

OTHER VIEW | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The roar offshore

With all of Mitt Romney’s efforts to dance around when he did or did not leave the helm of Bain Capital, he seems to have forgotten to say something: The shifting of jobs from country to country – yes, that dreaded word “outsourcing” – is a fact of economic life in a global economy.

It’s not a shameful practice. Some of America’s most admired companies have developed operations overseas, often moving U.S.-based jobs to those operations. Some companies have been saved by such decisions.

Manufacturers have developed or relocated operations to developing countries, mostly to take advantage of lower labor costs and expanding markets. Technology companies have embraced outsourcing for call centers, data entry and other low-value-added tasks.

Outsourcing has helped U.S. companies and consumers by reducing the cost of goods and services. It has raised living standards in China, India and other poor nations – which has created some resentment in the U.S. But higher living standards have turned many of those nations into better markets for U.S. products ranging from livestock feed to jet airliners. U.S. sales to those growing markets often creates jobs in the United States.

This global marketplace has helped promote international trade and break down cultural and economic barriers. Human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law have found a foothold in places where those American priorities never before got much attention.

Moving jobs offshore reflects what economists call comparative advantage. Goods and services are best produced where it is most efficient to do so. As a result, there are fewer U.S. assembly-line jobs in the textile industry, but more U.S. jobs developing apps for iPads, designing products on 3D printers, exploring for natural gas.

Bain Capital invested in some companies that developed or moved operations overseas in the quest for economic efficiency. That quest often creates job gains and job losses. Older workers and less educated workers tend to be vulnerable. Yet such dynamic change – creative destruction, as it’s known – is essential for the prosperity of the United States and every other nation.

Romney knows that. Yet he seems to be afraid to say it. Instead, he has tried to scamper out of responsibility for investments made by Bain after 1999, when he says he gave up decision-making responsibility at the company and headed off to run the Salt Lake City Olympic Games.

President Barack Obama knows that too. One of his important economic achievements was the approval last year of free trade agreements with South Korea, Panama and Colombia. Yet you don’t hear him talking about that in this campaign.

We’re troubled by Romney’s failure to be straightforward and transparent about his business career – starting with his unwillingness to release more than two years of tax returns and ending with the laughable rationale served up by senior adviser Ed Gillespie that Romney “retroactively retired” from Bain.

We’re troubled, too, by the president’s decision to stoke resentment toward the people who have taken risks and succeeded in this nation. “If you’ve got a business, you didn’t build that. Somebody else made that happen,” Obama said Friday. He went on to argue that public investment – in roads, in education – helps business owners.

And, yes, that public investment does help businesses, although note that it does so by removing money, aka taxes, from the private sector. But at its core – you didn’t build that, somebody else made that happen – the president’s remarks rang as an astonishing dismissal of the hard, often lonely work of American business people.

Obama likely will keep pounding away at Romney and his work for Bain until Romney explains to Americans how important that work was in rejuvenating companies in decline.

ARTIST’S VIEW



POLITICS | SEN. TOM O’MARA

Growing the economy, outdoors

Did you know:

- nearly one-half of the nation’s citizens, 141 million people, took part in an outdoor recreation activity last year;
- Americans made 11.6 billion outdoor outings in 2011, 1.5 billion more than the previous year; and
- these participants averaged 82 outings annually.

That’s according to a timely new report from the Washington, D.C.-based Outdoor Foundation, a not-for-profit organization established to “inspire and grow future generations of outdoor enthusiasts.” I say timely because it complements New York government’s reinvanized efforts to encourage outdoor recreation.

In short, the Outdoor Foundation report shows that there’s a lot of biking, hiking, camping, fishing, paddling, running, bird watching and other outdoor recreation going on locally, statewide and across the United States. You can read the full report on www.outdoorfoundation.org. The organization’s executive director said, “This report shows that Americans are getting up and getting outside – a great trend for the outdoor community and the country.”

And let’s make no mistake, it’s big business. Surveys by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, for example, have shown that the 87.5 million Americans who fish, hunt or engage in other wildlife-related recreation have a striking nationwide economic impact, to the tune of \$122 billion in revenue and millions of jobs. The impact’s equally noteworthy right here in New York State. New York’s 1.2 million sportsmen and sportswomen, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, generate nearly \$2 billion worth of statewide economic activity and directly create 28,000 jobs.

