

GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD
Oregon joins fight against time tyranny

Oregon might be on the verge of joining the resistance, and it's about time. No, not that resistance: We refer, instead, to the tyranny imposed on us by the nation's foolhardy twice-annual time switches, as we toggle between standard time and daylight saving time. We made the change again this weekend: At 2 a.m. Sunday, we once again heeded the instructions from our time lords and dutifully sprung ahead one hour, losing an hour of sleep forever.

But resistance is growing to these time switches, as evidence mounts they come with real risks to health. And the last thing an already sleep-deprived nation needs is to lose any more sleep.

So it is with joyful hearts that we report on Senate Bill 320 in the Oregon Legislature. If the measure passes, it would put this question to voters in the 2020 general election: Should Oregon switch to daylight saving time and stay there year-round?

Oregon is not alone in rising up against these time switches: Puerto Rico, Arizona and Hawaii already don't change their clocks. Legislators in California, Florida and Washington are considering various legislative proposals to do the same. (We like the idea of a unified West Coast stubbornly sticking with daylight saving time year-round.)

Although we have no specific complaint against either daylight saving time or standard time (it's the switching back and forth we object to), the truth is that the reasons why we adopted daylight saving time in the first place have not panned out.

Although popular legend suggests Benjamin Franklin was the first person to suggest daylight saving time, it's not true. Franklin did write an anonymous letter to a French publication suggesting the French could save on candles by rising earlier with the sun. He was joking. But the joke ended up being on us.

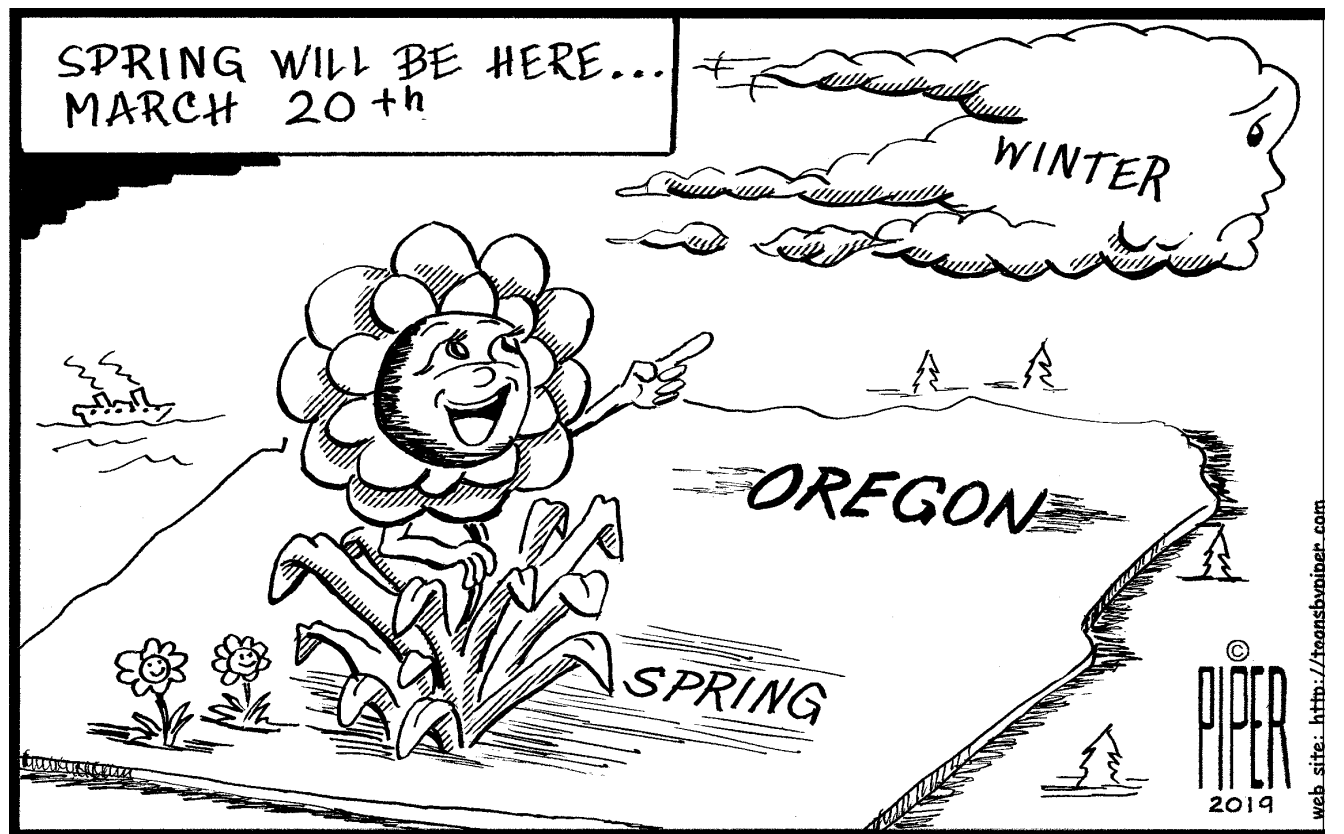
Daylight saving time wasn't implemented on a large scale until 1916, when Germany and its World War I ally Austria-Hungary set its clocks ahead an hour to save energy costs. Other nations, including the United States, followed suit. After World War I, other nations abandoned the idea, but not the United States. The idea of daylight saving time really picked up steam during the energy crisis of the 1970s.

