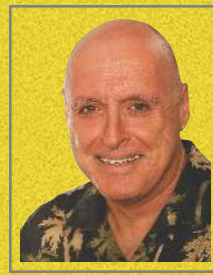


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1174 Empty Promises Can't Be Ignored

Question: What's the value of a promise in business today? How about politics? I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll dig into the topic of promises, next on The Extra Point.

With a nod to John Lennon, let's consider a few things.

Imagine we're an auto shop and we promise a customer that we're going to fix their vehicle. Instead, we charge them for the work but don't make the repair.

Imagine we own a restaurant and a diner orders a meal, asking for it to be cooked a certain way. We promise to do that, but then we decide they should have it another way, not the way they specified.

Imagine we run a small contracting company and we're hired by a large contractor to work on a military job. We see the plan and promise that we'll do the job on time, and within the budget. Instead, we go off the plan, do something else entirely different, creating a big problem that delays a project.

In each case, a promise was made based on the desire or requirement of the buyer. Each wanted or needed something done and the vendor agreed to do it that way. Then, they ignored their agreement, broke the promise, short-changing the customer in the process.

In business, there are repercussions for acting in such a manner. Unhappy customers, perhaps some bad publicity that loses future business, and maybe even legal action.

Yet, when politicians make promises, why are they not held to the same level of accountability? A politician can promise almost anything, give no details as to how they'll deliver on their promise, and get away with it.

Guam has a severe, basically out-of-control housing problem. While virtually everywhere in the rest of America is seeing the price of single-

family homes and rental units fall sharply, our prices continue to go the other way.

Affordable housing doesn't exist in Guam, and you have to lay this issue at the feet of elected representatives. Which elected representatives?

Well, consider that this is not a new problem, as media reports on growing housing troubles date back 15 or more years. Elected officials have stood by and watched as housing has become less and less affordable.

What if customers paid you for 15 or more years, and you didn't deliver for them? That's fantasy of course, because nobody in the private sector would buy from you for even a fraction of that time if you weren't providing results.

Yet, over that same 15+ years we've paid a few billion in taxes, and where are we? Here's your answer: no closer to solving the problem than we were 15 years ago. In fact, it's more likely we're further away from a solution.

I don't blame local politicians for the military driving rental prices higher by giving their members a large subsidy to live off-base.

I don't blame local politicians for the cost of building materials, shipping prices, and the federal government making it harder to bring workers to Guam who can build housing. All of these factors have also driven prices higher.

Where politicians have to step forward and accept responsibility is not aggressively going after any and every potential solution to change the direction of the situation.

There needs to be an affordable housing task force that survives administration changes, and is given the job to remove obstacles from the goal of building X-number of single-family units and apartments by a given date.

(Con't.)

Part of that is streamlining every aspect of permitting, cutting out red tape and delays. Part of that is to look at new technologies that have cut the cost of construction elsewhere.

Which technologies can work in our region? Can we obtain financing? Can we obtain insurance?

Maybe the answer will be some conventional structures, some 3D computer-printed units, some container homes, and I don't know what else.

What I do know is that promises have long been made and then ignored. That has caused an enormous problem that will only get worse before it gets better.

I call upon the two gubernatorial teams plus any legislative candidates to come up with a plan to turn this situation around. Not just a bunch of promises, but also details, and then doing something about it once you have the positional authority of the people to do so.

With a broken justice system, crime that's rampant, plus unsteady infrastructure, Guam is already leaning in the direction of being labeled a third-world destination. Stabilizing our housing market will be a big step in the right direction of positive change.

Somebody, sometime soon, has to make affordable housing an absolute priority, and make an absolute commitment to achieve it.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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