

O P I N I O N

Happy Thanksgiving

FROM THE NUGGET NEWSPAPER



Thank you to all of the local businesses and sponsors who helped The Nugget to support the Sisters Community Thanksgiving Dinner.

The Nugget will be closed Thursday, November 28. See additional holiday deadlines and hours on page 26.

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Guest columnist Josh Groves makes important points about reasons to oppose development pressure in his "Expansion of Sisters Benefits Few" piece last week.

Growth benefits a handful of developers in the short term, but it does not benefit most citizens or tourists who are attracted to Sisters as a small community with a special connection to nature and who marvel in its clean water, air and pristine habitat. He's right to point to lessons from Bend, where unchecked growth is causing worse congestion and putting pressure on natural resources without increasing affordability or family-wage jobs.

But there's another reason to be extremely cautious when turning up the heat on development and handing out building permits without thinking about the future, as recently highlighted in the *New York Times* ("As Climate Risk Grows, Cities Test a Tough Strategy: Saying 'No' To Developers"). With dangers from climate extremes rising, so too is the

likelihood of wildfire, especially in wildland-urban interface towns like Sisters.

No matter how many preventative measures are taken, another wildfire that has the potential to cause major devastation isn't a matter of if, it's when. And as the financial and emotional toll of climate-related disasters experienced throughout the nation have shown, greater development in these vulnerable areas only ups the ante on that threat.

If protecting what makes Sisters special as a community — celebrated by locals and tourists alike for its small-town feel and close connection to nature — aren't enough for elected officials and community leaders to stop yielding to pressure from special interests and developers, then the very real dangers of climate change and the drive to keep Sisters and its residents safe should be.

Darcie Buckley

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Snow 29/19	Snow showers 26/13	Partly Cloudy 28/6	Snow showers 27/16	Snow showers 34/22	Snow showers 39/25

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Business should pay attention to idling

By Steve Nugent
Guest Columnist

A Sisters contractor just completed some work for my house and we were talking about the benefits of electric cars and the real cost of gasoline. I was shocked when he told me that his workforce used 25 percent of the companies fuel up just idling the work trucks unnecessarily. He hopes to eliminate this behavior because it's an avoidable expense. He had devices installed in his trucks to monitor fuel usage.

Idling is not as inexpensive as you think because the cost of gasoline is not what you see on the pump.

There are a lot of hidden costs. Oil subsidies are one of these costs. Total US subsidies for coal, oil and gas are \$650 billion annually, more than the defense budget according to an IMF study. At least 50 percent of this is oil subsidies, tax-breaks and other oil-related programs and bureaus, or \$325 billion. \$27 billion is the monies going directly to oil companies as subsidies for oil production and exploration. A conservative amount that is related to oil production is \$100 billion. Another big cost is the military defense for middle-east oil interests. This is estimated to be \$81 billion/year or about 16 percent of DOD base budgets. This amounts to about 28 cents per gallon to defend these foreign oil interests, even though the U.S. is now mostly oil independent. A smaller cost is the subsidy for corn-ethanol farming and production.

Ethanol costs drivers in the U.S. \$10 billion every year in higher gasoline prices for lower-quality gasoline.

Subsidies and tax-breaks for the top ten corn producers combined with other programs, like the farm bill amount to about \$450 million annually. If you add up all of the hidden costs of gasoline, these come to about \$181.5 billion annually. We have about 230 million drivers

in the U.S. Therefore, the added cost for gasoline for each driver is about \$790 annually or \$66/month. The average gas expense per driver per month is \$250, so the actual cost is \$316/month. This is a 26 percent increase. This increases the average gas price in October 2019 from \$2.99/gallon to \$3.78/gallon. This is what you are actually paying, not what is on the pump.

There is no good reason to idle a truck under normal circumstances. For diesels, maximum of three minutes of warm-up is recommended by the manufacturers. More causes engine wear. I guess if it's not your fuel, you don't care if you waste it. The downside is that it creates less profit for the company you work for and maybe makes them less competitive when bidding for jobs. This can affect your job prospects.

If you are sitting in an idling diesel truck, you are probably breathing some carcinogenic fumes. You may develop lung cancer, even if you don't smoke.

I have watched as the Salvation Army delivery truck sits for hours in the Target parking lot, idling while the attendant sits on the back lift. I have watched as CEC trucks parked next to job sites idle with the windows open and no passengers for hours unattended. Besides being against the law to idle a heavy truck for more than five minutes in a two-hour period (ORS 825.605), it's bad for the environment and increases everyone's living expenses.

UPS is a good example of a company doing the right thing for the planet and the smart thing for their business. Even though their delivery trucks stop a hundred times each day, they turn off the engine and restart at each delivery location. Their starters don't wear out and their trucks last just as long, maybe longer. If only FEDEX would do the same. If only all truck drivers in Central Oregon would do the same.

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