

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

In response to the letter from Mr. Baldwin on February 10: Even though I support Biden and his policies, I agree the landslide of executive orders is disconcerting in view of his stated goals of promoting unity.

However, Mr. Baldwin falls into a dangerous "fake news" format, which has fed the extreme conservative movement. Saying that Biden has a "long history of graft" is called libel unless you can produce facts that prove this statement.

An extremely important improvement in the current divisiveness of our social fabric

will be to stick to the facts. Otherwise there can be no trust between different groups and followers will believe whatever they are told without thinking about it.

Sharon Booth



To the Editor:

A big thank you to AirLink and Life Flight, for getting the COVID-19 vaccines from Portland to Redmond. Heroes, all.

Judy Bull

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Transportation improvement underway in Sisters Country

By Emme Shoup & Janel Ruehl
Guest Columnist

The Sisters Country Vision is a community-led vision project, created with extensive community engagement in 2018. In the Vision, "Integrated Transportation Options" is prioritized as one of five strategies to create a more livable Sisters Country. In 2021, the Vision Implementation Team (VIT) — representing local government, agencies, nonprofits, and community members — is collaborating with several key players to address the evolving transportation needs of the community.

Andrea Breault, the Transportation Director of Cascade East Transit (CET), is working in collaboration with Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), the City of Sisters, and AFSC (Age Friendly Sisters Country) to expand alternative transportation options for the residents of Sisters Country.

"Alternative transportation options are any mode of transportation that is not single-occupancy vehicle use. This can be biking, walking, carpooling, or taking the bus," Breault says. "CET is the buses part of that equation, and collaborates with other planning efforts on the city and county level to ensure they coincide. Working as a network, we can go above and beyond."

In Sisters Country, CET offers two fixed bus routes that connect Sisters to Redmond and Bend Monday through Friday: the Sisters Dial-a-Ride, which runs one day a week to the grocery store or the pharmacy (and offers free fare during COVID-19); and the Sisters Shopper Shuttle to Bend on Thursdays that takes Sisters residents to Walmart, Costco, and the Cascade Village Shopping Center in Bend — all funded by the State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Tax.

The Shopper Shuttle is brand new, having just launched on the first Thursday of January 2021. Through collaboration with AFSC, CET is focused on getting the word out to help this new service be successful. Breault emphasizes, "The more successful it is, the more programs like it can be expanded!"

Looking ahead, CET aims to expand services to the weekends, increase the frequency of buses on the fixed-route schedule, grow services within the existing

boundaries of Sisters, and reach new tourist riders. To support these goals, VIT member and COIC Executive Director, Tammy Baney, is coordinating a CET optimization study on alternative options for on-demand transportation. This study serves as a snapshot of the CET agency, including its funding sources, how to use those funds most efficiently, and how to stay in alignment with the community's needs.

Other local agencies and organizations are working to improve transportation in Sisters Country. The City of Sisters is working to secure funding for the Locust-Highway 20 Roundabout construction project. When complete, this project will serve to better manage traffic flow for not only vehicles, but also bicyclists and pedestrians. The City also is in the process of completing a new traffic-safety audit, which will be incorporated into the new Sisters Transportation System Plan. The City has some other exciting transportation-improvement projects in the works this upcoming fiscal year, including completing the design of the Adams Avenue streetscape improvement project, which will add bicycle and ADA-compliant routes through the Adams Avenue corridor.

"We will also be designing and building the North Pine Street multi-use path in coordination with the new developers of the old Forest Service property, to provide a continuous bicycle and pedestrian path from Main Avenue to the northern city limits," says Public Works Director Bertagna.

AFSC's Sisters Transportation and Ride Share (STARS) ride-share program continues to serve the Sisters community in a variety of ways. They recently added a new service: meal delivery through the Meals on Wheels Program! STARS is available to transport people to their COVID-19 vaccine appointments, and other important medical and dental appointments around town, in Bend, and Redmond — all at no cost!

"STARS is really doing a lot for the residents of Sisters Country and we encourage others in the community to join us!" says Dixie Eckford, co-founder. If you are interested in getting involved as a volunteer, or would like to schedule a ride, visit www.starside.com/home.

Learn more about Sisters Country Vision projects at www.sistersvision.org.

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday Mostly Sunny 42/26 	Thursday Rain/Snow Showers 42/32 	Friday Rain/Snow 38/24 	Saturday Mostly Sunny 41/23
Sunday Partly Cloudy 48/30 	Monday Few Showers 43/27 	Tuesday Partly Cloudy 45/27 	

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