

The Oldham Era

Opinion

Cell tower is needed in U.S. 42 area

by Julie Nelson Satterly

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There's a community friendly approach to change. And then, there's the approach that suggests change is coming — and people should deal with it.

Few people like to be treated in the latter manner. Especially residents in Oldham County, who are protective of their county's landscape and object to anything that might be too obtrusive.

So when a cell phone company applies for approval to build a tower near U.S. 42 without communicating with all nearby residents - whether notification is required by planning and zoning or not - it's not going to go over well. And when said cell phone company does not adequately pursue options to co-locate on existing structures before making its request, you can bet your best poker hand planners aren't going to approve it.

That's what happened last week when T-Mobile requested permission to build a cell tower on Liberty Lane in Goshen. The company took the change-is-coming-deal-with-it route, and was quickly and steadfastly denied.

Should T-Mobile representatives think they were denied simply because Oldham Countians resist change, they can look to a local organization seeking the same mission to learn a few lessons.

The truth is, cell phone coverage on U.S. 42 is terrible at best. There is a need for another tower. If you're a resident in this area and your home is on fire, odds are help could be delayed because calls cannot be made and firefighters have trouble communicating with others as they coordinate a response.

North Oldham Fire Department is attacking the problem as a safety issue. They too are seeking permission to build a communications tower, though officials have not yet filed an application with Oldham County Planning and Zoning. Instead, they're on a public education mission - communicating with residents through The Oldham Era, planning community meetings and taking the process one step at a time.

The primary function of the NOFD tower is to provide reliable communication between emergency responders in North Oldham and for Oldham County Central Dispatch, but the tower will also have space for cell phone carriers to co-locate.

We hope North Oldham Fire Department's proposal is met with consideration from

planners and residents, given the lengths members are going to demonstrate the need in the community.

Now is the time for the affected parties to work together toward a compromise to promote safety. A large, obtrusive tower isn't the most attractive thing to have in the neighborhood, no doubt. But if your family is faced with an emergency, you'll be glad you worked with a local agency to build it.

Odds are, firefighters and emergency crews will hear your call, be able to communicate with others and send help your direction.

The views in this editorial are endorsed by the six members of The Oldham Era's editorial board.