

## Debra Thompson

---

**From:** kathi riemer <riemer@hotmai.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 9:34 AM  
**To:** Assembly  
**Subject:** Hospital

Thank you for letting the Hospital Board share information about our need for a new hospital. I found this article on the KTOO website that emphasizes my point about how lack of local control can be damaging to the organization and the community.

<https://www.ktoo.org/2021/05/01/pointing-to-low-salmon-forecasts-trident-seafoods-to-keep-wrangell-plant-closed/>



### Pointing to low salmon forecasts, Trident Seafoods to keep Wrangell plant closed

One of Wrangell's two fish processors will remain closed for the second year in a row. Seattle-based Trident Seafoods cites a dismal salmon forecast for its decision. Chum and pink salmon ...

[www.ktoo.org](http://www.ktoo.org)

It's also important not to make the assumption that another organization will move in and take over our hospital. The PRS liability is a burden that organizations don't want.

The price tag of a new hospital is daunting, but the cost of not having a hospital in Petersburg is greater to the community. The hospital provides more than 100 jobs to local people, with many being professional positions. These are tax payers, property owners, people with children in school, members of our community. Health care is the fastest growing industry with job availability all over the country. If our hospital closes many if not all of the PMC professionals, will be forced to leave Petersburg to work. It's important to note that many of the employees of PMC have graduated from Petersburg High School and have continued to live in Petersburg and college graduates have come back to work and live in Petersburg. PMC offers scholarships to graduating seniors, an RN nursing program, and in addition, professional positions to local college graduates.

I'm like you, we are getting older, less hungry. We like status quo, and can't see the forest for the trees. However, I see a new hospital as an opportunity, not a burden. Our long-term care wing houses people from all over the region, not just Petersburg residents. Some of the hospital staff provide needed services to other communities. Home health is becoming more viable every year allowing people to stay home for their care. Dr. Hofstetter continues to add lines of service that help people in our community, around Southeast and Alaska.

Redding, California is a lovely community in Northern California, and it is a medical center hub for the region. The medical industry provides employment, and tax funds to the municipality that make it a really nice place to be. While Petersburg can't be Redding, we can expand the services we do well and bring people into our community and serve people around the state.

Camas, Washington is a town just east of Vancouver on the Columbia River. The town grew around the pulp mill and was a prosperous little town until the pulp business crashed. The Camas Assembly met the challenge and made their community appealing for other, completely different kinds of business. Tech companies moved in and cost of real estate increased, and property taxes along with it. Just this year United Precision Corp moved a plant from California to Camas and will build a huge set of manufacturing buildings to produce parts for Boeing, Space X, the US Navy and Lockheed Martin. With these new businesses come many new people, so more tax payers.

These are two examples I thought interesting when exploring the idea of change. I've driven through lots of communities with boarded store front windows and know that not all communities accept the challenge of finding new industry when theirs dries up. It's much more common actually.

I implore you to ask yourselves these questions when considering full support of our new hospital:

1. What is the future of Petersburg's economy?
2. Is it possible to add industry to our one industry town?
3. What do we already have that we can build upon and make stronger?
4. Taxing is a viable way to bring money into the general fund, but with an aging population is raising taxes an effective way for the city to raise funds? I will pay less property tax and will have the option of paying no sales tax very soon. Raising taxes won't affect me, but will add an additional burden on young families, a burden they may not be able to meet.
5. What kinds of business and industry bring young families to Petersburg? I will submit to you that the majority of the people who work for PMC have young children who are in or will be in our schools.
6. What kind of people do we want to attract to Petersburg? If we want to be strategic, it's a good idea to bring young professionals into town because they participate on boards and in organizations. We are currently watching a multi-family housing unit go up next to the hospital. This will house low-income people from all over the state. Is this the demographic we want to attract? I am not judging; I just think we also need the business and professional demographic to pay for the needs of our growing low-income demographic.

I believe we need to be forward thinking. We can stay here and fade away with our little town or we can look to the future and see what a new hospital can bring to Petersburg.

I agree that there are many who scoff at the new Fire Department, and even the new library, the parks and rec building and renovated borough buildings. These people are generally our age. Will we continue to listen to these old scoffers or will we take the long view and work bring young families to Petersburg; people who want to use the Parks and Rec facility, and the library and who enjoy a clean safe environment?

Please consider full support of our new hospital and as community fathers/mothers, please look forward to the opportunities a new hospital will bring to Petersburg. We are at a crossroads and what we do today will have long-term repercussions for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you again for working with us to keep our community healthy, viable and safe.

Kathi Riemer  
PMC Board Member

---