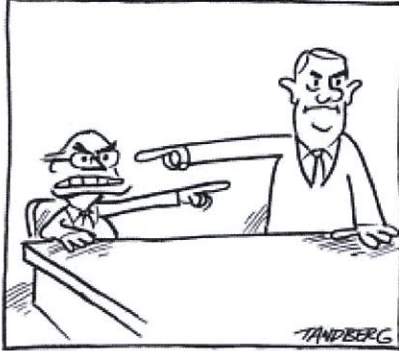


FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2008

## Springdale Cowbirds Shirk Responsibility



Springdale pays their local Chamber of Cowbirds \$100,000 annually from its general fund to promote economic development, \$60,000 from the advertising and promotion tax, and another \$17,000 from the Public Facilities Board. That's \$177,000 in taxpayer money, and what do they get for it? Excuses.

In 2004, Springdale issued 242 commercial building permits valued at \$125.7 million. Three years later and **more than \$500,000** paid to the Chamber for economic development, the commercial construction figures last year had fallen to only 161 permits with a value of \$40.5 million. So far this year, they plummeted to 48 permits and \$11.6 million. That's quite a serious drop, but you won't hear the Cowbirds taking any blame or explaining what went wrong with their alleged economic development strategy. In addition, sales tax revenues have tanked for 19 straight months.

Blame Bush. "It mirrors the national economy," said **Perry Webb**, Chief Apologist for the Springdale Cowbirds. "Construction runs in cycles, and we're down now. Nobody thought we could maintain the high levels we had perpetually." No, but they probably expected something for all the money they paid the Chamber every year. You did worse than "business unfriendly" Fayetteville.

Useful Idiot. Alderman **Bobby Stout** said the Council has passed ordinances that are unfriendly to businesses. The sign and billboard ordinances are hostile to business. I don't think that's your problem, Bobby. Springdale has more billboards than any city in Northwest Arkansas, and it has the worst economic growth. You'll have to do better than that.

Fayetteville used to pay the local Chamber about \$100,000 a year for economic development, but even **Fred Hanna** could see that was a waste of money and put a stop to it. Springdale might catch on after the next election.