

28 October 2010

Mr. David Palmer, Editor
The Cullman Times

Dear Mister Palmer,

The residents of the City of Cullman should vote NO to allowing alcohol sales of any kind within the city limits IF they want what's best for their future!

I agree with the individual who wrote that fear should not sway a person's vote! Voting should be done as a rational, intentional, deliberate act with prayer and accumulated information. I believe that by carefully considering all of the facts that surround the wet/dry issue, one will deliberately choose to vote "no" because of the facts.

Evidently the earlier letter writer is unaware that Longhorn, Olive Garden, Outback and Red Lobster restaurants will NOT build in Cullman because Cullman doesn't meet any of the minimum requirements for their restaurants.

For a restaurant like Longhorn, Olive Garden, Outback and/or Red Lobster to locate a store in Cullman, the following demographic information must be present (with small variations on the restaurant that you select to investigate):

- Median family income - \$50,000 or more
- Median family income in Cullman - \$39,276 – below the minimum requirement
- Average daily traffic (ADT) on at least one traffic light in Cullman – 30,000 vehicles; ADT in Cullman – 28,000 IF you count the number of cars going north and south on I-65 at AL is 157 – below the minimum requirement
- Required population within a 15 minute drive – 100,000 persons depending on which restaurant you're talking about; there aren't 100,000 people who live within a 30 minute drive of Cullman – below the minimum requirement.

The proposed Wilson development or any other development isn't going to become reality until Cullman begins to meet the minimum requirements mentioned above.

In addition to the demographic requirements, other hoops must be jumped. For example, most banks are going to require a developer to pay for half of the development in cash as a guarantee for a loan. If the shopping center Mr. Wilson is proposing costs \$50 million, Mr. Wilson will have to come up with \$25 million out of his own pocket before the bank will loan him the other \$25 million needed to complete the development. There's no way such a shopping center will be built currently.

A corollary to the fact that Cullman doesn't meet the demographics needed to build such a proposed development means that the estimate of 600 new full-time jobs is fantasy. Many of the stores listed in *The Cullman Times* as stores that might open in the new shopping center (Old

Navy, Best Buy, Kohl's) don't require alcohol to open any way! There's no way that these clothing stores are going to hire hundreds of people.

Another fact that comes along IF the proposed shopping center is built to completion is the affect that an already difficult merchandise situation in Cullman will become worse as stores like Belk's and Penney's move to the proposed new shopping center, leaving vast amounts of vacant commercial property.

The facts given below can be discovered and verified by going to *The Marin Institute* web site, the ALCAP web site, the Journal of Studies on Alcohol, JAMA, the US Department of Health, and many other reputable institutions:

- For every \$1 in revenue from alcohol sales in Cullman, the people of Cullman will have to spend \$15 in social costs.
- It will take decades for the revenue generated by alcohol sales to pay for the tax incentives that will be given away in order to locate a proposed new shopping center in Cullman.
- Neighborhoods with more alcohol outlets have more violent crime. Who wants that for the City of Cullman neighborhoods that we all enjoy? No one!
- Neighborhoods with more alcohol outlets have markedly increased incidents of child abuse. Who wants that for an innocent child? No one!
- Counties with fewer alcohol outlets show an increase in school performance. Counties with more alcohol outlets show a decrease in school performance. If you want to maintain Cullman's high ranking in school performance you will vote "no."

The recent full page letter to the Cullman Times by Steve Skinner, MD (and I've never met him and/or communicated with him) is as accurate as it can be! Doctor Skinner is absolutely correct when he says that glutony has NEVER produced impaired driving! I agree whole-heartedly with everything Doctor Skinner said in his letter and urge everyone to study it closely so that facts, not hysteria and/or hype, will help shape his or her vote!

Those of us who oppose the City of Cullman becoming wet do so because we want the best for Cullman! Crime, spousal abuse, child abuse, lower grades, marked increase in violent crime and all other kinds of terrible things follow alcohol to the places where alcohol is served. Is that the best future for the City of Cullman? I think not.

Alcohol sales in the City of Cullman will only bring heartache to more people. If you don't think so just go to the CCDC as I did last week and talk with the inmates. ALL of them said that their first step towards a LIFETIME of addiction and crime began with drinking alcohol, mostly beer.

For the 87% of you who can consume alcohol without a problem, I say, "Good for you!" Thirteen percent (13%) of your friends and family, however, WILL have a terrible time with alcohol. Why would you want to vote to create more misery?

This paragraph isn't fact but analogy. Would you play Russian roulette with an 8-shot revolver? Of course not! Since statistics show that 1 out of every 8 people who begin drinking alcohol become addicted, why start making alcohol available here in the City of Cullman and give 13% of the people who begin drinking the opportunity to become an alcoholic?

Is the small amount of generated tax revenue that will remain in the City of Cullman and the possible creation of a few dozen jobs worth the negative affect that is sure to come if the residents of Cullman vote "yes" to allowing beverage alcohol in our city limits? I think not.

Cullman is already at the top of the State of Alabama in several areas: Industrial development; school performance; lower unemployment; number of new jobs; and other areas, all of this accomplished without selling alcohol. Why create a city with more violent crime, more spouse abuse, more child abuse, less performance in school and other such things for an industry to consider as they ponder moving some of their business to the City of Cullman?

I encourage everyone to objectively consider ALL of the facts concerning whether the City of Cullman should be wet or dry. I suspect that those who make an objective study of the facts will vote "no" for the BEST future Cullman will ever have.

Sincerely,
Jim O'Dillon
Hanceville, AL