

*This "My View" editorial was originally printed in the Birmingham News Aug.23, 2009. It has been reprinted here with permission.*

I find it hard to believe that during a time of economic turmoil, residents of McCalla are fighting the Norfolk Southern railroad hub, something that would bring economic growth and jobs to the area. I have friends who work for Norfolk Southern, and I know how environmentally minded the company is.

Did people protest the new Colonial Tannehill Promenade shopping center in McCalla because it would bring traffic to the area and destroy one of our beautiful, green pastures? No. The shopping center created countless jobs and eliminated the 20-minute drive we used to make just to buy groceries.

What about when the Jefferson Metro Industrial Park was built? Did residents protest the many trucks the park brought to the area and the "constant 24-hour lighting" that the Web site of opponents of the railroad hub ([www.nohub4mccalla.com](http://www.nohub4mccalla.com)) claims would also come with this "neighborhood disturbance?" No.

Maybe the opponents should try to decide what side of our beautiful green pasture they want to chew on.

Don't get me wrong. I love rolling hills and quiet nights. But when a community wants to expand, what gives one the right to say which companies and facilities can come to the area?

Especially in this time of slow business and the continued trend of financial shrinkage, why would one not want something that could bring millions of dollars in investment to McCalla?

As I understand, one of Birmingham's biggest growth mechanisms was the railroad. Well, besides the steel industry. (Oh wait, did I just say industry?)

And, if I'm not mistaken, a prosperous town or city is bright and does have a decent amount of noise. I'm pretty sure you can't hear a pin drop in McCalla anyway. The community of McCalla is one of the fastest-growing residential areas in central Alabama.

The group No Hub 4 McCalla knows McCalla is the fastest-growing community in Jefferson County. I don't understand how the group believes a facility like this "would seriously degrade the community's standard of living and reduce property values because of a) noise of trains and moving containers, b) 24-hour lighting and c) smoke from continuous concentrated railroad engine and truck operations," when it would only in reality prosper the community.

Norfolk Southern has said it knows how negatively people can feel about something like this in their community, and the company plans extensively because of that.

Every day, hazardous materials roll along the same track the facility would be attached to (right behind McAdory Elementary School, which, by the way, is too big for its building and will not be there much longer; Jefferson County school officials might have to build a new elementary school soon on a different site). At the north end of that track line, those same hazardous materials rumble right past my alma matter, McAdory High School. Every single day.

The same people who call themselves No Hub 4 McCalla also want their community to grow and become successful -- one that works harmoniously with residents, business and industry. I think they have a hard time with the word industry.

In order for a community to succeed, it must grow. The people of McCalla seem to like to pick and choose their aspects of growth.

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