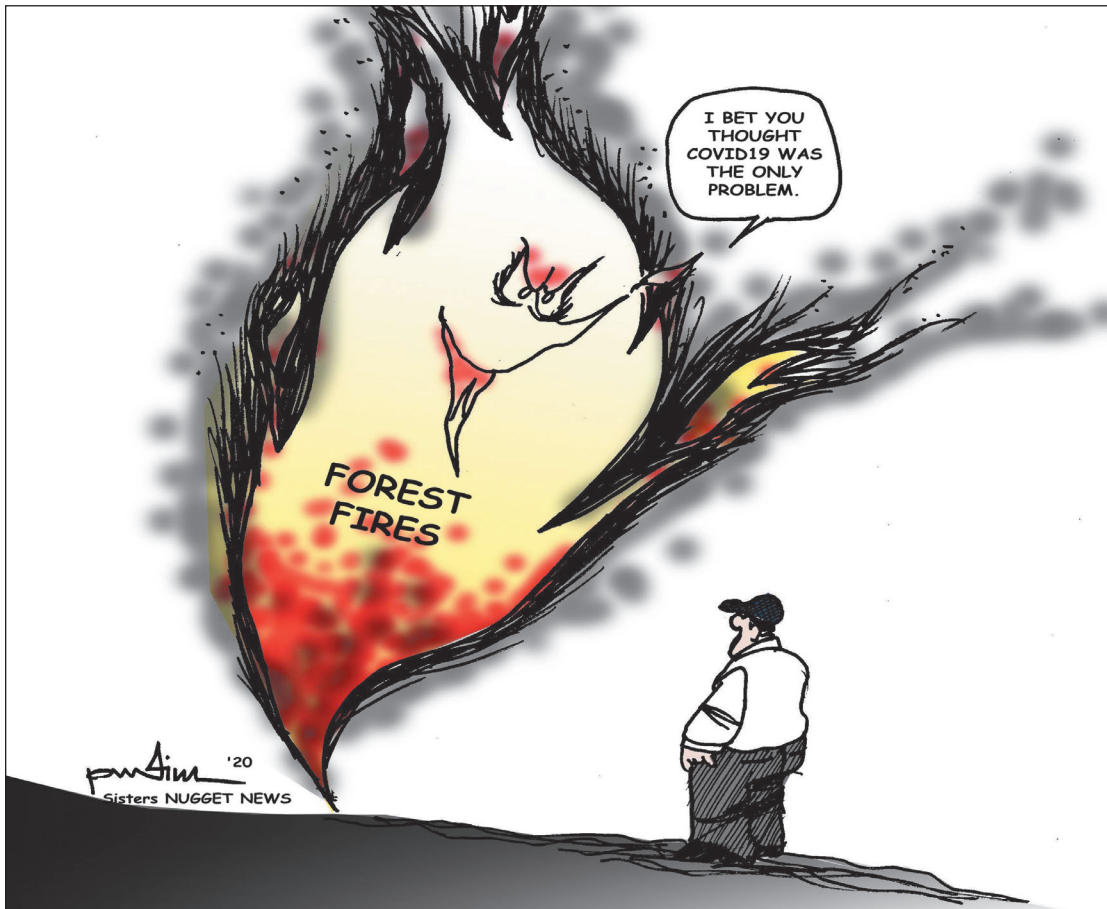


O P I N I O N



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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 10 a.m. Monday.

To the Editor:

A few years ago there was an excellent article in *The Nugget* about our noxious toxic knapweed invading Sisters. I see currently knapweed has totally invaded the corner property near the Lodge & Post Office. It is now blooming and can release up to 25,000 seeds per plant, covering Sisters. The plant makes soil toxic to native plants plus it can be toxic to horses. It is difficult to eliminate.

All the blooming Sisters knapweed needs to be removed now before seeds are released. Please write another informative article. Thank you.

