

Everything you wanted to know about oil but were afraid to ask



Or

Oil for Dummies

by Doug Maurstad

The first day of the rest of your life

I am being so overwhelmed with facts, figures and articles about the Hyperion project that I almost can't handle anymore without going into overload. The only thing left is the hope that reasonable people will reach a point that they say "You know, we can't let this happen." Good sense has to come into play and soon. Let's face it; we can only do so much. The rest is out of our hands and what happens, happens. Greed, self indulgence and materialism are a terrible recipe for success in life. I don't think some people realize the seriousness of this situation. Lives are going to be changed forever if this project is allowed to continue. Whether it is good or bad for the state of South Dakota and the rest of the United States, the people most affected by this endeavor are the people of Siouxland, and I'm not sure it will be for the betterment of any of us.

I've said this before and I will continue to say it. At what cost to our way of life and our lives in particular? I'm sure life will go on, but will it be as it is now? I don't see the benefits of a 400,000 bbl per day refinery sitting in my back yard. God, the phrase finally came out. People who are for this project continually refer to us saying the only reason we don't want this is because it is in "Our Backyard." If it were in another state or in another part of South Dakota, we would be all for this. That is not true, but the fact is, Union County, South Dakota is the bulls eye.

On one hand, I have to respect the hopes and dreams of those who wish a better life for themselves, but do those that think of this of this as an economic boom have respect for my wishes? I don't think so, and that is what bothers me the most. I have said since day one that Hyperion has no intention of coming to South Dakota, but the uneasiness and anger they are causing is almost too much. Hyperion still has not said that South Dakota is the site they have selected for the refinery, and yet people in this area are acting as if it is a done deal. Those that say this is going to be an economic boom to this area need to step back

and take a long hard look at what will happen. I've always said, "Be careful what you ask for."

Just for the sake of argument let's say that the vote goes in favor of Hyperion and they get their application approved. This is just another step in the process of big business getting what they want by using whatever means is necessary to make their venture successful in their eyes. The economic boom is not going to happen overnight. They have 3 or 4 years of permitting to go through before the shovel gets into the ground. To prepare for the refinery, the Siouxland area and specifically Spink and Brule Townships must start working on the infrastructure to allow thousands of transient workers to invade this area to build this behemoth of a refinery.

It has not been mentioned before, **but in the zoning ordinance, it says specifically that when an area becomes a planned development, all trees, buildings and any superstructure must be removed. In plain words, the area of the refinery, all 3,500 acres of it will be stripped to bare earth.** Any wetland can be destroyed as long as the same amount of land is restored nearby. This, in my mind is unconscionable.

We (Union County) do not have the skills or expertise in our government employees to be able to make educated decisions on what Hyperion can and cannot do. We have no experience in what goes on or what it takes to build a refinery. We are giving a company from Texas permission to do what they want at their will and trust that they will do the right thing. What do you think is going to happen? If I wanted to be a bit cynical I would say that Hyperion just bought South Dakota lock, stock and barrel. This business is like waiting for the other shoe to drop.

I'm sure that my wife and I will adapt to this new environment, but we won't like it. I urge everyone to really think hard about this and ask yourselves over and over again. Look deep into your heart and honestly ask Is this what I really want to happen to this beautiful place? Can I live with this 10 years from now? Can I live with this one year from now? After June 3

it is too late to change your mind.

Let me end this with a verse from a song by the group Alabama, "Down Home"

"Down home where they know you by name and treat you like family
Down home a man's good word and a handshake are all you need
Folks know if they're fallin on hard times they can fall back on
Those of us raised up down home.
When I was a boy I couldn't wait to leave this place
But now I wanna see my children raised

Down Home!"