

The November 25th issue of Coeur d'Alene Press featured a "My Turn" column written by representative elect Kathy Sims. In her article she falsely accuses the NIC Board for not following a legal process in the acquisition of the education corridor. Her allegation that the NIC Board of Trustees acted in violation of the constitution is misleading, false, and grounded on a distortion of the facts.

- First, Ms. Sims accuses Trustee Judy Meyer of a conflict of interest. She states, "The appraiser is a business partner with an NIC Board member who also sits on the Board of Mountain West Bank."
- FACT: Judy Meyer does not sit on the Board at Mountain West Bank, nor is she a business partner with Ed Morris who appraised the mill site in 2008. Moreover, this fact has been publicly stated many times.
- Second, Ms. Sims accuses the NIC Foundation Board members, the NIC Board of Trustees, the Mayor and City Council, The Presidents and administration of University of Idaho and Lewis Clark State College as being part of an elaborate scheme to defraud taxpayers.
- FACT: The Education Corridor represents the greatest step forward, to date, in bringing the opportunity for higher education to North Idaho taxpayers. To allege that highly reputable officials would put their name, reputation, and energy into an illegal endeavor is farfetched and defamatory.
- Ms. Sims states "The current NIC Board of Trustees has made great plans but in their haste to see their dreams fulfilled, they seem to have forgotten a pending lawsuit that challenges the constitutionality of their actions."
- FACT: The lawsuit she refers to has resulted in a summary judgment in favor of NIC. The court ruled the lease agreement to be legal. It is the same mechanism many foundations use in Idaho. The exact process was used in 1997 by the NIC Foundation to acquire the Work Force Training Center in Post Falls. The plaintiffs have chosen to appeal the decision to the Idaho Supreme Court.
- Ms. Sims also questions the NIC Board's authority in appropriating funds for the Ed. Corridor. She states "The exorbitant price they paid for the land purchase wasn't their money."
- FACT: As Ms. Sims herself will learn, in a democracy officials are elected to lead and to make fiscal decisions that have a far-reaching positive impact on the citizens who elect them. Furthermore, as Ms. Sims will learn, the revenue structure of community colleges differs from that of the university system. Community colleges are supported not only by state and local tax revenue but also by student tuition and fees. The NIC Board recently received an A+ rating from auditors for a budget that is sound, fiscally conservative, responsive to the needs of our community, and open to the public for review.
- Ms. Sims states, "The network of developers behind this purchase has had the approval and support of the NIC Board every step of the way, so why didn't they just buy the land? This interesting Mill Site Money Mix apparently finds it much more profitable to avoid spending their own money--they would rather use yours."
- FACT: There are no developers involved in the purchase or planning of the mill site. The board would very much appreciate a disclosure of the basis for such an erroneous statement. It is blatantly false.
- Ms. Sims sums up her critical attack on the NIC Board by directing board members to analyze the recent election results for indications that "voters are becoming more informed all the time."
- Fact: A clear distinction was made in several candidate forums between the winners and losers of this election, in terms of their support for the Ed Corridor. That voters decisively elected Christie Wood and Ken Howard demonstrates not only how "informed" they are, but also their support for this historic project that will give citizens access to a wide range of higher education choices for generations to come.
- Ms. Sims states "We need an NIC Board we can trust to tell us the truth".

- **FACT:** We need a legislator who takes time to check her facts before falsely accusing honest hardworking public servants of subverting the public trust.

It is the NIC Board's hope that as a newly elected representative, Ms. Sims will take the time to study the facts supporting the development of the Ed Corridor instead of hearsay, especially before publishing it. Voters have a right to expect a representative to check her facts.

Most important, the North Idaho legislative delegation has a great deal to be proud of in North Idaho College. We hope Ms. Sims will visit the NIC campus and outreach centers and see for herself what student success looks like in academic achievement, in the accomplishments of our music, drama, journalism, athletic teams (Go Cards!), and our applied tech programs. NIC needs, and deserves, her support.

Christie Wood
North Idaho College Board of Trustees
Board Secretary