Do you know how the proposed B2H transmission line will affect your property values and livelihood?

My Voice

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Jim Kreider, of La Grande, is a member of the Stop B2H Coalition, which is dedicated to opposing the transmission line through Union County.
My Voice columns reflect the views of the author only. My Voice columns should be 500-700 words or as space allows.
Submissions should include a portrait-type photograph of the author. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We reject those published elsewhere.
Send columns to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

The Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Transmission Line is planned to cross five Eastern Oregon counties, with 1,228 transmission towers averaging 150-feet high, occupying a 273-mile-long and 250-feet-wide clear-cut. An estimated 11,000 acres of farm, forest and wildlands will be impacted, and 670 miles of new or reconstructed roads will be built for the installation and maintenance of the towers. Many Union County residents remain unaware of the proximity of their property to the proposed transmission line. When the dynamite, drilling rigs, bulldozers, heavy trucks, helicopters and 150-foot towers with a 250-foot right-of-way come barreling down on them it will be too late to stop them.

Representatives from the Oregon state agencies responsible for siting the proposed Boardman to Hemingway 500 kV transmission line will meet in La Grande's Blue Mountain Conference Center, 404 12th St., from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 17. This is an information only meeting and will not include public testimony or on-the-record public comments. It is an opportunity for local residents to learn about the regulatory procedures that will determine the controversial project's specific route across Union County. Representatives of the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) and the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) as well as Idaho Power staff will be available to answer questions following the informational presentation.

B2H was initially planned with a completion date of 2018 to fulfill an anticipated need for additional power in Idaho, which has not materialized. Critics of the project, which now has a projected completion date of 2026, argue that technological developments in energy efficiency, construction of new renewable energy facilities in Idaho, rooftop solar and energy storage coupled with microgrids will provide for Idaho's future power needs, making the major investment in a $1.2 billion facility unnecessary.

After agency representatives visit the five Eastern Oregon counties that would be crossed by the proposed transmission line, ODOE plans to submit its Draft Proposed Order (DPO) for state agency review early in 2019. After the DPO (approximately 17,000 pages) is issued, there will be a public comment period. Another ODOE-EFSC meeting for public testimony on the proposed route will then be scheduled — hopefully in all the impacted counties. Failure to appear at a public meeting to give carefully articulated oral testimony or written comments for the public record will deny affected property owners and others any possibility to contest the agency's decision for the transmission line site certificate.

Assistance to local agencies, organizations or individuals wishing to comment on the controversial B2H's proposed route is available at www.oregon.gov/energy/facilities-safety/facilities/pages/default.aspx or by emailing StopB2H@gmail.

Your views

Barreto: This is the land of the free

To the Editor:
I appreciated the editorial essay by Samuel Innocent (in the Sept. 21 Observer) regarding his pride in NFL players calling attention to law enforcement's mistreatment of black people. Observing the public response to the nonviolent act of kneeling has been interesting, as ensuing comments have often been far more disrespectful than the act itself. Kudos to those who truly represent "the land of the free and the home of the brave" in their thoughtful consideration of others' perspectives and pain.

Patrice Barreto
La Grande

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only).
We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We will not publish poetry, consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged.
Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks.
Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

Letters deadline
The Observer does not run endorsements of more than 350 words. The Observer will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day if necessary. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by noon Friday, Oct. 26. You can email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com, drop them off at our La Grande location, or mail them to The Observer, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, 97850.
We will publish our last letters on Friday, Nov. 2. Election Day is Nov. 6.

Schaefer: Wes Williams is prepared and qualified to fill important role

To the Editor:
I am writing in support of Wes Williams for 10th District Circuit Court Judge.

I have worked in Wes Williams' Law office since last January when I was hired by former circuit court judge Jeff Wallace. During that time, Wes was always courteous and patient. I am now working for Wes. Having not worked in the legal profession before, I have a lot to learn. In Wes, I found a man who respects and loves the law. In practicing law, he is still very much a student. This makes him an excellent teacher, and any mistakes I make are an opportunity to learn. I have always been treated with respect. I expect him to establish this same atmosphere from the bench.

Wes' preparation for a case involves extensive study of case law. The walls of the office are lined with volumes of case law. Not a case occurs where these books are not consulted. I know that Wes will bring his love of studying law to the bench. He will always prepare for every matter over which he must preside. He will never assume he already knows everything about a matter. Instead, he will remain open minded, listen and study all sides before making a decision.

Wes Williams is prepared and qualified to fill this important role in our community. I would encourage you to vote Wes Williams for judge.

Allison Schaefer
La Grande

Barry: Dewey cares about Imbler and its citizens

To the Editor:
I am writing to express my support for Teressa Dewey in her efforts to be elected for Imbler City Council Position 5.

The City of Imbler has been blessed for many years with volunteer leaders on our city council. Teressa is in the mold of leaders in the past who have unselfishly, and with vision, made important decisions to improve our community. I believe Teressa's vast knowledge of budgeting and of City Council Rules of Order and Procedure will be a great asset to our city council.

Teressa cares about our community and its citizens. I appreciate her willingness to serve. Join me and vote for Teressa Dewey, Imbler City Council Position 5.

Deana Barry
Imbler

Ballard: Support Ballot Measure 105 and say No to illegal aliens

To the Editor:
Illegal is illegal and "No" is a complete sentence. Crossing the border illegally is a violation of the law. Those who cross illegally are known as illegal aliens. Look up the definitions.

Those who harbor law breakers are complicit in violating the law. I believe in following the law. Most illegal aliens are on the public dole. For those in Rio Vista, that means you and I are paying for them. If that's OK with you, contact me and help with my husband's cancer and dialysis treatments. This would be much more rewarding than knowingly letting a law breaker pick your pocket.

So, join me in supporting Measure 105 and just saying no to illegal aliens leeching from our system and being complicit in a losing codependent relationship.

Jennifer Ballard
Joseph

Woosley: Impressed by Wes Williams before I knew his name

To the Editor:
I am writing this letter to endorse Wes Williams for circuit court judge.

For many years I worked at our local movie theater while putting myself through college. During that time, I came to observe numerous people. Wes Williams and his family were some of the more memorable people I observed. I did not personally know Mr. Williams or his family at that time, but I never forgot how they treated each other and the kindness they presented. Not only was Mr. Williams always extremely nice and respectful to myself and the other staff, but he and his family treated each other with the same amount of respect. The values they showed to strangers and to each other was authentic.

Currently I am the director of human resources and marketing for a local small business. I recently had the opportunity to meet and work with Mr. Williams in a professional capacity. Getting to know Mr. Williams and finally putting a name to the face that I remembered from my days at the theater was an honor.

Seeing Mr. Williams work is impressive; he thinks through every angle of a situation. There is a humbleness to Mr. Williams that is genuine for someone of his intelligence. I found Mr. Williams to still be respectful, caring and patient — all qualities that being a great judge requires. I can feel confident about giving this endorsement because I witnessed Mr. Williams living these values with his family long before I ever knew his name.

Royce Woosley
La Grande

Smolkowski: Voting for Wes Williams based on personal experience

To the Editor:
I've known Wes Williams both personally and professionally for many years. He has my vote for circuit court judge because he is fair and just and cares about people regardless of their background.

When my son made some poor decisions, Wes helped me make sure he was treated fairly by a system that doesn't always work the way it is supposed to. My son is now a model citizen with his own house and family.

I know Wes Williams is the best candidate for Circuit Court Judge of Union and Wallowa counties.

Kevin Smolkowski
Elgin

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