Sharon Sharpnack



To the Editor:

Thank you for the article in last week's paper, "Cold weather shelter a victim of pandemic," (*The Nugget*, July 22, p. 1).

The last several years the cold weather shelter has received broad community support in the form of volunteers, meals for shelter guests and donations. I am hoping the community will continue to support the shelter in coming up with and facilitating options to help house our houseless community members, many of whom work in local Sisters businesses.

Last season, we just had a handful of local shelter guests so I don't feel the situation before us is insurmountable. I feel our creativity and compassion will prevail. I'm just not sure what that looks like.

Lois Kaping
Wellhouse Church Cold Weather Shelter
Liaison



See LETTERS on page 14

The late great city of Sisters

By Gary Leiser
Guest Columnist

It is breathtaking to watch the Sisters City Council try to obliterate Sisters as fast as it can.

Has the Council ever seen a plan for urban sprawl that it didn't like? True, it usually requires "fixes" to these plans, but they are cosmetic, a kind of slight-of-hand to help ratify the fiction that the Council is acting in the interest of the City, while actually abetting its suicide.

What is the rationale behind the City's actions? It seems to be twofold. First, as reported in *The Nugget*, July 24, 2019, the City produced a housing strategies report which claimed the City had a potential deficit of land zoned for residential use inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

This claim, based on no empirical evidence, was a guess. In other words, the city paraded a portentously documented report of little value to support a foregone conclusion which was a fantasy. It went on to say that this presumed deficit could be addressed by rezoning land, including the USFS land within the city on the assumption it would be used for housing. In short, this would allow the City to solve a problem that it didn't have.

Then the report stated, "If codes are adopted that would increase density, the question arises as to whether that increase will fundamentally change the character that attracts people to visit and live here."

The answer is self-evident.

Second, when pressed for ignoring concerns about rampant sprawl, the City claims its hands are tied, that State law requires it to approve development if it meets zoning requirements, and that the City cannot be selective. On March 11, 2020, however, the same newspaper published an article by the Sisters city manager and principal planner in which they said, "State law requires development to be concentrated in a defined boundary in order to preserve natural resources, working farm and forest land." And they

asserted, "the city's development codes and zoning can be changed through a standalone process with state noticing, outside of review of a specific application."

This is incoherent. Can the City change the zoning within its urban boundary or not? If it can, then why not limit rampant development?

Now, add to this confusion Laird industries. In 2016 the City and Deschutes County helped bring Laird to town by giving it, respectively, \$51,000 and \$50,000 as forgivable loans (gifts). Subsequently, Laird obtained \$32 million in private investment to expand production. It also received \$10 million from the French food giant Danon, (see *Vegan Buzz* April 28, 2020). On June 10, 2020, *The Nugget* reported that the CEO of Laird had purchased 31 acres along Pine Street and Highway 20, formerly USFS land, on which he intended to build 250 to 300 houses.

Indeed, he acted as if the City had already approved his plans.

In an unblushing exercise in self-promotion Laird has touted the benefits that it will bring to Sisters. Above all, it projects having 500 employees by 2023. This projection is used to justify the aforesaid housing, although these workers could not afford it.

Let us not forget that Laird is here to make money, not to help Sisters. Nevertheless, Laird's special pleading — "Our goal is to create jobs that will help balance the economy of Sisters" — has been swallowed by Mayor Chuck Ryan, who stated (*The Nugget*, December 19, 2019), "It is such a great fit given its low impact environmentally."

He added that it was needed for reaching the goal of creating "a vibrant and diverse local economy." How can a major industrial plant requiring 250-300 houses have a low environmental impact? How did the Mayor conjure up the need for a diverse economy? Sisters already has a mixed economy. The Mayor was simply parroting Laird.

Has Sisters' fate been sealed?

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

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Mostly Sunny 95/62	Sunny 100/60	Mostly Sunny 87/52	Mostly Sunny 88/53	Mostly Sunny 88/53	Sunny 84/49

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