

O P I N I O N

Editorial...

Housing has to be a priority for Sisters

If Sisters is to continue to be a vibrant community, a mix of housing types and price ranges has to be a priority in local planning.

If Sisters schools are to recover the enrollment they need to be healthy over the long haul, young families with children have to be able to move here. That means they need housing they can afford — and not just housing for purchase. Central Oregon's rental market has grown exceedingly tight, making it difficult for folks to establish themselves here and eventually enter the housing market.

Recently surveyed business owners note that lack of workforce housing has a negative impact on employee hiring and retention. If the people who work in Sisters can't find a place to rent in Sisters or can't afford to live here, they're going to look for employment closer to home and lose the commute.

The City of Sisters has a limited toolkit to provide incentives to build affordable housing, but they are looking at ways to deploy reductions in fees, zoning changes and loosened code restrictions to jump-start affordable-housing efforts.

One thing the City can definitely do is to tread carefully in allowing developers to change plans that are already in place that could provide more affordable housing options.

Last week, representatives of Hayden

Homes floated the possibility of modifying their master plan for the remaining phases of their development at the west end of Sisters. The development plan approved by the City of Sisters in 2010 called for 273 total dwelling units, including 164 apartments and 109 townhouses. Hayden Homes' development model and area of expertise is in construction of single-family residences.

There's no harm in talking about making changes. Hayden Homes is to be commended for seeking public input in a workshop before making a proposal, and the Sisters Planning Commission should be willing to consider alternatives. However, the burden must be on the developer to demonstrate why changing an agreement that has been in place for five years is a good deal for Sisters.

It may be true, as many folks believe, that single-family homes are a better "fit" for Sisters. But a single-family home may not be in reach for many folks who work in Sisters or for a young family that wants to get a start here and send their kids to Sisters schools.

The town needs rental units and financially accessible homes. The City and developers should work together to find ways to make that an economically viable proposition — and do it quickly. The need is great.

Jim Cornelius
News Editor

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

Some very well-written and thoughtful letters written in support of the proposed trail between Black Butte Ranch and Sisters, and glad to see them.

I had guests from out of state and we went for a couple of rides from Tollgate — one

south on Highway 20 to Sisters and up across McKenzie Pass on Highway 242 (a wonderful experience), and a second to Indian Ford Road and back to Sisters to visit the Quilt Show exhibits.

See **LETTERS** on page 18

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 76/39	Mostly sunny 74/46	Sunny 82/51	Sunny 82/50	Sunny 79/48	Mostly sunny 81/na

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Rachel Marsden

American Voices

PARIS — The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany have struck a deal with Iran to lift economic sanctions and open the country back up for business in exchange for limitations on Iran's nuclear program. While skepticism may remain about Iran's willingness to follow through on the agreement, Western nations nevertheless must quickly and decisively shift from a conventional-security mindset to one of economic security.

Economic security is synonymous with national security — more so now than ever before in this era of perpetual fiscal crisis.

The Iranian situation is unique. Try to recall the last time that a significant nation-state economy opened up to the West for business. The first one that comes to mind is the Soviet Union following its dissolution in 1991. Remember how Russians were going to fall in love with Hollywood and Levis and become overnight entrepreneurs?

Yeah, well, some Russians became entrepreneurs, all right. They're called "oligarchs." The Kremlin divided up the people's assets, handed them out to a few cronies (some of whom soon went overseas to live the good life), and we in the West cheered that Russia had embraced capitalism.

As long as Russia was no longer seen as a military threat, the West didn't seem to care that this version of capitalism was nothing more than lip service.

Cereal boxes have more detailed instructions for their enclosed toys than the Russians were ever given for their newfound capitalism. Nearly 24 years later, Russian President Vladimir Putin is still trying to steer Russia's fledgling version of capitalism off the rumble strips.

That's the mistake the West is in danger of making with Iran, as it has made with so many other post-conflict economies.

The nuclear deal with Iran represents a window for the West to export capitalism — not the crony capitalism of

Wall Street, please, but true capitalism. Western governments should make it as easy as possible for entrepreneurs to gain access to the Iranian market, but those governments should also help instill security through measurable economic engagement and profit. That means opening up Iran not just to big corporations and their lobbyists, but to the individual capitalist who wants to venture out into the new frontier in search of opportunities, Gold Rush-style.

The West has been operating on a hot-conflict footing for so long, it's way overdue for a massive shift in focus away from conventional (and often redundant) security and toward stability through foreign economic engagement.

Consider the recent examples of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. We have gone into these countries on a military basis and have failed to transition to economic stability after investing billions of dollars in warfare.

In the post-9/11 era, scores of "counterterrorism" and "security" experts have come out of the woodwork and flooded the private sector. This period has produced far fewer experts analyzing post-conflict or emerging markets for economic opportunity, regulatory harmonization and strategic partnerships.

Part of this can be blamed on the system itself, whereby nation-states' development funding is largely laundered through bloated bureaucracies and world governing bodies, virtually ensuring that by the time these funds trickle down to the people who are rolling up their sleeves and doing the groundwork, there isn't much left.

Imagine if most of the time and effort being spent on what has thus far been an unsuccessful fight against overseas terrorism were applied to concocting ways to engage emerging post-conflict economies.

Maybe one of the many candidates running for the U.S. presidency and promising economic growth can figure out how to lead this change of direction in short order.

Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.