

## **Fort Morgan Times 09/30/2011, Page 4**

### **Times editorial**

#### **People want to know about Morgan County**

People want to know how Morgan County and in particular Fort Morgan do it.

Parts of it are the local need, opportunities, practicality and personality.

Last week, a delegation from the island nation of Cyprus came to ask the questions again. How do you handle an influx of immigrants? How do you deal with troubled youth? How do you handle the economic impact? How do you get along so well?

This was not the first time another nation sent representatives to ask. Danish reps came last year. And agencies and organizations across the U.S. ask, too.

Obviously, Morgan County is not some utopia, but compared to some places in the world and the U.S., it seems head and shoulders above.

In part, that is because we have needs and opportunities different than other places.

Many immigrants — though scarcely all — are uneducated by American standards and struggle with English. That makes finding jobs lucrative enough to become self-sufficient difficult.

Morgan County is unique in some ways by having jobs immigrants want and few others do. Agricultural production is backbreaking, dirty work, whether in fields, livestock operations, dairies or factories. Producers are usually looking for people willing to shoulder those jobs.

This means there is a need and a place for immigrants.

Of course, that does put some strain on what has sometimes been a homogenous population here. Newcomers present challenges as well as solutions as they learn to live among old-timers.

Agencies such as schools, the justice system and health care have responded in practical ways. Instead of beating their heads and wailing about difficulties, they have moved to reach out to immigrants. That is important because they are not going away and we need them.

Lastly, the character of our county shows.

Visitors and newcomers see our residents as friendly and open-hearted. They feel less separated than in some big cities, thus struggle less. Not everyone jumps to welcome those they see as unimaginably different, but the vast majority of residents are open to good people of all kinds.

This combination may not be repeatable in areas where there is little employment for those with

few skills, closed hearts and wish it would all go away.

But it is nice to set a standard for the world and nation, and nice to know we have such good people among us willing to make it all work.

*The views expressed in The Times editorial are independent from the news coverage, offering our opinion and additional commentary on items of public interest. The editor can be reached at [editor@fmtimes.com](mailto:editor@fmtimes.com).*

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