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Editor's Corner - Ticket to Texas

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Ticket to Texas

Yesterday afternoon my colleague from the next office stopped in the doorway to drop a few pearls concerning the Iowa weather, the Iowa economy and a letter he had recently received from a former graduate student. Although only three in number, the pearls seemed to be the beginning of a string — they were alike in many ways. It was a cold rainy day; the Iowa economy might well be described the same way; and the letter not only matched the other two but was, to some degree, the result of them.

Although many people love the Iowa weather, some have been encouraged by it to take a ticket to Texas. Those of us who have recently traveled through Texas have met many Iowans there whose ticket to Texas was the Iowa economy. The letter which my colleague shared struck me as being a science teacher's ticket to Texas, courtesy of the Iowa economy, the Iowa legislature and the local school board. The ticket (letter) read in part:

"Dear Dr. _____:

Recently I was reviewing and updating my credentials . . . I had not obtained a reference from you on the graduate work I did . . .

Would you please complete a reference for me?

I'm still at _____ High School (sixth year) where I've been teaching science and doing some coaching. This year I have six classes — eighth grade earth science, general science, biology, chemistry, environmental science and advanced biology. I was also head high school girls' basketball coach and I've got high school boys' track this spring.

My future plans are to remain in teaching. . . If I stay here, I'll have to teach physics next year and if that be the case. . ."

If that be the case this experienced and versatile teacher may well be ready to take a ticket to Texas that provides warm winters, larger paychecks, a reasonable teaching load, and a reasonable opportunity to do quality teaching and find some personal gratification in the work done.

Most of us are well aware of the weather and the economy of our state, but it appears that those who could effect some changes in teaching conditions are not aware of the tickets to Texas which they are inadvertently offering to teachers. The time has come for legislators, school board members and the local citizens to carefully examine the cost of *quality* education which is extracted by maintaining tiny high schools and teacher overloads. In the long run the price of consolidation and lighter loads may not be as great as the cost of tickets to Texas.

— C.W.B.