

Kerkhoven Banner
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Ted Here.....by Ted Almen

The defeat of neighboring MACCRAY school district's \$20 million bond referendum came as no surprise to me last week as proponents didn't seem to fully understand just how important an operating school building is to a little town.

Right away I read that the MACCRAY Board of Education had some study that showed no effect upon the communities that lost their schools. Whether or not the members actually bought that line, I have no idea. I'm only guessing now, but I would expect that the expert who came up with this finding has either never lived in a small town, or has long since wiped the dust of it off his sandals.

The fact is that not only is a rural school the life-blood of the community it serves and is one of the major sources of pride, but it also drives economic traffic. While it might be true that a school doesn't always purchase goods and services in the town where it is situated, it absolutely brings people to town who do. I can't believe that study wouldn't take that into account.

And maybe it did. I'm only cursorily familiar with all the happenings of the MACCRAY referendum effort, but that

one statement really struck me. I think the effort would have been better off just acknowledging the negative impact on the two towns which would have lost their elementary schools -- Raymond and Maynard -- and then tried to overcome that by selling all the positives that could come from a brand new elementary school building in Clara City.

I know there are opponents to the KMS plan to add on to an old building at Murdock, but I think they will have to admit that doing so helps keep a certain vitality to that town. Who knows if there were enough votes to defeat the referendum by folks who were dead-set against that. At the very least it would have created a rift, and a deep one at that.

Early in the discussion, principal Jeff Keil, when confronted by the prospect of moving some upper elementary programs to the high school, asked the bare question, 'Why fix something that isn't broken?' KMS seems to have a good model right now and for the foreseeable future.

And don't believe that this won't have an effect on both Kerkhoven and Murdock. It will, and it will be positive.