

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

We would like to thank City Manager Cory Misley and City Councilor Andrea Blum for educating our group on April 11 about how our City government operates, who is responsible for what, and how citizens can get involved in making Sisters a better place. We are so grateful for all the volunteer work Andrea puts into her work as a councilor, and for the passion and dedication Cory showed us for making sure Sisters thrives.

They taught us that the City operates on a \$15,836,348 budget for FY 2018-19 to administer water and sewer, city streets, parks and land-use planning, public safety, and the economic development of Sisters. The City Manager, who is hired by the council, makes sure that the City's policies and contracts are administered, oversees staff, and makes recommendations to the council on many issues.

There are five city councilors that are elected for four- or two-year terms; three are open positions every two years. The top two vote-getters get four-year terms, and the last gets a two-year term. The Mayor is chosen from within the council, by the council. The mayor runs council meetings and officially represents the City in public. Three councilor positions will be open in the 2020 November election, including Mayor Ryan's, Councilor Blum's and Councilor Esterman's seats. Qualifications for running are simply that candidates must be a qualified elector and live within the Sisters City limits for at least 12 months immediately preceding the election, and agree to volunteer their time to make decisions on behalf of the citizens. Other helpful, but unrequired, qualifications are: a passion

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 68/41	Partly Cloudy 71/43	Sunny 64/36	Mostly Sunny 62/33	Sunny 59/33	Partly Cloudy 57/35

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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

Graphic Design: Jess Draper

Community Marketing Partners:

Vicki Curlett & Patti Jo Beal

Classifieds & Circulation: Lisa May

Proofreader: Pete Rathbun

Owner: J. Louis Mullen

Hayden will provide workforce housing

By Paul Hodge
CEO Laird Superfood

Last year, when Laird Superfood made the decision to open a major facility in Sisters, we worked out our facility location, transportation routes and how to train an ever-increasing workforce to deliver sustainable products that fuel people across the globe to perform at their peak. But there's one critical element of our work over which we have little control: housing for our employees.

Once at full capacity, we will be ramping up our employee hiring for our new modern facility in Sisters, likely making us the largest employer in town. Already available housing is in short supply in Sisters, and according to a new housing needs analysis in Sisters, more than 1,000 new homes will be needed in the next 20 years. How will these homes get built and where will our employees live?

We chose this community because Sisters is different. The lifestyle, the pristine environment, the welcoming people. It all lines up with our ethos of providing clean, nutritious products that add to the health and wellness of our customers' lives. But when we look at our own employees' ability to thrive given the lack of housing options in Sisters, we see a problem in need of new solutions.

We need the City of Sisters to partner with us to provide a housing supply that's capable of sustaining not just our growth, but the growth of every business in Sisters. We need leadership that keeps housing affordable and accessible to everyone in our adopted town.

And so, to say we are

incredibly supportive of the close to 200 homes to be built in the new Hayden Homes McKenzie Meadows neighborhood is an understatement. Not only will homes in McKenzie Meadows be financially within reach for our team, an additional 20 affordable homes will be available for families making 80 percent or less of area median income through the nonprofit First Story and additional rental units. These homes will increase the housing supply in Sisters — a huge impact.

Yes, our employees could commute 30 minutes each way from Redmond or Bend every morning, and, of course, some will choose to do that, but if a commute like that is a requirement to be a part of our team, we will likely always battle recruitment and retention challenges. More importantly to the greater community, the ripple effect of our economic value to Sisters will be dampened dramatically if our employees aren't able to support local businesses by becoming full-fledged locals. We want to use the power of the economic development we provide to make Sisters an even better place to live and work, but we are limited without the strong underpinnings of a stable housing supply.

We chose Sisters because it is a truly special place on this Earth and we want to help retain what's special here and grow opportunity at the same time. By pulling together in the same direction, we can make it happen. To the Sisters City Council, we ask you to please pull with us at Laird Superfood by approving the McKenzie Meadows neighborhood and others like it as Sisters grows.

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