



MATTER OF OPINION

In every community there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is the power to do it."
— Marianne Williamson, American author and lecturer

LETTERS

From Canada: Don't call it 'Tar Sands'

The people of the United States have a misconception on Canada's oil in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. You use the term, "Tar Sands." The proper term you should use is, "Oil Sands."

The oil in northern Saskatchewan and Alberta is not tar. The oil up there is trapped in sand. If any of you folks down there ever get a chance to visit Alberta's Oils Sands, have one of the companies up there show you the actual sands that are mined. You will see that it is oil that is trapped in the sands and not tar.

To extract the oil from the sands, you need to use heat. The sand is put through a facility that steams out the oil, separating it from the sand. The cleaned sand is then pumped to a settling pond. The wastewater is then reused to make more steam for the

plant again. The cleaned sand is then reloaded into trucks and placed back from where it came. New trees and plants are then reintroduced to the area in completing the cycle, making it ready for wild animal habitat once again.

The Keystone XL Pipeline will create more jobs in the United States. Just think of all the benefits for you and your country. Welders, truckers, machine operators and the manufacturing jobs that will be created, directly and indirectly, in your country.

Instead of the term that many people use, "Dirty Oil," maybe the term that should be used is "Friendly Oil." Have you ever looked north and seen any troops on our mutual border, American or Canadian?

Where do you want to get your oil? From a friend — or a foe?

Keith Picard
Dalmeny, Saskatchewan

State's health care exchange is a plus

There's been a lot of confusion surrounding the health care law lately, specifically around health insurance exchanges set to open next year. The airwaves have been full of stories about the federal government's proposal to possibly delay key features in some small-business exchanges until 2015.

But Colorado small businesses need not worry, as the exchange in our state will open in January 2014 as planned. Colorado announced recently it will move forward with a robust marketplace aimed at helping drive down premium costs for countless small employers in the state.

A robust exchange will increase Colorado small businesses' likelihood of, and ability to, offer health insurance to their employees. Our polling suggests that one-third of small businesses

that currently don't offer insurance said the exchange would make them more likely to do so. About a third that already offer insurance also said the exchange would make them more likely to provide it.

The current health care market is incredibly difficult to navigate, and many employers end up with expensive plans that aren't ideal for their needs.

A strong insurance marketplace, like the one Colorado has committed to having, will go a long way in helping small businesses offer quality coverage options so they can better compete with large businesses to attract and retain the best employees. The Centennial State has to offer.

Tim Gaudette
Colorado outreach manager
Small Business Majority

Colorado small businesses deserve support, recognition

Earlier this year, the Denver Business Journal reported that our metropolitan region ranks third out of 102 U.S. markets in the vitality of our small-business sector, a steady improvement from just three years ago when we didn't rank in the top 10. That's good to hear.

Viewpoint



Shepard Nevel

While a variety of reasons have been cited — from local and state government support, DIA and the biosciences boom sparked by the Fitzsimons Life Science District — the greatest credit should be given to the men and women who launch and sustain the 426,000 small businesses in Colorado, generating jobs and much more of value to our state.

"Small business" is one of those terms that means different things to different people.

- For public officials, it's a talking point to acknowledge the role that locally owned businesses play in economic development, and an appealing venue to visit during election season.
- For schools and nonprofits, small business is a vehicle for supporting and bringing attention to local causes, providing a sponsorship or front-window space for poster display.
- For law enforcement, small business helps ensure safer neighborhoods.
- For urbanists, and health and wellness enthusiasts, it translates to attractive destinations for walking and cycling in the neighborhood.
- For other small businesses, which can't afford lobbyists and lawyers, it means partners with whom to join forces to fight the unnecessary red tape or paperwork of government.

My father, a small-business owner his entire professional life in Miami, would advocate at City Hall for the two businesses adjacent to his, both of which were owned by immigrants who struggled with burdensome permitting and zoning processes and unresponsive city staff. "They deserve our community's respect and appreciation, and our support," my father would say to me as he gathered his information to argue on their behalf.

Small business also provides an important thread in the community fabric — a feeling of connectedness that, for some, is a source of dignity, for others a lifeline. The American Planning Association

refers to this "true sense of place" as one of the most important characteristics of "great places" to live and work.

Our neighborhood grocery store in Denver, owned by Pete, and his two sons, Ted and John, is a terrific location for fresh fruits and vegetables, and a variety of other items at a good price. It's also a friendly and convenient destination to pick up quickly that one thing you need for breakfast before taking the kids to school, or for dinner when rushing home from work.

Even more than that, Pete's is a refuge where a working, overstressed mom in a pinch can leave her child with the comforting knowledge that he'll be watched closely and remain safe, where a lonely retiree has found a stool to sit on for hours each day to engage with customers and talk baseball, where elderly Russian women can mingle and laugh unhurriedly.

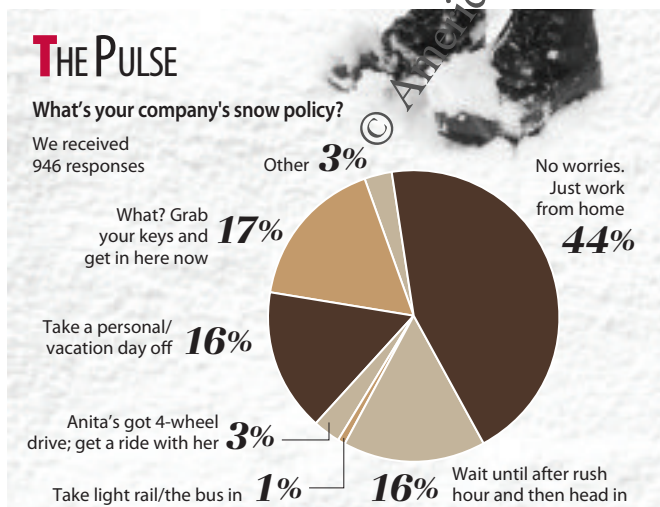
It's also where a sweet and beautiful, severely autistic 18-year-old girl, who happens to be my daughter, bustles in with a big smile on her face, knowing that she'll be embraced by Pete with a loving heart and a warm greeting. Even as she tears through one bag of potato chips after another, grabs candies, spills blueberries and creates an undeniable mess. Pete, a sturdy, smiling Greek immigrant with deep blue eyes, refuses our apologies. Each time this chaos ensues, Pete offers the same response: "You are our customers, and we love having her here."

I don't know if there's a way to measure the economic (or social) impact of such a place. I'm not sure whether Pete's ever will appear on a list of top small businesses in Denver, or whether Pete himself will receive the type of special tributes from the mayor, governor or chamber of commerce that are offered to many business leaders.

But I do know that, for my daughter, and her grateful parents and sisters, and for countless other families facing their own very different challenges and busy schedules, Pete's Fruits and Vegetables on the corner of Cedar and Holly streets is a precious asset, and a gold standard for business in our community. Pete and so many other caring, dedicated small-business owners work unimaginable hours and contribute priceless social capital in their respective communities.

They deserve our community's respect and appreciation.

SHEPARD NEVEL, vice president of policy and evaluation for the Colorado Health Foundation, can be reached at 303-953-3649 or snevel@coloradohealth.org.



This week's question Home sale prices have been rising for months. Has the improved real estate market led you to consider buying or selling a home this year?
To participate, visit denverbusinessjournal.com

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