

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

Downtown Area And Future Options

Downtown Yankton has a lot of past behind it, but however much future is in front of it looms as an intriguing question. On Monday, the *Press & Dakotan* began a three-part series on the past, present and future of the downtown district, which — like downtown business areas in so many communities across the country — has seen better days.

To really appreciate the story, you have to remember what the downtown district used to be, which was the focus of the first story. Yankton's downtown was a vibrant center of shopping activity, with grocery stores, clothing stores, drug stores, shoe stores and many other outlets. It drew in a lot of people, to be sure. Downtown Yankton was a regional shopping hub and something special.

These are different days. With the arrival of the mall and other large stores, plus expansion to the north and west, the downtown district is no longer the heart of the community. Indeed, for some people, it is a chore just to come downtown when they live only a couple blocks away from the stores on the north end of the city.

Yankton's Historic Downtown District can be magnetic and exciting again.

However, while city officials and downtown boosters examine the past to figure out how to cultivate the future, they must remember they can't recreate the past. The downtown district will never be "what it used to be" — but it can be different and, in some ways, perhaps even better.

To do that, the downtown must play to its strengths and advantages.

The biggest one is the fact that the riverfront area is developed far more than it ever has been since probably the steamboat days of the late 19th century. For instance, what we now know as Riverside Park was once a dumping ground and, as recently as 30 years ago, an undeveloped vacant tract. Why such prime property sat virtually dormant for so long is perplexing (although the fact that it was once part of a "red light" district in the early 20th century may have had something to do with it). Now, it is a tremendous green space and an alluring park that serves as the center for Riverboat Days, a huge festival which, like the park, also did not exist during Downtown Yankton's halcyon days. The conversion of Meridian Bridge into a pedestrian walkway and the addition of a plaza offer even more new benefits for the downtown area.

The other big factor serving downtown is, of course, the history. Yankton has more history going for it than most places in the region, and it needs to capitalize on it. The downtown area can be part of it; in fact, any marketing of Yankton's history would be impossible without it.

But these are only parts of the answer.

The bigger solution is going to be the businesses that locate in the district, whether they are startups — as per the winning Onward Yankton idea — or fresh retail outlets. As far as the latter goes, there are some things happening in the district: some specialty shops, a looming discount grocery store and several other venues, including, of course, a number of pubs. But more is needed. As we've stated here previously, people generally won't come downtown for one place to shop, but they may come for six places to shop. Providing a diversity of options is the key.

Yankton's downtown could be something like Omaha's Old Market, if the right opportunities can present themselves. Our district certainly has the character and the location to make it work.

People are not averse to coming downtown; they simply need reasons to do so. That's easier said than done, of course, but the building blocks are here. The history is here. The riverfront is here. The components are ready. Here's hoping that a vision to revitalize this district can be brought into tantalizing focus.

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ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 16, the 350th day of 2015. There are 15 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 16, 1773, the Boston Tea Party took place as American colonists boarded a British ship and dumped more than 300 chests of tea into Boston Harbor to protest tea taxes.

On this date: In 1653, Oliver Cromwell became lord protector of England, Scotland and Ireland.

In 1809, the French Senate granted a divorce decree to Emperor Napoleon I and Empress Josephine (the dissolution was made final the following month).

In 1811, the first of the powerful New Madrid earthquakes struck the central Mississippi Valley with an estimated magnitude of 7.7.

In 1907, 16 U.S. Navy battleships, which came to be known as the "Great White Fleet," set sail on a 14-month round-the-world voyage to demonstrate American sea power.

In 1930, golfer Bobby Jones became the first recipient of the James E. Sullivan Award honoring outstanding amateur athletes.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of the Bulge began as German forces launched a surprise attack against Allied forces through the Ardennes Forest in Belgium and Luxembourg (the Allies were eventually able to turn the Germans back).

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman proclaimed a national state of emergency in order to fight "world conquest by Communist imperialism."

In 1960, 134 people were killed when a United Air Lines DC-8 and a TWA Super Constellation collided over New York City.

In 1965, British author W. Somerset Maugham, 91, died in Nice, France.

In 1976, the government halted its swine flu vaccination program following reports of paralysis apparently linked to the vaccine.

