

Hello,

I have lived in Robinson, pop. ~35, for more than 15 years, have served as mayor, rural Fire Dept member, a Lions member, and currently hold a City Council seat. The establishment of a Rural Community Endowment Fund by the state Legislature will be a desperately needed investment to support small rural towns, which feel, correctly or incorrectly, generally overlooked in favor of large towns and major cities.

Every small town has its' own story in regards to needs for financial investments. Robinson's story consists of a very strong need for renovation of our historic Robinson Hall, which in its useful days functioned as a place for meetings, family gatherings, weddings, events, and even a Senior Center. Currently, the only events held at our current city hall (former grade school) are monthly city council meetings and a single Lions event, which are forced to meet in a cold, expensive to heat, sterile, school gymnasium.

Other needs are similar to any small town... aging water and sewer infrastructure, pulverized roads, dangerous abandon structures, lack of affordable single-family housing to increase our tax base, and an ever-shrinking population who is solely responsible for funding the city's needs.

Maintenance and revitalization currently falls on a smaller and smaller tax base in our community. Our city council can't (for obvious reasons) apply for matching grants, and the time involved for the few grants available that aren't matching, require so much time as to not be possible for a council member. Every fall, we're looking at our remaining funds on one screen, and checking the long-term winter forecast on another, to see if we'll go broke paying to have snow cleared so our residents can get to work or buy goods... in other towns... because we can't afford needed improvements to attract new businesses... and on and on.

Small towns are the Heart and Soul of North Dakota. Please, help us help ourselves, by establishing and funding this important and desperately needed resource.

Respectfully,
Bill Bender, Robinson