over the last 5 years the NWA corridor has blossomed into a cultural, diverse, savvy area. Short of having a religious theater, the family and wedding business are well orchestrated and courted right next door. The people who are coming to NWA to work for the large corps over there have come from areas of the country where great dining, shopping, services were simply the norm. Rogers/Bentonville are meeting the needs and more.

Meanwhile Branson is exploding. Branson Landing is the new wave market for them. Upper scale, more of a gentrified experience that the baby boomers and their families expect. And they do have religious theater.

Marty and Elise have also made their move into that market by building the condos...and thank whatever God, it is finally happening and will also draw the client of today in Eureka's new transition.

Maybe transition is the word here.

While I realize that many of the larger properties and businesses were built and have continued to grow based on a target from 30 years ago, it is simply not going to work much longer if they continue to hold that vision as the 'only' target.

The term 'family' has a whole new connotation than it did when my own family took vacations. The term wedding and romance has altered too.

Consider the fact that most of big business started offering domestic partner benefits 3-7 years ago. As the economy changed, as insurance skyrocketed, these companies had to do something in order to stay competitive in keeping their employee base.

At this site alone you will find all the media companies offering DP benefits.

http://www.nlgja.org/workplace/dp_newsmedia.html

Many of these are affiliates in our own targeted backyards. Springfield, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Dallas, etc. 1000's of employees just ready for the courting by Eureka Springs.

Or you can access a list of all 9000+ companies at http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Search_the_Database&Template=/CustomSource/WorkNet/srch.cfm&searchtypeid=3&searchSubTypeID=1

But please, let's not make it a gay issue. It's not. While it's easy to blame GLBT, or motorcycles, or, or, or...it really needs to be addressed of how the businesses here can be more inclusive, welcoming, and intrusive into markets other than the same ones of the past decades.

Have the Historic Hotels or any of the other CO-OP members contacted ANY of the 9000+ businesses in the above lists? Have specials been offered to employee groups to come to Eureka? Has anyone contacted all the major media players such as Gannett, Belo, CBS, Hearst, and all the others that Eureka Springs welcomes their employees for family activities, outdoor rec, romance? Those companies offering DP's offer it to ALL employees - straight and gay. Those media business are as close as Springfield with employees..not to mention Kansas City, etc.

There are golden opportunities Eureka has right now to gain some ground. The only town in the mid-west, certainly in the Ozarks that is openly inclusive to all. NWA nor Branson can even compete with the gift your city has given you...and it certainly wouldn't hurt to let those same companies know that "oh, by the way, when you're in town, come see our new condos...perfect for your getaway, retirement, investments"

What we are hearing from corporations like ATT and others as they want info as they are preparing their internal press releases to employees groups. Drury University in Springfield, MO announced last night their DP benefits. They like many others having been watching Eureka.

The lists go on and on. Eureka is either poised to take advantage or will spend it's time complaining that business isn't what it used to be.

And the list goes on for cities, tourist destinations around the country. Remember the Distinctive Destination award Eureka got a few years back? I'm going to use another award winner as an example. Doylestown, PA. Doylestown is a small historic town much like Eureka sitting in Bucks County, PA. Bucks County has an aggressive CVB that we worked with with cross promotion during the Distinctive Destination era. One of the things I found today at looking at their CVB is they have a whole section dedicated to the diversity segment.
<http://www.buckscountycvb.org/listings/index.cfm?catID=25¬ify=1>

A statement from their CVB: Bucks County is well known for its acceptance of all lifestyles. All of our member businesses celebrate diversity and consider themselves to be open to all people without regard to issues of gender, race, or sexual orientation. The gay and lesbian community has been visiting New Hope for many years because of the openness and sensitivity shown by the business community. That same openness and sensitivity can be found throughout Bucks County. So enjoy all that Bucks County has to offer and we hope you'll come back often.

Maybe it's time that someone contact Disney, Ft Lauderdale, Tucson CVB's and ask how their family business is.

Jack, the only thing standing between success and failure to use this Domestic Partnership will be the unwillingness of businesses to recognize there is a new business model and targets in the 21st century. If family, wedding, religious markets are sliding, then look inward and adjust what needs to happen. With the clout of the CAPC, the Chamber, the CO_OP, you can all turn this completely around and prosper from it.

My concern is only that if referendum petitions are allowed to continue and this ultimately ends up with a special election, you (as in CO_OP you) will have allowed the bulk of your tourist season to be overshadowed by the trainwreck the media will turn it into.

For any groups that have so far cancelled, has anyone asked them exactly why they cancelled and if they were notified by media or did they receive calls from Eureka's concerned pastors? Might be a good thing to know.

I'm a bit in awe of you thinking I am writing for supporting me..is that the ME that is gay and you think I have some agenda here? My emails to you have been what I considered support.

And your statement as to 'what assurances' I can give you.

I guess the only assurance I have is the knowledge and experience of being on this particular train in two different states in the past. One went the way of prospering, the other did not. Those are documented by the media and has nothing to do with my personal opinions.

