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South versus North - One Nevada?

In my travels to Las Vegas, I hear an increasing murmur of discontent and grumblings in the "South" that they are not getting their "fair share" of the state's resources - Given that they "own" 77 percent of the state's population. It is unfortunate that the "us versus them" attitude is actually getting worse due to the recent Tesla announcement. Why is this bad and what can we do about it?

This "north versus south" - "city versus rural" - "rich versus poor" - "we versus them" attitude has played out in some form for centuries. It is the reason for most of mankind's wars and is often based on greed, mistrust or the competition for limited resources. In short, it is negative energy, often providing a convenient excuse for a shortfall or a short coming. It can also provide the rationale to do something that is not right. Has anyone heard the saying, "A house divided against itself cannot stand?"

Then there is the argument that we are 77 percent of the population, so we should get 77 percent of the state's resources. Really? I am amazed that educated people actually quote this argument. Why does every state in the Nation have two U.S. Senators, regardless of size? Clearly the Founding Fathers understood the fallacy of this argument. Can you imagine if the interstate highway system was built and funded based solely on the population of each state? This population based argument is based on a "win - lose" mentality and often results in "lose - lose" results. I can only hope that Nevada, as a state, can rise above this petty and counter-productive thinking and move to a "One Nevada" approach.

For those locked into the "fair share" paradigm, have you heard of this thing called a "global economy"? In the world of economic development, we know that our competition for the quality jobs we seek is not only within the state of Nevada, nor in the U.S., it is global. The strength associated with team work and diversity is what will enable our state to compete as a team, globally. It is hard for some to realize, but we are on the same team, in the same "house" or part of the same family. It is our success as a team that will enable us to offer our kids and grand-kids an even better place to live, work and play.

So what can we do as Northern Nevadan's to help the South see that we are on the same team, one Nevada?

First, be aware of this perception by many in the south that the north has been unfair in the past. They can recite many examples of the north running rough shod over the south and, to be honest, they may have a point. We must acknowledge that there was likely, well intended, but parochial behavior in the past. However, going forward, we must work together as one team, one Nevada.

Second, promote and support solutions to issues that work for the entire state. Look for opportunities to understand the needs and perceptions of the rest of the state so that win-win solutions are presented and supported. The "zero sum" game, where if you win, I lose and vice versa, does not focus our energy and resources on how to compete as a team, growing the state's economy and adding resources to everyone's benefit.

Finally, don't be a part of the north versus south fight. The success of the state as a whole is what will enable Nevada to compete globally in the years ahead. We are on the same team. Be proud of the many strengths and successes in the south, celebrate the Nevada family. Let's stop looking back and set the example going forward. We owe that to the many generations of Nevadan's that will follow us in the years ahead.