

Statehood for Kiski

by
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Almost everyone knows that Puerto Rico might eventually be admitted as a state, but did you know there is a chance that Quebec will secede from Canada and the remaining provinces could ask to be admitted to the United States? Before the addition of states becomes trendy, the Kiski Valley ought to beat everyone else to the punch. We should lay the ground work today to become the 51st state in the Union.

The idea to become a state may not be as far-fetched as it sounds. There is already precedent set by our neighboring state, West Virginia. It broke off from Virginia and was officially made a separate state in 1863. Article IV, Section 3 of the United States Constitution states "New states may be admitted by the Congress into this union; but no new states shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other state....without the consent of the legislature of the states concerned as well as Congress".

We should be able to get the consent of our state legislature without any problem. The reason is obvious. Pennsylvania doesn't want us. Look at the atrocious Apollo bridge, omission to remedy abandoned coal mines and industrial sites, and the failure to rejuvenate the Kiski River.

But the real kicker is the recent passage of the gas tax. It came and went with hardly a whimper in the Kiski Valley. Some of us may have grumbled to ourselves for a few moments but most of us hardly noticed. We have grown accustomed to tax increases that benefit everyone but us.

Reality was that lawmakers cast their vote in favor of the gas tax in exchange for promised road projects in their respective districts. There is nothing wrong with that. It's just the way things have been and always will be in Harrisburg. Representative Joe Petrarca did not vote for the gas tax because no one wanted his vote. His asking price was too high. His price was safety for our area. His price was economic opportunity for our area. His price was the Kiski Valley Expressway.

Guess what? It's never going to happen. No one in Pennsylvania gives a hoot about the Kiski Valley Expressway because they don't give a hoot about the Kiski Valley. Clearly we have a strong case of taxation without representation.

Since Pennsylvania doesn't want us, passage by our legislature should be a breeze. Congress's approval will be more difficult however. The major impediment will be where to place the 51st star on the flag. That's why if we time our admission with the entrance of Puerto Rico and/or the Canadian provinces hardly anyone will notice and we can go in with an even number of stars.

I am convinced that our only chance to substantially improve is to become a state. The benefits we will enjoy with statehood would be many. First, we would have direct representation in Congress, two Senators and one Congressman. We would know them by name. They would live up the street.

Second, we would likely qualify for federal highway funding in this area. The Kiski Valley Expressway, safety and economic opportunity would come to fruition. Third, our state income taxes would benefit only our state. We could actually watch our tax dollars work for us instead of everybody else. Fourth, we could make our state bird the endangered albino, flightless turkey. Many new federal jobs would be created preserving this bird.

Finally, the state of Kiski would have an unforeseen secret weapon. At a recent Apollo Area Economic Development Council meeting it was reported by a local gadfly that Susquatch resides in our area. Think of the tourism dollars that would roll in if we erected a state monument to Susquatch along the banks of the Kiski River. But even better, imagine the federal dollars that will roll in to preserve his natural habitat. The Apollo bridge would be immediately repaired. The Kiski River would be made clean and the abandoned mines and industrial sites would be cured.

The state of Kiski could be the mouse that roared.



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