

# President's Message

## Ted Trakas

Just a few items of interest this month.

I have completed an economic analysis of the digital billboard ordinance that San Antonio City Council passed on December 6, 2007.

According to my figures, the ordinance will allow billboard companies to exchange old passive signs for new digital ones and increase their gross revenues by factors up to 38-to-1. Obviously, our mayor and councilpersons, including our own D8 councilwoman Diane Cibrian, did not have the benefit of a similar analysis before they negotiated and passed their ordinance, and then declared it a “good deal for the city.” *(I'm sorry. Call me cynical if you must, but I have to think the billboard people had a good, hardy, private laugh on that one.)*

In performing research for the analysis, I found that the city council in Anaheim, CA was not so ill prepared when they voted on a similar proposition. Under the leadership of their mayor, Anaheim demanded industry bids against a Request for Proposal. Clear Channel, the primary billboard company in San Antonio, bid a proposal that had 9 times fewer digital billboards than what San Antonio allows (aka ‘gives away’) in its ordinance. And oh, by the way, Anaheim rejected all bids because they were not sufficiently in the public interest and compromised scenic protections already in place! *(Imagine that!!)*

Unfortunately, my analysis is too long to reprint in this newsletter because of its lengthy appendices, so you may ask how you can see it and judge its validity for yourself. Not to worry. I have posted a full electronic copy on our VJ web site, at [www.vjni.org](http://www.vjni.org). *[And I am sorry that I gave you a wrong (.com) address in the last newsletter.]*

So please visit our web site for this information, under the ‘Issues’ link, and then let city council know if you think the San Antonio ordinance was a “good deal for the city.” D8 Councilwoman Cibrian can be reached at [district8@sanantonio.gov](mailto:district8@sanantonio.gov) and 207-7086

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