

# Merger would accelerate economic development

To the editor:

When local voters consider the plan to merge Greenwood and White River Township, they should make a decision that preserves and increases the value of our growing suburban community.

Residents of the two areas live in a community of both new subdivisions and aging subdivisions with deteriorating streets. They enjoy a rolling landscape and battle flooded streams. They travel on well-designed modern streets and outdated county roads.

They reside in low-density single-family homes as well as high-density apartments. Responsibility for local services and economic development in this large sprawling community is divided among Greenwood, Bargersville and Johnson County.

Doing nothing, the choice of many opponents of the merger, ignores this reality and allows current problems to get worse. Maintaining the status quo in White River Township will only encourage both Bargersville and Greenwood to annex areas that will add to their tax base without adding to their costs.

Older subdivisions in the northern portions of the township and their crumbling streets and drainage problems will then be left to county officials beholden to voters from other townships. In the long run, doing nothing will reduce the value of the entire community.

Some White River Township residents want to solve these problems by creating a new city. The idea has merit; however, it would require a very high tax rate.

As an alternative, several residents wanted to merge Bargersville and White River Township. Town officials rejected the idea of taking in the older and aging portions of the township while attempting to annex the portions of White River Township with the least problems, the most potential for growth, and valuable sanitation assets owned by Greenwood. Such "cherry picking" does make sense for Bargersville.

On the other hand, it endangers the older northern White River Township neighborhoods by isolating them from the growing tax base in the south.

A better alternative for both areas is to merge White River Township with Greenwood. The two areas have almost equal populations, and thus neither could "take over" the other; and many White River Township residents already live in Greenwood. In a merged city, more than 40,000 of an estimated 88,000 residents would live in White River Township.

By merging with Greenwood, White River Township residents would have more control over local officials who control road funds and would receive more road revenue from the state than currently goes to the county. In addition, the city would receive more revenue generated by state cigarette and alcohol taxes, which is not distributed to the county.

In a merger, Greenwood would contribute a large commercial tax base, well-organized city depart-



WRITE A

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit comments for the opinion page.

## GUIDELINES

- Letters must include the writer's name and a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.
- Opinion columns for the editorial page also will be considered for publication. The article should be

## WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER

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ments and various municipal properties such as an airport and parks. Though White River Township has no similar municipal assets to contribute, it does have significant potential for commercial growth.

Furthermore, both areas have innovative leaders, good schools, economical home values and industrious people.

In the short run, the rules of the merger would ensure that rebuilding aging infrastructures in one area would not drain money from similar work in the other area. In the long run, a larger tax base would benefit both White River Township and Greenwood residents.

Merger would facilitate economic development along key transportation corridors in both White River Township and the old city of Greenwood. Creating one police department would help combat crime more effectively in areas with increasing population density as well as along the Marion-Johnson county line.

Becoming the sixth-largest city in the state would increase our influence in state politics.

The bitterness expressed by some opponents of the merger suggests that they not only dislike change, they really do not like our community as it is. They would prefer to go back to some version of a 1970s community that did not include most of us.

By opposing the merger, they seem to think that they can roll back the calendar and do away with the problems that go with being the sixth-largest urban community in the state. However, we cannot go back. We cannot even stay where we are.

Change has been the most constant characteristic of our community for half a century and will be for the next 50 years. The only thing that we can change is the way we plan for change. There really is no better alternative than merging the city of Greenwood and White River Township.

Don Hanlin  
Greenwood

## People bringing firearms to work not a good idea

To the editor:

As you're well aware, guns in the workplace lead to tragic con-