

## Dangers of Being Shortsighted

### Long-Term Growth & Prosperity of Our Nation is in the Balance

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "Taxes are paid in the sweat of every man who labors." From small communities to the federal government, officials are learning that when the income of the electorate falls, so do tax revenues. The knee-jerk reaction is to raise taxes to make up the difference, rather than cut spending. However, the long-term vision of our elected officials (and isn't "long-term vision" the reason we elected them) should be to get the economy moving, help the populace get back on their feet, and the tax revenues will take care of itself.

When the Great Depression hit, it was ultimately government-backed public works projects, not welfare, which got the country moving. Perhaps the largest construction project ever attempted in this country was Hoover Dam. When the Colorado River overflowed its banks in 1905, it destroyed towns, farmland, and ultimately formed the Salton Sea. With 376 square miles of surface area, the Salton Sea is still the largest lake in California. For years, there was talk of building a dam to prevent another disaster. Later, the idea of harnessing the river for electrical power came into play.

It wasn't until the Great Depression that the federal government funded the project. This project put thousands of people back to work and controlled the periodic flooding of the Colorado River. But that's not all the project accomplished. The dam supplies water and electricity to the people of Arizona, California, and Nevada, making the areas prosperous. Las Vegas would not exist today, along with its tourism industry and the millions of tax dollars it generates, if it were not for Hoover dam. This aspect of the project was not foreseen in the 1930s.

When President Kennedy announced his plan to put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s, he was criticized for spending millions when

the money could be used to feed the less fortunate. The money for the space program wasn't poured down a rat-hole, instead it created products that didn't exist, put thousands of people to work, who then bought homes, consumer goods, and paid taxes. What wasn't foreseen at the time was the technological fallout from the space program. The world we know today would not exist if it were not for the space program of the early 1960s.

Everything we use today, from the computer I'm using right now, to cell phones, to communications satellites, to pace makers, all use microchips... a direct result of the space program. The quest to reduce weight in spacecraft by making electronic components lighter, faster, and produce less heat, has spilled over into every aspect of our lives... and kept millions of people employed in industries that didn't exist 50 years ago. And its not just electronics; clothing, medicines, Velcro, Kevlar vests, solar panels, and many of the construction plastics and adhesives you use today can trace their roots to the space program of the 1960s.

Where would we be today if the politicians of that time had been shortsighted and listened to the critics? Where would we be now if, instead of investing this money in research, they had doled it out to the unfortunate few? I'm not saying that some people don't need financial help, but in the long-term our money needs to be invested in our future.

The construction industry is directly related to government's investment in the future of its citizens and creating an atmosphere that's conducive to a free market. In recent years, long-term projects involving space, moon and Mars explorations, and military research have been eliminated. Funding has been cut for medical research and higher education. These line items are not a drain on the budget, but investments in our future. I feel that our current batch of politicians are being shortsighted, and not looking at the future financial health of our people or our nation.

Marc Dodson  
editor & publisher

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