

# CALL & POST

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Wednesday, March 19, 2014

Editorial

## **Issue 7, we'll drink to that!**

One of the strongest points to be made in support of Issue 7, better known as the Sin Tax, is the makeover Cleveland's downtown area has undergone under the raising of the Gateway facilities.

The whole "Before Gateway/After Gateway imagery is vast.

Before the fruition of the Gateway project, East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and much of downtown was abandoned, dreary and looking more like the post-apocalyptic backdrop of the Will Smith's film "I am Legend."

We aren't who we say we are, we are who we show that we are!

In 1994 with the opening of then "Jacob's Field" and "Gund Arena," preceding life under the unseemly shadow of Cleveland's historical football franchise cutting the heart out of our city by packing up and going to Baltimore, a new public-private partnership rose from the ashes.

By all estimations, the initial Sin Tax/Gateway project was one of the best things to ever happen to Cleveland's economy, certainly in the post-Rockefeller era.

Quicken Loans Arena, Progressive Field and FirstEnergy Stadium has galvanized downtown Cleveland.

Thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue and an estimated 5 billion in overall economic impact on our county.

The renewal of this tax is imperative for the continuing growth of our city.

Let's be clear in understanding that this is not a tax increase. Issue 7 is a renewing the original "Sin Tax" of the '90s that placed a small tax on alcohol and cigarettes and pretty much transformed our economy for the better.

The renewal will continue to tax about 2 cents a beer, about a penny for a glass of wine and about 4 cents for a pack of cigarettes.

We are among a handful of cities that have “The Big 3” major league sports. This comes with a financial responsibility. The facilities that occupy the Browns, Indians and Cavaliers are owned by the people of Cuyahoga County. Yeah we know that you thought Dan Gilbert owned the building – nope!

The money from this will go to the upkeep of our major league status as a major league city.

Not a nickel from Issue 7 will go to the players nor the team owners.

The partnership thus far has been equitable for both sides. Right now the Sin Tax has been a perfect model for delivering our part of the responsibility but the life of the current tax is coming to a close and we are being asked to once again rise to the occasion.

The Call and Post is at the table with the people responsible for bringing this request back to the people.

Our concern in this matter is and has always been that the Black community share in the process and benefits of this very important undertaking.

We have thus far been assured that this is the case.

And as long as our community are respected participants, we continue to support this effort.

We stand with the passage of Issue 7.