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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

The Observer

Wheeler and Kate Brown have declared war on rural Oregonians

I no longer visit Portland. Nor do I conduct any type of business within the Portland Metropolitan area, personal or professional. Fact

is, most of my vendors have fled the area. I now go out of state to do business, and I am not alone.

I'm a rural Oregonian and it has become clear to me that not only Ted Wheeler but Kate Brown have declared war on rural Oregonians. They seemingly despise our values, lifestyles and the very resource base we survive on. Our homelands have become nothing more than a playground. Our lives open for experiments in social engineering. Why would I spend money some place where it is used to support an ideology that considers me a second or even third class citizen? Third class? Yes.

My Voice ABOUTTHE AUTHOR

Grant Darrow, of Elgin, has been a self-employed chimney sweep for 38 years.



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. Authors also should include their full name, age, occupation and relevant organizational memberships. 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, fax them to 541-963-7804 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.

Kate's current minimum wage laws clearly define third class citizens as living in rural Oregon. It's bad enough that the money I work so hard for is taxed and then is squandered on waste with no redeeming value added to my life or business. I am not an evil force.

I have fond memories of driving to Portland as early as 1958, before interstate highways, when you stopped in rural towns for stoplights and lunch all along the way. I remember the opening of the Lloyd Center and having a picnic in the park across from it. Our family would stay for several days. Shop, attend special events and enjoy a family-friendly big city. How many Portland residents now picnic in that park?

In the 1990s I would bring my own family to Portland. We would park in La Grande and take the Pioneer Amtrak train into Union Station. We would enjoy the ruralness of Eastern Oregon and the sudden transition into western Oregon at The Dalles. We enjoyed the courtesy ride to a downtown hotel and free Max downtown as we shopped for ourselves and others. I felt perfectly comfortable allowing my teenage daughters venture forth on their own. We enjoyed plays, concerts, exhibits, Saturday Market, Powell's Books and "fancy" restaurants. Not anymore. Portland is filthy, nasty and increasingly dangerous.

Last May I attended a five-day National Chimney Sweep Guild / Oregon Chimney Sweeps Association joint conference near the Lloyd Center. My first overnight stay in Portland in 15 years. What a mistake. I didn't travel downtown to entertain. I traveled east, away from the city center. At one point I overheard a couple from the Carolinas comment on what a friendly place Portland was, one could camp anywhere. I spent a lot of time trying to explain to visitors that Portland no longer represents Oregon — geographically, culturally or politically.

The politicians of the Portland Metropolitan area clearly cater to the forces of evil and hate with open arms, which only further stratifies our society, making life more unlivable on either end. Many Portland residents are understandably upset. How does this make Portland and consequently Oregon better? Time for a big change.



Your views

McHaddad: Is there a \$100 charge on your property taxes?

To the Editor:

Many Union County property owners will notice a \$100 service charge for "BMTV" on their property taxes this fall. Blue Mountain Translator District has been broadcasting channels from Portland and Boise since 1978, and we collect revenue through a system of service charges. Every June, BMTD mails service charge letters to all properties in our rural district where signals can be received, and properties within city limits where an antenna was discovered during a physical inspection.

Property owners must send in a voter-approved payment of \$100 for use of the signals or request an exemption by the following May, and BMTD has initiated the courtesy of sending a second letter to delinquent property owners every winter to ensure that no one is billed improperly. If BMTD does not receive the letter, the service charge is automatically entered onto the following year's property taxes as a lien.

erty taxes as a lien.

BMTD sent service charge letters in June 2017 and reminder letters in March 2018 that were due back on May 31. A sample of returned service charge letters from Union County was audited to ensure accurate entry in our database, and Assessor Cody Vavra reviewed our initial delinquent property list to ensure that ineligible properties were removed.

Entry of the charge on 2018-2019 property taxes was approved by BMTD's elected board of directors on June 12. This process is authorized by ORS 354.690, and BMTD has taken steps to ensure that these stat-

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.

My VOICE

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utes are correctly implemented. For more information about this process and our policies, visit www.bmtd.org or call 541-963-0196

Alex McHaddad BMTD secretary/treasurer

Whitaker: Seeds of change have been sown

To the Editor:

The 2018 midterm elections are now behind us. All residents of Union and Wallowa counties owe a big thank-you to the La Grande Observer for publishing so many letters from many perspectives on behalf of many candidates and issues during the campaign. Coverage by the Observer was an excellent example of freedom of the press in action.

As chair of the Union County Jamie McLeod-Skinner for Congress Campaign, I am grateful for our many supporters who wrote letters, knocked on doors, distributed hundreds of yard signs, made phone calls, staffed our office, leafletted at grocery stores, baked cookies, walked and talked, made the EOU Homecoming Parade and tailgating great successes for Jamie's campaign, proved that many small contributions can compete against massive corporate dark money donors, and volunteered in many other ways.

While we did not win the election this time, we have shown that a candidate who is not afraid to listen to her constituents, who supports the wellbeing of ordinary citizens in her congressional district and who is willing to fight to ensure that all of us have access to affordable, quality health care is a viable candidate. Together we have laid the foundation for future success.

The seeds we have sown are sprouting. The 2020 harvest is only two years away. Together, we will prevail.

Bill Whitaker La Grande

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Phone: **541-963-3161**

Toll free (Oregon): 1-800-422-3110 Fax: 541-963-7804 Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com

Website: www.lagrandeobserver.com Street address: 1406 Fifth St., La Grande

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STAFF

	Home delivery advisorAmanda Fredrick
	Customer service rep Mollie Lynch
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