

Opinions

ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

No toleration for intimidation



BEVERLEE J. MCCLURE
Guest columnist

Adams State University is known for our quality education with a personal touch.

Teaching is an unparalleled act of passion and compassion, driven by an intuitive need to uplift others and help them find the best in themselves. If I could characterize any legacy for our university, it is that we graduate students who dedicate themselves to helping others.

Alamosa and the San Luis Valley have become my home. When I accepted the role as president of Adams State University, I had no idea the profound impact that this place would have on me, and the admiration that I would come to feel for

the people here. This valley is appealing. From its stunning backdrop, to the wonderful people of our community, once you've been here, the place stays in your heart.

Some of the smartest, most noble and giving people I have ever known choose to call the San Luis Valley home. We are surrounded by goodness in this community and often feel comfortably insulated from the chaos and heartache affecting so much of the world right now.

This has been a difficult year. Violence, whether political, emotional or physical, seems common, and it's hard not to feel impacted by the fear and sadness it causes.

At Adams State, we pride ourselves on serving a diverse student population and value the diversity of our faculty and staff. We are part of an inclusive and united community. We are accepting of who each person is, and who each person is here to become.

SEE INTIMIDATION, 4B

CHIEFTAIN PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/ANN BOYDEN



PUEBLO COUNTY

Understand budget before criticizing it



EMILY PRICE
Guest columnist

Budget season is upon us, and Pueblo County, as well as every community within

Will insurance costs remain constant? What's the chance of catastrophic fires or floods or blizzards? Is any equipment reaching the end of its useful service, such as fire trucks, police vehicles, road graders or dump trucks? Will the price of crushed rock for road repairs continue to double or triple each year? Will the walls of the jail finally just crumble down on

amount of taxes paid and the services received. No matter how many public meetings are held or how many copies of the proposed budget are made available, there still exists a common belief that the county government has some secret source of unlimited funds that they are refusing to use for the welfare of county residents. And each individual taxpayer seems to

dedicated to road repairs, then it seems only fair that we stop complaining about the condition of our roads. If we vote no on a mill levy to provide upgraded computer systems and expanded curriculum enhancements for our schools, then we



Tell it to the Chieftain

Yes to stadium

The approval of Question 1A is a good sign for Pueblo's future. One project in particular that stands out for pride and vision is that of a Downtown baseball stadium. This is a well-thought idea whose time has come.

Mistaking this plan as an intended copy of LoDo in Denver would be an error. Many better-matched examples of great stadiums anchoring their cities' downtowns exist.

Oklahoma City's Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark is their brickwork district's keystone, preserving architecture and encouraging foot traffic and thriving business. Des Moines, Iowa's Principal Park links to downtown across a river bridge further away than Pueblo would need, and still has similar local impact. Look from above at the stadiums played by the Tulsa Drillers or the T-Bones of Kansas City,

Kan., and you'll see commercial development and land value radiating outward like the wheel around the ballpark hub.

Those who don't follow the game might not realize that core ballpark traffic lasts much more than a few summer days. Seasons in professional baseball start as early as April and many last into September, inevitably with scores of home games, not handfals.

Further, a well-designed ballpark has utility and appeal far beyond the season. Certainly such facilities offer more opportunity for community use and businesses' customer traffic than residential developments alone, which even if filled — a big if — don't serve as an attraction to draw in people from other neighborhoods, towns and cities.

Off-season public events can happen at ballparks, but

not at condos.

Pueblo, play ball!
Demian Ryder
Swink

PS: I must agree with the letter writer who questioned why you choose to publish anonymous commentary online, when you practice the respectable journalist standard of requiring identification for printed letters?

I mean this as friendly criticism, not trying to tell you your jobs of course, but that doesn't seem right to me, either. If you decide to change this practice in the future, I will be among those applauding your support for a better internet.

Still a recession

With Pueblo's unemployment rate at 4.5 percent, one might get the impression that the Great Recession is over.

This may be news for some Pueblo neighborhood ar-

eas, particularly on the East Side and in Bessemer, where census data shows unemployment rates, as averaged over the 2010 to 2014 time frame, running in excess of 15 percent, and in some cases, over 25 percent.

Unfortunately, data more current than 2014 are not available for these small areas. Despite this, one thing seems clear. These neighborhoods cannot continue to be viable when one in four is not working.

One's sense of self-worth and usefulness to society is destroyed by being unemployed. Is it any wonder that Pueblo has a problem with gang activity? I can only conclude that many of Pueblo's unemployed are only able to make ends meet by living with relatives or receiving Supplemental Security Income, or other sources of public assistance income.

Indeed, the latter seems

likely, as Pueblo ranks 33rd out of 381 U.S. metro areas in the percentage of households which receive SSI. Thinking about present-day Pueblo as I perceive it, compared to my childhood memories of it, there seemed to be a sense of hope that by working reasonably hard, one's life could be improved.

Certainly the Cold War with its prospect of nuclear annihilation was a constant terror, but a feeling of optimism and belief that America could do anything, even land on the moon, seemed to outweigh the sense of despair.

I don't sense that many young people today believe that their efforts will be rewarded. How can they, when they work at low-paying jobs, if they work at all, that offer no sense of personal fulfillment, no possibility of future advancement?

Don Vest
Pueblo

INTIMIDATION/from page 1B

This is a safe place.

I recognize that for women, minorities and the LGBTQ community, fear is very real. On this campus, we will not tolerate any kind of intimidation. For nearly 100

years, Adams State has stood as an institution committed to providing a safe haven for learning, growing and expanding. Here, you are safe.

Gov. John Hickenlooper was on campus last

month. He was bold in announcing, "If anybody is going to go house to house, start rounding up people for mass deportation, it is not going to happen in Colorado."

I will take that state-

ment one step further and say that we will not allow that to happen on our campus or in our valley.

I am asking one thing of you, for our university, our community and our

world: Find the courage to be kind. Now is the time for us to be united and continue standing strong in the face of fear and hate.

At Adams State, we are committed to being

a safe space in the San Luis Valley and for all of Colorado.

Beverlee J. McClure,
Ph.D. is president of Adams State University in Alamosa.

BUDGET/from page 1B

like to start? Shall we take money from the DA's budget and use it for road repairs? Then how many more months will people have to sit in our substandard jail awaiting adjudication? And how much will that increase the expenses at the jail?

"Well, then take it from county employee

salaries," you counter. OK, we already are struggling to get our county employee salaries up closer to the market rate. If we abandon that effort, more employees will leave us for higher-paying jobs in private business; we will incur far higher recruiting and training expenses; and prob-

ably suffer a downturn in productivity due to inadequate staffing.

The bottom line here is, as always, education. Citizen taxpayers have a right, and a responsibility, to study their local government's budget to detect waste and call it to the public's attention. But first you must understand

enough about the expenses of government to be able to accurately recognize waste. For instance, you shouldn't criticize the amount allocated for road repairs if you're not aware that the cost in today's market to pave 1 mile of road is \$350,000.

Of course, if you don't want to personally invest the amount of time and

effort necessary to become a budget expert, a road construction expert and a human resources expert, you could just have faith in the intelligence and judgment of the officials you have elected to represent you. And if at the end of their terms you decide your faith was misplaced, there's

a simple solution ... don't vote for them again.

Emily Price is retired from two careers — insurance executive and entertainment venue senior management. She now spends her time as a community activist and a volunteer champion of social and political causes in Pueblo County.