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Column

City has lots of positives going for it

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The economy is a common topic of conversation these days, and there's plenty of bad news to go around. Fort Collins is not isolated from economic hardship, yet I believe we have reason to be optimistic.

As a community, we continue to invest in ourselves, in our people, in our businesses and in the things that make Fort Collins unique and desirable. I am grateful to live and work in a city that has so many positives going for it. Here are just a few:

> FortZED and the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster are positioning Fort Collins to be a leader in clean-energy development and job growth. CSU is developing technology that will be used in FortZED, a zero-energy district in the downtown area, and Poudre School District is beginning to offer clean-energy manufacturing classes in its high schools.

> The Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative, or RMI2, continues to support innovative startup companies that have the potential for significant growth. Companies in RMI2 range from software development to green toys to engine parts and components. Currently, RMI2 itself is growing and is working to build an expanded facility.

> Plans are developing for both the North and South College corridors. The North College Marketplace, a project that will spur further investment in the area, is the first major redevelopment resulting from the North College Urban Renewal Authority. The South College corridor plan emphasizes transportation and infrastructure improvements while preserving open space and encouraging business development.

> We are well into the engineering and design phase for the Mason corridor, and construction is expected to begin as early as next year. This is one of the top transit-oriented projects in the nation, and it will spur high-quality infill and redevelopment for properties along the corridor.

> Our downtown continues to thrive, offering visitors and residents unique shopping and dining opportunities while also contributing to our Fort Collins identity. The vibrant arts and cultural community, high-quality bike trails and park system, outstanding schools and the incredible contributions of Colorado State University all make Fort Collins one of the best cities in the nation.

Fort Collins is not immune to the problems plaguing our country. However, I am confident that we are making smart choices in business development, clean energy, transportation and more. Fort Collins is well-positioned as a leader and model for other communities. We must continue to be creative and forward-thinking.