In 1985, at services in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, offered condolences to families of 248 soldiers killed in the crash of a chartered plane in Newfoundland. Organized-crime chief Paul Castellano and his bodyguard were shot to death outside a New York City restaurant on orders from John Gotti. "The Color Purple," Steven Spielberg's film adaptation of the Alice Walker novel, premiered in New York.

In 1991, the U.N. General Assembly

rescinded its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism by a vote of 111-25.

Ten years ago: In a stinging defeat for President George W. Bush, Senate Democrats blocked passage of a new Patriot Act to combat terrorism at home. (The result was a revised Patriot Act signed by Bush in March 2006.) Actor John Spencer, who'd played the powerful chief of staff on TV's "The West Wing," died in Los Angeles at age 58. Singer-actor Enzo Sturadi died in Midland, Texas, at age 86. Jessica Simpson filed for divorce from Nick Lachey.

Five years ago: The House joined the Senate in passing a massive bipartisan tax package preventing a big New Year's Day tax hike for millions of Americans. Interviewer Larry King, joined by a parade of former guests, concluded his CNN talk show after 25 years.

One year ago: Taliban gunmen stormed a military-run school in the northwestern Pakistan city of Peshawar, killing at least 148 people, mostly children. Nick Bjugstad scored the game-winning goal in the longest shootout in NHL history to lift the Florida Panthers over the Washington Capitals 2-1.

Today's Birthdays: Civil rights attorney Morris Dees is 79. Actress Joyce Bulifant is 78. Actress Liv Ullmann is 77. CBS news correspondent Lesley Stahl is 74. TV producer Steven Bochco is 72. Former Nevada Gov. Jim Gibbons is 71. Pop musician Tony Hicks (The Hollies) is 70. Pop singer Benny Andersson (ABBA) is 69. Actor Ben Cross is 68. Rock singer-musician Billy Gibbons (ZZ Top) is 66. Rock musician Bill Bateman (The Blasters) is 64. Actor Xander Berkeley is 60. Actress Alison LaPlaca is 56. Actor Sam Robards is 54. Actor Jon Tenney is 54. Actor Benjamin Bratt is 52. Country singer-songwriter Jeff Carson is 52. Actor-comedian JB Smoove is 50. Actor Daniel Cosgrove is 45. Rhythm-and-blues singer Michael McCary is 44. Actor Jonathan Scarfe is 40. Actress Krysten Ritter is 34. Actress Zoe Ljajman is 33. Country musician Chris Scruggs is 33. Actor Theo James is 31. Actress Amanda Setton is 30. Rock musician Dave Rublin (American Authors) is 29. Actress Hallee Hirsh is 28. Actress Anna Popplewell is 27.

Thought for Today: "It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit." — Sir Noel Coward, English actor, playwright, composer (born this date, 1899; died in 1973).

FROM THE BIBLE

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Robert B. Reich

The Revolt Of The Anxious Class

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Content Agency

The great American middle class has become an anxious class — and it's in revolt. Before I explain how that revolt is playing out, you need to understand the sources of the anxiety.

Start with the fact that the middle class is shrinking, according to the Pew Research Center.

The odds of falling into poverty are frighteningly high, especially for the majority of the population who lack college degrees.

Two-thirds of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. Most could lose their jobs at any time. Many are part of a burgeoning "on-demand" workforce — employed as needed, paid whatever they can get whenever they can get it. Yet if they don't keep up with rent or mortgage payments, or can't pay for groceries or utilities, they'll lose their footing.

The stress is taking a toll. For the first time in history, the life spans of middle-class whites are dropping. According to research by Nobel-prize-winning economist Angus Deaton and his co-researcher Anne Case, middle-aged white men and women in the United States have been dying earlier. They're poisoning themselves with drugs and alcohol, or committing suicide. The odds of being gunned down in America by a jihadist are far smaller than the odds of such self-inflicted deaths, but the recent tragedy in San Bernardino, California, only heightens an overwhelming sense of arbitrariness and fragility.

The anxious class feels vulnerable to forces over which they have no control. Terrible things happen for no reason. Yet government can't be counted on to protect them.

Safety nets are full of holes. Most people who lose their jobs don't even qualify for unemployment insurance. Government won't protect their jobs from being outsourced to Asia or being taken by a worker here illegally.