Eureka has been transitioning for about the last 7 years. A gentrification is coming. A gift was given that truly sets Eureka apart from all other destinations within a 10 hour drive. But it won't last long. Some other town will see the benefit and take the ball and run. I hope Eureka will understand now and not be left behind while waiting for an election.

One of my favorite sayings is "What are you UNWILLING to do in order to succeed?"

My sincere hope is that Eureka be 'willing' to do whatever it takes and sees this not as a conflict but as an opportunity.

Whatever severity Eureka has been faced with should not be blamed on others. Results are only the polarity of the side of the magnet we project. We get exactly what we attracted.

If you find my knowledge, insights, and pulse on the markets and trends helpful, then let me know. If you only think I am looking for support for a cause..then I don't want to waste either of our time. For our own business, it makes no difference what Eureka does or doesn't do.

I wish for all to prosper!

Jan

From: Jan Ridenour
To: Jack Moyer
Subject: DPR's – Please Read
Date: Sun, 17 Jun 2007 12:21 PM

As predictable as snow in New England, the media has taken the DPR issue and is gleefully writing about the Eureka trainwreck. http://www.nwaonline.net/articles/2007/06/17/columns/bob_caudle/061707caudle.txt

Spurred almost daily, Rev Wilson et al are calling media at every turn. Newspapers, TV, Radio - he and a couple other preachers are loving their new soapbox. He made a call to the media before he turned in the petition and the media was at the courthouse before he was that day.

Yes, it's predictable..so is the outcome and they are not much different than the links I sent you in mid May - (see first email below)

Sales, marketing, promotion, publicity. Rule number 1. **Either control the press or the press controls you.**

It's rather sad that the bigger businesses in Eureka..along with the CAPC and Chamber didn't take the ball a month ago and begin the campaign of turning this into the positive it could be. But rather they sat wanting it to be kept quiet while allowing the media to be controlled by Rev Wilson and his 143 mostly elderly signers...most of which have little to no business interests in Eureka Springs. Personal feelings are one thing. But one would have thought that somewhere in this burg, someone had enough savvy to conduct business as it is done in this day and age of inclusiveness.

AT&T did send out their newsletter last week to employees (which now consists of Cingular, SBC and whomever else AT&T gobbled up) nationwide announcing DP's in Eureka Springs. Since they are just 1 of the 9000+ companies offering DP benefits to their employees, this could have been a destination for some of those employees and their families. Maybe it still will be..but at least another 60 days has been lost during the height of tourist season.

But all that is water under the bridge.

The press is now in control and Rev Wilson is doing a dandy job. As he attempts to eliminate the possibility of a DPR, he is also spreading the word far and wide that this is going on to begin with, and every time he calls Eureka a 'sex destination or gay mecca' he is only turning away more folks who you say you want and letting every gay or progressive liberal unmarried straight person know that Eureka is probably just exactly the place they want to go.

Yes, this winter it will snow in New England. And the progression of what is next for Eureka has been spelled out by the towns and states that have gone before them in this issue and allowed someone to 'control their message'

In your May 16th email below, you stated you personally supported the DPR - a bit different than your [statement on Geekfest yesterday](#). You also asked what middle ground their was. (see email below) -

Jack, there isn't much of a middle ground. The integration of church and state just knocked you off the fence.

But then, I'm not sure that human worth should have a middle ground. Do you?

And for weddings and a festive atmosphere, you don't get much more festive than Disney...

http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=domesticNews&storyid=2007-04-05T231045Z_01_N05453609_RTRUKOC_o_US-DISNEY-GAYWEDDING.xml&src=rss&rpc=22

Just some thoughts on a Sunday....

Jan

From: jack moyer
To: Jan Ridenour
Subject: RE: DPR's – Please Read
Date: Mon, 18 Jun 2007 03:56 AM

This destructive town has damaged me personally

You are a big part of fueling that

This email continues to convince me that your a big part of the division and not the answer

I know need to put my family back together as this issue played a part in ripping it apart

I blame the likes of wilson on one side and ridenour on the other

Sent via BlackBerry from Cingular Wireless

From: Jan Ridenour
To: jack moyer
Subject: RE: DPR's – Please Read
Date: Mon, 18 Jun 2007 8:56 AM

Jack,

I am sorry you are experiencing family troubles. My own family has been the subject of the towns divisiveness for many things for many years. I do understand.

But this issue is about business, not personalities.

As hateful as some of the pastors have been, I would be hard pressed to blame them as a personal attack on me.. Even though it's hurtful to every gay and lesbian person I know. Rev Wilson is standing by his convictions..there is nothing wrong with that. Every person deserves to do that in my opinion.

But from a business perspective, this, as all things needs attention.

Over the years Jack, you have made it very difficult for us on a business level, but to blame you personally for anything? No, you'll never see that from us. Business is business. I have understood your position professionally and still do.

Again, I am sorry you are going through something hard with your family. I hope it strengthens and gets better soon.

I won't bother you anymore with anything I feel might be informative to this issue and how it relates to business. Your email of early this morning gives me more insight as to how you feel personally about the Ridenour's, so no need to fuel you any further.

Best Regards,

Jan