

Two minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

The Truth be Told

A front page article in the Herald News the other day was of interest. It was a story titled “*Five Myths Told by Illinois Politicians.*” I believe the paper was being magnanimous in respect to the whole myth thing. The fact that a politician is capable of even telling the truth is something mythical to me. Or is that mystical? Either way, the article centered on “Five Myths.” They were all of interest, but only two will be discussed as they apply to public sector work and teachers, as you will see.

The first myth—the lottery was supposed to pay for education. How many times have you thought that yourself, or heard someone ask that very question? Millions of lottery money, all going to schools as people all over Illinois pour their hard earned cash into quick-picks hoping that all their dreams come true. Vote for Pedro! (A line in the movie *Napoleon Dynamite*, for those of you who refuse to enter Geekville for a couple of hours.)

Anyway, the lottery, beginning in 1974, earmarked the money earned here for education in 1985. The law required all lottery profits to go to education; kindergarten through our formative high school years, or is that the other way around?

The kicker here is that according to the article, there isn’t any requirement for lottery money to be on top of what money is already in the education/school fund. What the politicians did not and do not tell you is that as the lottery purchase and winnings come in, it frees up the other money already in this pile of state funds (taxes) to spend elsewhere. Neat trick, huh? I guess they just take the money off the bottom of the pile and use it for other stuff. Don’t you wish you could do that?

How much of this dough actually goes to education is up to the annual “whims of state lawmakers and the governor.” The education budget is enormous, even with lottery money, but I would hazard to guess that many of us thought the lottery was going to fix education problems. Obviously nothing can be further from the truth, as regards the “myth” of lottery and education.

The second myth I’d like to comment on is gas taxes. They are supposed to pay for road construction. The article states that this one has more truth than #1, but there are some surprises. This money is supposed to be utilized for road and bridge work. However, the money can be been diverted to other expenditures, like workers comp and insurance costs for the Department of Transportation.

And gas tax revenue also pays, to some extent, for the state police and secretary of state expenses under the guise that these expenditures are road related. Saay what? Well, I guess us coppers do occupy the roadways.

Would this myth make it in the O'Reilly Factor's *No Spin Zone*? I think not. BS is the true credo of many politicians. That and divert our money to where they want to sneak it, spend it, or hide it.

Check out the article if you can for the other lies, I mean myths. It is the **Daily Herald** April 15, 2009 edition, front page. A good piece of writing. I wish they would do more of this type of expose, especially in our new era of "you got any spare change?" Too bad they won't focus on Du Page County and their myths, but that's another story...

Now the point here is this; remember to use these issues when your village idiots, no I mean officials, come to you threatening layoffs if you don't give them concessions.

Tell them about the lottery myth and then the gas tax myth. Maybe they can divert that revenue where there is a local gas tax, or federal gas tax reimbursements or lottery purchases to keep your jobs. See how they will spin *that!*

Let's see how the Myth Makers handle that one.

Stay safe.

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