Government can't even protect them from evil people with guns or bombs. Which is why the anxious class is arming itself, buying guns at a record rate.

They view government as not so much incompetent as not giving a damn. It's working for the big guys and fat cats — the crony capitalists who bankroll candidates and get special favors in return.

When I visited so-called "red states" this fall, I kept hearing angry complaints that government is run by Wall Street bankers who get bailed out after wreaking havoc on the economy, corporate titans who get cheap labor, and billionaires who get tax loopholes.

Last year, two highly respected political scientists, Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page, took a close look at 1,799 policy decisions Congress made over the course of over 20 years, and



Robert B. REICH

who influenced those decisions. Their conclusion: "The preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy."

It was only a matter of time before the anxious class would revolt.

They'd support a strongman like Donald Trump who'd promise to protect them from all the chaos. Who'd save jobs from being shipped abroad, slam Wall Street, stick it to China, get rid of people here illegally, and block terrorists from getting into America. A strongman who'd make America great again — which really means make average working people safe again.

It was a pipe dream, of course — a conjurer's trick. No single person can do this. The world is far too complex. You can't build a wall along the Mexican border. You can't keep out all Muslims. You can't stop corporations from outsourcing abroad.

Nor should you even try. Besides, we live in a messy democracy, not a dictatorship.

Still, they think maybe Trump is smart enough and tough enough to pull it off. He's rich. He tells it like it is. He makes every issue a test of personal strength. He calls himself strong and his adversaries weak.

So what if he's crude and rude? Maybe that's what it takes to protect average people in this cruelly precarious world.

For years I've heard the rumbles of the anxious class. I've listened to their growing anger — in union halls and bars, in coal mines and beauty parlors, on the Main Streets and byways of the washed-out backwaters of America.

I've heard their complaints and cynicism, their conspiracy theories and their outrage. Most are good people, not bigots or racists. They work hard and have a strong sense of fairness.

But their world has been slowly coming apart. And they're scared and fed up.

Now someone comes along who's even more of a bully than those who for years have bullied them economically, politically and even violently. The attraction is understandable, even though misguided.

If not Donald Trump, then it will be someone else posing as a strongman. If not this election cycle, it will be the next one.

The revolt of the anxious class has just begun.

Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new book, "Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few," is now in bookstores. His film "Inequality for All" is now available on iTunes and Amazon streaming.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Free Speech And Lies

Chris Svarstad, Yankton
Free speech ensures that we can say almost anything without consequence, but the Constitution and we as a society have made exceptions to free speech. You cannot yell "fire" in a theater when there is no fire, for instance. Why? Because, at that point, your free speech infringes on the safety of your fellow citizens.

Yet, the shadowy billionaire Koch brothers and their sycophants in the Republican Party have been getting away with figuratively yelling "fire" in a crowded theater. To the Koch brothers and their Republican stooges, America's uninsured and poor don't matter, they just make up the crowded arena. And they'll do anything to turn them against Obamacare, even though it would enable them to be healthier and could even save their lives.

Because Republicans have been unable to find people in real need for affordable insurance where Obamacare was a net negative, they resorted to lies. Debunkers have been playing Whack-A-Mole with every single false advertisement, Fox News false story and/or lying politicians that the Koch Brothers keep paying for via organizations like Americans For Prosperity. Think of the Koch Brothers as the modern day Robber Barons.

The bipartisan Congressional Budget Office said The Affordable Care Act will cost \$230 billion the first decade, and \$1.2 trillion thereafter. Those are nonpartisan facts of people hired to give us the truth. Republicans don't like the truth, so they summarily dismiss it.

They say it's a "government takeover of

P&D Letter Policy

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.
- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.
- Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.
- Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

healthcare" — a big lie. Just like Goebbels. You say it enough, you repeat the lie, you repeat the lie, you repeat the lie and eventually people believe it. Like Blood libel, that's the same kind of thing. The Germans said enough about the Jews, and the people believed it and we got the Holocaust. You tell a lie over and over again.

We've heard it all before "government takeover of health care." Politifact, non-partisan, Pulitzer Prize Winner of 2009, said the biggest lie of 2010 was government takeover of healthcare — because there is no government takeover.