

Former Centennial lawmaker repudiates assertions about city

As a former councilman for the city of Centennial from Ward I, I feel compelled to write this letter. I have to correct the incorrect information being spread by one of the candidates for city council for Ward I.

Candidate Ron Phelps has made inaccurate statements, several times, about city finances and the city budget that are detrimental to the city, and the city council. When candidate Phelps says the city finances are "in trouble" he is very incorrect. Since the sales adjustment in 2003, the finances for our city are the strongest ever in the six-year history. The city council has planned the budget every year with great diligence, complete openness with necessary public hearings and with great success. It is posted on the city's Web site for review.

Secondly, candidate Phelps has denigrated councils past and present by repeatedly insinuating that the city council has not worked well for the city and that council members are not doing the jobs they were elected to do. As one of the original council members for this city, and having served two terms, I take particular objection to this accusation.

Candidate Phelps need only take notice of the recent scientific

survey conducted for the city by Hill Research Consultants to set him straight on the job performance of city councils past and present. "Basic trust in the competence of city leadership continues" and "satisfaction with life in Centennial and local governance remains high" are two of the very interesting quotes from the survey. This survey completely repudiates candidate Phelps' assertions. It is being posted on the city's Web site for all to review.

Thirdly, and most egregious of the statements made by Phelps, is that Centennial is "deficit spending." The budgets for each year have been planned with public review, have gone through the normal budgetary process with council planning, oversight, input and approval. Every budget this city has ever had was balanced. They have to be balanced by state law. If the city were deficit spending (spending more money than we have) the state treasurer and state auditor would remove the city council and take over control and operation of the city. Since that has not occurred, the city is not deficit spending.

I do not know candidate Phelps' motives for making these incorrect and detrimental statements that present a negative

image of the city and cause great concern to the citizens he hopes to serve. If the statements were made for political gain and personal ambition then that is abhorrent to the principles of character needed for service to his city.

If these incorrect statements on those three very basic aspects of city government, were made from lack of experience, knowledge, or understanding of the city, the city council or the citizens, then candidate Phelps needs to educate himself before he tries to run the city. With the myriad of tasks facing the next council, I do not think we can afford the steep learning curve that would apparently be required for candidate Phelps.

Regardless of the motive, incorrect statements on such basic issues by candidate Phelps, not only hurt the city, but indicate he is seriously lacking the leadership experience, the leadership experiences, knowledge of the city, knowledge of city government and city finances needed for city council service.

George Gatseos II
Centennial

Editor's note: Centennial Ward I Candidate Ron Phelps announced his withdrawal from the race on Oct. 13.