Reno should entice tech sector

ONE VIEW
RALPH COURTNAY

I agree with most of the opinions expressed by Mike Kazmierski in his column **[One View, Aug. 20]** "Reno-Sparks wants to be itself – not Silicon Valley." Silicon Valley has become too crowded, too bustling, and too expensive, particularly housing. We don't want to duplicate those aspects for the many reasons Mike cites.

But I don't think we should worry. I do not think we could be like Silicon Valley even if we wanted to be. We could not duplicate the size of the high-tech economy or venture capital infrastructure there. However, there is a part of Silicon Valley that I think we should try to emulate. I think we should try to have some of the jobs currently captive there.

We have technically talented graduates of UNR, TMCC, Western Nevada College and Sierra Nevada College who have to leave our area upon graduation because we do not have jobs for them. I would like for those graduates to be able to stay here, enjoy careers in the fields they choose to study, and continue to enjoy our lifestyle. Having those graduates stay here would enhance the culture of Reno-Sparks, and there would be symbiotic relationships between the colleges, students, faculty and the industries.

At the last company at which I worked in Silicon Valley (Tandem Computer Corporation) during the last year that I was there (2001), the top engineering staff was discussing the concept they called remote development centers. The idea was that it was very difficult to attract high-caliber recent graduates from American engineering and computer science schools because of the crowding of the valley and the high cost of housing. The staff thought that if they could establish engineering centers in small cities, they might be able to attract more of these graduates.

Other requirements for the cities were that they have good universities for graduate studies and collaboration, have healthy climates, have cultural activities, and have stimulating outdoor activities. Also, it would be beneficial if the remote development center cities had good air connections with Silicon Valley. Reno-Sparks meets all these requirements.

I am proposing that Reno-Sparks attempt to establish semiconductor, electronic, or software remote development centers. I am not proposing to create another Silicon Valley, merely import small parts of a small number of companies which could form a small stable industry which would benefit Reno-Sparks, its university and colleges, its students, and the new industries.

Ralph Courtnay lives in Reno.