So in keeping with this resurgence of outdoor recreation, efforts are underway in the Legislature to grow and encourage outdoor recreation, not solely for the

economic benefit, but equally recognizing that so many of these activities offer a high quality means of exercise, healthier lifestyles, and family fun and recreation.

Governor Andrew Cuomo recently signed a new law, which I strongly supported, to expand the number of free fishing clinics offered through the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as a way to introduce more and more New Yorkers to recreational angling. New York’s sport fishing industry generates an estimated \$1.8 billion in economic activity annually and supports nearly 17,000 jobs.

Earlier this month, a number of Cuomo administration cabinet members and senior staffers joined more than 500 bicyclists from around the nation for the 14th annual Cycling the Erie Canal event – a 400-mile bicycling tour along the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany aimed at showing off upstate New York and encouraging the corridor as an economic development engine.

This year’s state budget included the New York Works Fund, the largest infusion in the state’s history of capital dollars dedicated to the enhancement and revitalization of New York’s already impressive system of public parks and trails. Furthermore, many of the state’s Regional Economic Development Councils, including the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes councils, have identified an outdoor recreation component as part of their long-range strategies for economic revitalization.

It’s a wise investment. After all, a study by the advocacy group Parks & Trails New York has pegged the economic impact of New York’s 178 state parks, 35 historic sites, 1,350 miles of hiking trails and over 8,000 campsites (to say nothing of numerous boat launches, beaches, swimming pools and nature centers) at nearly \$2 billion in generated revenue, almost \$500 million in employment income and 20,000 jobs. The most recent statistics from the state Office of Parks and

Recreation showed increasing attendance at state parks and historic sites – so just imagine the potential impact of the new New York Works Fund.

Finger Lakes State Parks Regional Director Tim Joseph recently said, “When you look at the total (of parks attendance), what you see is pretty steady growth over a five-year period, not really big growth but consistent growth.”

And “consistent growth” has not been an often-heard phrase in any sector of the economy over the past several years.

Each of this year’s moves represents the securing of another plank in the long-term rebuilding of New York State. I’ll briefly note here an administrative action by the Cuomo administration which has recently resolved the withholding of \$20 million in federal aid to the state Conservation Fund. This delay has caused great concern over the past few months among many conservation advocates, including myself, but recent reassurances from administration officials that the fund’s sole, dedicated purpose remains fish and wildlife conservation has settled the conflict and ended the delay. That’s great news.

So while we look to keep turning around the upstate New York economy through small business growth, a manufacturing resurgence, and an ongoing foundation of agriculture and tourism, we’re also smart to keep an eye on the outdoors. New York’s unique outdoor experiences and pastimes are sure to entice more and more spending on goods and services provided by local businesses. These expenditures support jobs, generate sales and income taxes, and strengthen the tourism industry.

It’s clear that more and more New Yorkers and Americans are getting outside for a breath of fresh air and a better view – and it’s making for a stronger bottom line.

■ **Sen. Tom O’Mara is a Republican from Big Flats.**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Why are you still living here?

TO THE EDITOR | Shame on the British letter writer of July 7 who claims she is NOT proud to be an American. My question to her is, why are you still living here? Her timing was interesting as it came around one of our most precious holidays, Independence Day! How “unpatriotic” of her.

Our great country was founded on the basic principals of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. America may not be perfect, but we live in freedom thanks to our forefathers and the protection of our military servicemen and women from the Revolutionary War to present. Sure, it would be great to eradicate bigotry, poverty, illiteracy, etc in any country. But humanity and free will makes the perfect world impossible. This great country was built on immigrants who came here legally and had a dream for themselves and their children. They were proud to be called an American and to speak the language. Even today, we have illegal immigration pouring over our borders to chase the American dream and get a better life. With hard work, determination and some ingenuity, most Americans have the chance to pursue happiness, and yes, wealth!

I suggest Mrs. Whitehouse think twice about spouting her left-wing liberal views.

They are damaging and twisted. And her obvious view on socialism is against all that this “Land of Opportunity” represents. We do not want Big Government. We the people do not want government telling us we cannot do it alone. But she is right about one thing. Citizens need to think for themselves and do some research about this upcoming presidency and decide do we want another four years of a narcissist in chief continue to destroy our great county, or do we need to elect someone that knows how to get our economy back on track and who loves this country.

I am proud to be an American!

Pamela Doud Rogowicz
Campbell

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