

By Timothy Linscott

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A few weeks ago I addressed a serious housing need in Grant after it was announced that an international wheat center would be constructed just outside of town.

People from the university and the new employees planned for this project, (not to mention other people needing housing, from railroad employees and hospital employees to teachers and support staff at the school) will all need places to stay as Grant, and Perkins County, continues to grow and expand.

Reading in the Tribune-Sentinel's sister publication, The Imperial Republican, on Jan. 2, I read that Imperial is constructing four spec homes, 10 new rental homes with over \$5 million in building permits throughout Chase County.

Imperial community leaders saw a stumbling block to overcoming issues holding back the community: a lack of rental housing. Community and business leaders have put forth a plan to address those needs and keep Imperial, and Chase County as a whole, on a path forward.

Perkins County needs a similar push to accommodate all of the growth coming in the future and the need currently in the county for addressing housing issues.

I recently spoke with Grant City Administrator Dana Harris about how local leaders are addressing the needs in Grant and was assured that the issue is being worked on and has been for quite some time. Progress is imminent.

I have recently received numerous phone calls, e-mails and had conversations with people in the public supporting the movement for more housing in Grant.

I want to thank Grant Mayor Mike Wyatt and the city council, along with Dana and others, for taking the bull by the horns and getting the ball rolling on this issue.

In order to meet a demand, especially one as big as the upcoming wheat center, the city will have to be prepared to not only facilitate the housing need, but deal with possible infrastructure issues associated with such a future.

The move toward water meters and looking at several angles to make it happen is a prudent notion by city leaders and I commend them for not only beginning this process but staying vigilant and not giving up on the citizens and taxpayers of this great community.

I can't wait to write a similar story that appeared in Imperial this week stating how spec homes are underway, apartments are being constructed and the city is elevating itself to another level to ensure a bright and prosperous future.

For many years I have long been a proponent of economic development in rural communities.

I grew up in a city of over 25,000 and considered it a 'small town' as a kid.

When I became an adult and began working in smaller, rural communities, I had my eyes opened to not only their charm and wisdom, but their forward-thinking mentality and progressive nature.

If you aren't moving forward you are sitting still and in today's world, those who sit still sink.

Appreciating small-town life is a wonderful aspect to my world and I implore city officials to continue to work forward on meeting the demands and needs of this community for one simple reason: the generation not yet born.

How many times have you driven through downtown and said, 'Well, that used to be (insert business name or landmark)'?

I recently went back to Norfolk, where I grew up, and spent a lot of time pondering where a

major part of the city went to or changed over the years.

Showing my children 'the old neighborhood' doesn't have the same appeal when the old neighborhood is a shell of its former self.

I want my grandchildren to come home to a bustling city full of businesses, modern conveniences, jobs and wise old men sitting at the coffee shop talking about what is right with the town, not 'what we used to have.'

Not every small town has the opportunity given Grant, so I hope community leaders stay with this movement and help their great-great-grandchildren appreciate life in Grant, as it was, as it is and as it can be perpetually.

This is a great area of the world and people want to be here, which is awesome.