

Urge police to merge

Metro-York's consolidation plan sounds promising.

Daily Record/Sunday News

York Daily Record/Sunday News

Article Last Updated: 09/17/2007 09:36:09 AM EDT

At bottom: • [THE PROPOSAL](#)

Sep 16, 2007 — One of the most important news stories of the year appeared on Thursday's front page.

Not "Man impales self on fence" - though that certainly was . . . *interesting*.

No, we're talking about the story right next door - spreading the news that our community may be nearing a major breakthrough on regional cooperation.

At the Rotary Club of York last week, leaders of the Metro-York initiative said several local suburban police departments have expressed strong interest in consolidating into a regional force.

That's wonderful news.

But the best part is that, for the first time in recent memory, a regionalization proposal would include York city.

York County has long been a state leader in regional cooperation - boasting the first regional police department (Northern) and several other such forces. The reasons hark back to York County practicality. Regional departments just work better - allowing the kind of specialization among officers that you just can't have in a Mayberry-type department. And elsewhere in today's paper you can read about another major milestone in regional cooperation: The merger of the Springettsbury and Spring Garden Township fire departments.

But until now, York city has always been the wallflower at the regionalism prom. Shunned. Isolated. Ignored. No one asks it to dance - or invites it to the regional cooperation parties.

But Metro-York's announcement last week that it was proposing consolidation of the city, Springettsbury, Spring Garden, West Manchester and York Area Regional police departments suggests the city is finally coming into its own.

This proposal is exciting and encouraging because, according to Metro-York officials, the municipalities are at least generally interested in the idea.

Springettsbury Police Chief David Eshbach has said the idea makes sense - at least to the point where a serious feasibility study should be conducted. York Area Regional Police Chief Tom Gross expressed similar sentiments.

That, of course, hardly means that this is a done deal. There are still many questions about funding, logistics, organizational structure and existing labor contracts. But these are not insurmountable issues, as the existence of other local regional police departments clearly shows.

The biggest issue will likely be public support for the idea. But Metro-York officials are optimistic. "I think the most exciting thing is the fact that there seems to be no

timidity and no concern on the part of people working on it that they've got to be territorial, that they've got to guard their political flank," said Eric Menzer, co-chairman of the group.

Good, because bringing such a proposal to fruition will require

political courage when the short-

sighted naysayers start piping up. "I don't want my tax dollars going to deal with the city's crime problem," some will no doubt grumble,

foolishly not realizing that the city's crime problem is the entire region's problem.

Criminals don't respect - or probably even know - where the municipal boundaries lie. They've already "regionalized" - in that sense, they're more progressive than our municipal systems.

The inner-ring suburbs are clearly facing inner-city types of crime problems. It just makes sense for them to work on those problems together, pooling resources, focusing efforts on problem spots before they spread like "cancer," as Chief Eshbach describes crime.

He and his colleagues would deserve tremendous credit for supporting such an initiative, knowing that you can't have five chiefs of one regional department.

One final question, though: Why aren't the other inner-ring suburbs mentioned as potential participants? Where is Manchester Township? Where are West York and North York boroughs?

They should get off the fence and into the Metro-York proposal - before they accidentally impale themselves. Or the criminals do it to them.

THE PROPOSAL

The Metro-York group suggests merging the York city, Springettsbury Township, Spring Garden Township, West Manchester Township and York Area Regional Police departments.

[top](#)

Close Window

Send To Printer