

O P I N I O N



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

On behalf of the Sisters Park & Recreation District, I want to thank the voters for passing the local option tax levy in last week's election. With nearly 60 percent of the voters supporting the levy, we are humbled by this outpouring of support.

Passage of the levy is the result of years of preparation. Ten years ago, SPRD was faced with significant financial issues and lacked strong community support. Thanks to the concerted efforts, over the past decade, of board members, staff and a legion of volunteers, SPRD is in position to put the new tax revenues to good use.

The board understands that it is obliged to use these new funds wisely and as outlined in

the levy. We also know that we must continue to look for ways to leverage our tax revenues with grants, fundraising events, partnerships, and volunteers.

This week the board, working with a group of citizen volunteers, will begin planning for how to use the additional funds when they become available. On our radar will be lowering costs for after-school programs, producing outstanding special events and sports tournaments, broadening the selection of adult programs, better supporting our staff and addressing the backlog of maintenance issues at SPRD headquarters and the adjoining recreation facilities.

See **LETTERS** on page 14

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Thunderstorms 75/54	Thunderstorms 76/52	Showers 62/42	Partly Cloudy 64/40	Mostly Sunny 71/44	Mostly Sunny 78/47

The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

Website: www.nuggetnews.com
 442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759
 Tel: 541-549-9941 | Fax: 541-549-9940 | editor@nuggetnews.com



Member

Postmaster: Send address changes to
 The Nugget Newspaper,
 P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.
 Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

Editor in Chief: Jim Cornelius
Production Manager: Leith Easterling
Classifieds & Circulation: Teresa Mahnken
Graphic Design: Jess Draper
Community Marketing Partners:
 Patti Jo Beal & Vicki Curlett
Accounting: Erin Bordonaro
Proofreader: Pete Rathbun
Owner: J. Louis Mullen

The Nugget is mailed to residents within the Sisters School District; subscriptions are available outside delivery area.
 Third-class postage: one year, \$45; six months (or less), \$25. First-class postage: one year, \$85; six months, \$55.

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CANNABIS — yes or no?



By David A. Asson
 Guest Columnist

Editor's note: David Asson is a Sisters City Councilor. He notes that all comments in this article are solely his own.

Four years ago, in November 2014, Sisters voted narrowly to permit marijuana dispensaries to open for business, as did the entire state of Oregon.

Based on unscientific discussions it seems to me that our populace is still almost equally divided on the issue. Marijuana is illegal nationally, but City Council has been informed that Federal law is not expected to be enforced or changed any time soon. We are advised to plan and decide without regard to national possibilities. An initial stop-gap recommendation is to adopt TPMs (Time, Place, and Manner regulations) which would allow the City to control hours of operation (Time), permissible locations (Place), and appearance (Manner). Some Oregon jurisdictions are even challenging the vote, i.e. trying to legally disallow dispensaries. Early results suggest that they will not be successful.

There is some interest in placing the measure on the November ballot so that the public can have a second chance to express their view. Although stated as fact, a vote for referral has not yet been taken. I oppose doing so.

OLCC has adopted and is enforcing a detailed set of rules intended to track and control the growth, processing, transport, marketing, employee training, counter display, safekeeping and assurance of marijuana product quality. I have visited an established dispensary and heard or read hours of pro and con testimony. Modern-day shops are not what I visualized months ago. Successful ones will be run by well-informed business people. Some shop operators demonstrate a willingness to assist in establishing acceptable TPMs. An example proposed by an owner that I spoke with is to locate shops

in a marijuana zone off main street and minimize outside advertising. This would lessen glaring curbside impressions.

And, there is evidence that some products do reduce pain and stress. These arguments fail to address the basic core values test that many, including myself, wish society could embrace. However, it seems that little merit will be given such concern. I urge all to visit an existing shop and ask questions. You may find that stereotypes of past behavior are not as negative under today's conditions as we came to believe. I believe the best course of action is for Council to design appropriate TPMs and vote directly to allow dispensaries to operate in Sisters.

My specific reluctance to having a public re-vote is based on unpredictable consequences. To sponsor a second vote fairly, the City would have to educate voters on both sides of the issue. Attempting to inform all with so short a timeline would be formidable. I have spent hours in training and am still not solidly convinced of the right thing to do. I sense that permission to operate is the logical outcome, but... Let's assume the second vote remains the same. We will have raised some people's hopes, delayed the process, and made little headway.

On the other hand, if the vote turns out negative, i.e. to not allow dispensaries, there will be a serious quandary. Council could not then look the public in the eye, say thank you for voting and then declare that dispensaries will be allowed anyway. How would that play? Those opposed may rejoice momentarily thinking that they succeeded in banning marijuana, while those favoring acceptance engage attorneys to override a dubious reversal. Given results to date the proponents would likely win.

I pray that Council and Sisters agree to put this difficult issue to rest without further delay.

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