

The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

Brought to you by the North Dakota Progressive Coalition – March 2006

Fear not your enemies, for they can only kill you. Fear not your friends, for they can only betray you. Fear only the indifferent, who permit the killers and betrayers to walk safely on the earth.

-- Edward Yashinsky

The Good: Senator Kent Conrad's recent condemnation of the Bush administration budget cuts: "I don't know of any religion practicing in America today that preaches from the pulpit that what one should do is take from the least among us to give to those who have the most. But that's what this budget is about. It's so profoundly wrong."

The Good and The Bad: North Dakota wages rose, percentage-wise, a tiny bit quicker than the national average – but we're still fourth to last in the country in terms of average wages, making a full 25 percent less than the average American. The economic tide is rising, but not all boats are rising as much as they should.

The Ugly: Most of the increase in wages comes from western North Dakota – not a bad thing. But the growth comes from the booming oil industry, which, according to the *Bismarck Tribune* and the *Devil's Lake Daily Journal*, is suffering price drops – down to \$36 a barrel – while nationally oil producers are getting \$50 to \$60 a barrel. Don't expect wages to stay high for long unless North Dakota gets on the renewable energy bandwagon.

The Bad: Seniors in the state have one of the lowest sign-up rates for the new Medicare prescription drug plan of anywhere in the country – more evidence that government is not the problem, but the jokers running it. Wouldn't a nice, simple, effective program be better than a confusing mess like Part D? Salvation, thy name is single-payer health care!

The Good: When politicians do the right thing. An amendment being considered in the U.S. Senate would restore funding to programs like Meals on Wheels, Head Start, child care, and other important community activities that “compassionate conservatives” cut because advocates didn’t bribe lobby them enough. And really, who cares about kids?

The Good: *The Encounter* is a visually-oriented ballet/pow-wow style dance experience centered on first contact between Europeans and Native Americans. Three people involved in the production of the event talked at the monthly NDPC lunch and are excited to bring a positive message of cross-cultural understanding to North Dakota. See the show on April 5 at Dickinson State University, and April 11 at Jamestown College. Visit NPB.org for more information.

The Ugly: According to *The Jamestown Sun*, Safe Shelter, a program to help abused women, is going to receive too little federal funding this year and private sector donations might not be enough to keep it going. Now, on first glance, this might appear hypocritical – after all, the party in charge has declared itself the paragon of family values. What better way to help people dealing with domestic abuse than providing a “safe shelter”? And on second glance (and third, and fourth) it appears even more hypocritical.

Upcoming Events

Check the online calendar at www.ndprogressive.org for more events!

May 5-6: NDPC Leadership Council, Fargo – Ryan @ 224-8090 for more information.

For More Information on Events or to Submit Your Own: Ryan Gustafson, nodakpc@btinet.net, (701) 224-8090

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