

# 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Before Mr. Trump took office, Iran was abiding by agreements made about weapons of mass destruction. International inspectors certified that this was true. Our two countries were at peace, more or less. Three years into Trump's administration, we are closer to war with Iran than we have ever been.

Trump slowly but surely eroded our shaky peace with Iran first by upping his rhetoric, then by imposing sanctions, next by upping the rhetoric even more, and now by killing one of their leaders. Who can blame Iran for reacting? Our country would do the same thing.

The American Constitution gives Congress the authority to declare war, not the president. Congress has let this authority slip from its hands over the years, and look at the result. And yes, most countries would see a drone strike killing an important leader of another country as an act of war. We certainly would.

Do we really want another war in the Middle East? How many thousands of people would die, most of them decent people just trying to live their lives as best they can? How many billions of dollars would we have to borrow from China to finance this war?

Making war is distracting us from the most important battle of our time — fighting climate change. This should be the only issue on the table in every country of our world.

Paula Surmann



To the Editor:

On Monday, January 6, over 85 people gathered at FivePine Lodge to learn about a new PAC called Strengthening Central Oregon Political Action Committee (SCOPAC). SCOPAC is a new volunteer-run, bipartisan organization being formed to support pragmatic problem-solvers with a common-sense agenda in Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook counties. I want to thank everyone who attended and extend an invitation to others to learn more.

At a time when our national politics have become so divisive, it is inspiring to see how our community strives to work together. This new PAC will provide training, funding, and practical support like childcare and meals to candidates so that more women and others from

underrepresented communities might run to give us better representation of all voices in our community. To learn more, go to SCOPAC.net.

On behalf of SCOPAC and the whole host committee, thank you again to all those who came to learn more, show their support, and donate to support more pragmatic problem-solvers in Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook county public offices.

Vanessa Wilkins



To the Editor:

I was disgusted to learn how badly Ray's Food Place in Sisters has consistently scored on the state's health inspections (*See story page 9.*)

*The Oregonian* recently published this health violations report:

[www.oregonlive.com/health/2020/01/these-21-oregon-grocery-stores-scored-the-worst-on-health-inspections.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/health/2020/01/these-21-oregon-grocery-stores-scored-the-worst-on-health-inspections.html)

The grocery store's most recent inspection showed 10 high-risk violations and six repeat issues including mouse droppings near the sandwich prep table, meat at unsafe temperatures and lack of hand-washing. Ray's ranked 13 out of 21 stores with the worst ratings in Oregon (out of more than 1,100 stores statewide).

A "heavy buildup of brown/black sludge-type material" inside fountain drink nozzles does not happen due to one missed cleaning. In addition, "brown slime buildup" on produce baskets containing green onions and "considerable buildup of milk solids" on the dairy case floor and racks demonstrate long-term inattention to health and safety.

The Sisters community deserves to know if Ray's will finally take these ongoing health violations seriously and act to address them. Also, we need to know the company's plans to make safety a higher priority in the future — it is disturbing to see a pattern of sanitation violations in past years. These plans must include continuing employee education because inspectors have frequently found lack-of-knowledge of proper food handling. In the most recent inspection, inspectors observed an employee sticking an unsanitized thermometer in chicken

*See LETTERS on page 16*

## Implementing Sisters Country Vision

By Janel Ruehl  
Correspondent

As the Sisters Country Vision celebrates its first anniversary, those working hard to bring the Vision Action Plan to life celebrate some notable progress and look forward to another year of collaborative, community-led action.

The Vision Implementation Team, led by Mayor Chuck Ryan and County Commissioner Patti Adair, has been meeting regularly to share progress updates on different strategies, identify priorities, and work together to find solutions to challenges. The team's mission is to "implement the vision action plan and prioritize projects through a transparent, balanced, and inclusive process." The 17-member team is comprised of representatives from local organizations listed as a lead partner on three or more items in the action plan, along with a current student at Sisters High School, and two unaffiliated community members. Along with members of the Vision Implementation Team, other local organizations have taken a lead on one or more of the four vision focus areas in the past year.

Age-Friendly Sisters Country, a new non-profit, has stepped up to tackle several Livable Sisters vision strategies. With a new Affordable Housing Work Group and a new volunteer medical ride-sharing database project in the works, these local leaders are demonstrating tremendous initiative. They also took on a Resilient Sisters strategy, securing official recognition of Sisters as a member of the Worldwide Age-Friendly Community Network; one of only seven communities in Oregon!

"Sisters is a leader and model for the Age-Friendly movement; working to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can thrive and prosper," says AFSC's Dixie Eckford. In addition to AFSC's work, improved transportation options are also coming to Sisters Country via Cascades East Transit in 2020. CET is adding expanded Saturday service and three new stops (Tumalo, Cascades Mall and St. Charles) to the existing route 29 between Sisters and Bend. They are also adding Tuesday service to their dial-a-ride program.

Progress on Resilient Sisters strategies also include the updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the new Deschutes County Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee. This committee is working with county staff to develop recommendations on how newly adopted building codes could better meet wildfire preparedness goals in Sisters.

"If the new building codes are adopted it will reduce the loss of homes to fires within Sisters Country," says Fire Chief Roger Johnson.

The Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District is also working with statewide and national partners on the First-Net rollout, which will bring expanded communications connectivity to the Camp Sherman area and fill in gaps in connection along Hwy. 20.

Prosperous Sisters strategies focused on Artisanal Capital, and a vibrant local economy also saw progress in 2019. A local group of entrepreneurs, assisted by EDCO Sisters Director Caprielle Lewis, has launched a new network called the Sisters Country Entrepreneurs and Executives Network (SCEEN). They will plan 4-6 "meet-ups" annually to connect and support local business owners, remote workers, and start-up companies with resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities. A new partnership between the Sisters Arts Alliance and the City will expand Sisters' public art program and includes funding for new art pedestals in 2020.

Meanwhile, several Connected Sisters strategies have been advanced by Citizens4Community (C4C). The nonprofit is developing a Community-Builders network and has presented many events — like a Let's Talk series, a First Amendment forum, collaboration/facilitation workshops and a community sing — to foster engagement, leadership, inclusion and collaboration.

"We've been working on Vision activities for two years — since the beginning of the community input process. It's great to see momentum continuing into implementation and the collaboration from individuals and groups throughout the area. It just further energizes C4C. We anticipate another busy year!" said C4C's Amy Burgstahler.

Visit [sistersvision.org](http://sistersvision.org).

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

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

<b>Wednesday</b> Snow showers 38/27	<b>Thursday</b> Snow showers 37/22	<b>Friday</b> Cloudy 38/28	<b>Saturday</b> Rain/snow 42/29	<b>Sunday</b> Partly cloudy 43/28	<b>Monday</b> Mostly cloudy 41/29
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