

## Letters to the Editor (3/5/2010)

Who prioritizes this stuff?

Dear Editor:

The front page of the *AFN* on Feb. 3, 2010: Value engineering cuts cost of South Mountain Freeway from \$2.5 to \$1.9 billion. But the profit motive is alive and well – same page also has laying off firefighters and police officers due to budget shortfall.

Maybe if we laid off a few more cops and firemen we could donate to a fund to keep 10 lanes instead of cutting back to a measly eight. Or maybe even squeeze in an extra couple. How about 12? Or 14? In each direction?

I'm pretty sure I voted for somebody down at The Bureau of First Things First to wrestle with such painful priorities. Or maybe it was The Department of Eggs in Baskets? Or is the explanation for these Decisions From Mars simply that those are all different dollars managed by different agencies with different priorities at different levels of left- and right-handed awareness.

Maybe what we need is a Department of Homeland Priorities. Meanwhile, so much for government as advocate – so much for government as adversary.

N. I., Ahwatukee

Tom 3/20/10 1:36 PM

**Comment:** The editor (not the writer, N.I.), writes the headline to summarize the main point of the writer.

Tom 3/20/10 1:39 PM

**Comment:** The writer cynically says the "profit motive" is alive and well—the value engineering method may save money, but it won't hurt profits. Then the writer points out the apparent irony that laying off firefighters and police will also save money.

Tom 3/20/10 1:41 PM

**Comment:** Here the writer is taking his cynicism to an extreme by satirically suggesting we cut even more public servants (which he really doesn't think is a good idea) in order to fund even more highway lanes.

Tom 3/20/10 1:42 PM

**Comment:** The writer is having fun by renaming decision-making government agencies in a way that suggests that these agencies are unrealistic if not irresponsible and incompetent.

Tom 3/20/10 1:45 PM

**Comment:** An unclear attempt at irony which suggests that, instead of government being there to help us, it is hurting us.

Tom 3/20/10 1:43 PM

**Comment:** A play on the words of the most recent federal addition to government agencies. He suggests by this that our funding priorities are all wrong.

Tom 3/20/10 1:49 PM

**Comment:** The writer expresses his cynical opinion that government priorities are wrong in a humorous but pointed way. Obviously, he values the funding of fire and police over highway expansion in these tough economic times. He really offers no evidence for his value preferences, but probably doesn't care to.

It is almost pointless to criticize him for ambiguous terms, as his argument is really only a "poke in the eye" of government.