

About the City  
By  
Councilman Kingery

I want to talk about the “good old boy” system in this article. Probably all of us have heard about the “good old boy” and we have our own opinions about whether it is real or not, and how we feel about the “good old boy” method of operation. My definition might be something like this. “If you are good to me I will reward you for it.” Now that in itself is not bad, all of us prefer being around, and working with, people that are good to us. Being good to someone is better than the alternative and we would expect the results to be better. So what could be wrong with the “good old boy” method?

When the “good old boy” rewards more than is appropriate, or in inappropriate situations, then we need to take a second look. The “good old boy” shows up in many ways, but it often has a common theme. Someone in a privileged position benefits while those that don’t have the privileged position fail to receive the benefit, or worse yet they “pay for the benefit” received by the privileged. What the “good old boy” method lacks consistently is fairness for everyone.

When I started serving on the City Council it soon became obvious that the “good old boy” was well and active in the City of Douglas. Being a friend, or being nice, to the right people had helped some people get to “high positions” and receive “high salaries”. Now being in a high position and receiving a high salary isn’t bad in itself. If you are good at your job and do a good job, that benefits all of the people living in Douglas. If you are not good at your job, or are not doing a good job, that means all of the people in Douglas are paying more than they should and an important job is not being done correctly. Not doing a job correctly often leads to unnecessary expenses, so the people of Douglas pay for expenses that should have never been there.

When the “good old boy” is active the privileged few tend to make decisions that benefit themselves. We see this all the time on the national level, where Senators and Representatives aren’t held to the same standards as the rest of us. They get to make the rules! You help me and I will help you is the way the “good old boys” function. But it isn’t just at the national level, it is right here in our town and at most of the places where we work. The people at the “top” have more power than the people lower down on the scale. The

people at the “top” have more knowledge about how things function on the larger scale, and they have more information at their finger tips. They are the ones capable of making the important decisions. They are also the ones who have more responsibility to make “good” decisions.

So how can we break away from the “good old boy” methods? Integrity and Ethics! We must have people with integrity and high ethics in the decision making positions. The leaders must keep the “good of the company/community” as their goal as they make decisions. They must hire good people and pay them appropriately so that the important work gets done. When they promote someone because they are “loyal” or “a good friend” instead of a good employee, they are making a poor decision. This is true all the way up and down the “chain of command”. Leaders at all levels must do their jobs well to assure the employees working for them are the best they can be. That means good training, good support with resources, and good working conditions in general. But it also means proper supervision so that employees know what is expected and that the employees meet the expectations. It also means that where ever you fit in you take responsibility to do your best in whatever your job is. So we come back to “integrity and ethics” for everyone! We all must work together for the benefit of all. Do your job to the best of your ability. Report problems to your supervisor when you believe things are not being done correctly. Set an example to your fellow employees. Stand for “what is right” not “what is good for you”.

The City Council is trying very hard to correct “good old boy” problems within the city of Douglas. We are fortunate to have a city administrator who is doing his best to help in this process. The Council is trying to do what is best for your city and your community. If it appears that we are “picking on you” please look at what is best for the community, not just what is best for you. That may be why it appears we are standing in your way. It is our responsibility to do what is best for the community. We will make mistakes because we are not perfect, but we will continue to do our best. We will do our best to fix mistakes as soon as we are aware of them. We continue to need your feedback so that we can be aware of how things are going. Thank you.

Oh yes, the Police Department and the Sheriff’s Office both want us to remind you; please don’t leave your keys in your vehicle! There have been

a number of vehicle thefts recently where the keys were right there in the ignition! Being a “good old boy” to the thief will not reward you!