



April Mayor's Report Mayor - Tom Hoechst - Exercising Your Right to Vote

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April 13, 2012 - With Federal and State elections approaching, we are nearing the time when you will be asked to exercise one of the most important rights and duties you have as a citizen of the United States, the right to vote.

You have the power to determine who will represent you in government. The right to vote should not come lightly and your choice should not come without your own research.

Do not let the media or propaganda unduly influence you. While the media does not intentionally distort information, you usually only get the parts of the story that they want you to receive.

Also, I encourage you to carefully examine the records and comments of those individuals seeking elected office.

With signs of the economy recovering and the scent of political opportunity looming, many domestic programs will come under fire. Regional planning, Community Development Block Grant, energy conservation, and high speed rail will become targets. Many critics will hide under the guise of "Deficit Reduction," but Alton has benefited in the past, and will benefit in the future, through these programs.

Long-term thinking for most politicians has never been popular if it promises to hurt the profits of any entrenched interest. For example, with a little long-term foresight, one can imagine the impossibility of spending enough money on roads to serve an increasing population without creating more congestion while reducing our dependence on foreign oil, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

I am always fearful of the extremist on either side of an issue because radicals never make rational decisions. Many have become so polarized in their party affiliation that they have lost sight of the big picture. In my lifetime, I have seen great leaders, (Reagan, FDR, Truman, and Eisenhower) who were prepared to compromise for the good of our country. These men were willing to compromise and move to the center, where eighty percent (80%) of us already are, and move our country forward. Never have our elected officials in Washington had such a low approval rating due to this polarization. Whenever lines in the sand are drawn and compromise fails, there are no winners, only losers, and those losers are us.

Remember the choices you make in November will have reverberations for future decades. Do not let party leaders, the media, or special interest groups form your decision. Do your due diligence and make your voice heard in the November elections as an educated citizen.