But here's the deal: Evidence suggests daylight saving time hasn't saved on energy costs. It may reduce lighting use, but that's offset by increased costs for air conditioning and heating, and increased consumption of gasoline.

At the same time, it's becoming apparent the twice-yearly time switch brings with it increased health and safety risks. A researcher at the University of Washington reports heart attacks increase 24 percent in the week after the United States springs forward. (They also increase a bit in the week after we fall back.)

So the way forward is clear: Do away with the time switches. Choose either standard time or daylight saving time and stick with it. Our preference would be year-round daylight saving time, in part because keeping the extra hour of daylight in the evening would reduce the number of fatal wrecks on the roads and also because it would help deter criminals, who prefer to commit crimes during the dark evening and night hours. Keeping the darkness at bay for an hour would shorten the time in which these scofflaws can operate under the cover of darkness.

We still grudgingly turned our clocks forward before we went to bed Saturday night. But we did so with a glimmer of hope the last time we'll have to perform this odious ritual could be in March 2021; if voters approve the measure in the November 2020 election, we won't switch back to standard time in November 2021. So there could be light, literally, at the end of this particular tunnel. We'll say it again: It's about time.



You're more than just a customer

Author Anthony J. D'Angelo noted that "without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."

To a large degree, this reflects Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's philosophy toward our member-owners and the broader territory we serve. As a cooperative, we have a different "bottom line." While our priority is always to provide reliable and safe energy, there is another equally important part of this equation: Your well-being and that of the larger community we serve are of paramount concern.

To us, you are not just a customer. You are a member of our co-op and, without you, we would not exist.

In 1989, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative was founded to fulfill a vital need in our community that would not have otherwise been met. Concerned local leaders came together to build this co-op and bring electricity where there was none. At that time, members of the community understood we were different because they likely knew someone who helped to create OTEC. For most people, our founding

and its circumstances have been long forgotten. Over time, folks in the community may have come to think of us as simply another energy provider. However, OTEC strives to be more than that. We are a co-op that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of our members and the communities we serve. We are able to do this because of members like you.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from you and that of the larger community to guide our long-term decisions. This is why we hold annual meetings and other events, such as town meetings, and attend local chamber and other business meetings in each of our communities throughout the year. We host events like this to engage with you and obtain your feedback.

We are always looking to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently, whether that's home or business energy audits, rebate programs for locally purchasing energy efficient appliances, or offering flexible payment options like leveled billing. In short, we are always seeking to



My Voice ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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keep pace with the changing energy environment, evolving technology and shifting consumer expectations.

As a local business, we have a stake in the community. That's why we support local charitable organizations such as United Way of Eastern Oregon, Soroptimists, Lions Club and Rotary, and through our donation programs like Member to Member. When you support these efforts, you are supporting the community and making it a better place for everyone.

Another role for OTEC is engaging the membership. One of the ways the cooperative strives to accomplish this goal is through the OTEC website, which is undergoing a major overhaul, both in look and in name. Formerly www.otecc.com, the new website will be found at www.otec.coop.

While changing names, its mission remains the same: provide useful information and tools to help our member-owners. More than ever before we want to differentiate the work and achievements of your electric cooperative from others in the social media world.

The relationship you have with your cooperative is special, and one no other electric utility can offer. As a member of an electric cooperative, you are far more than just a customer. You are a member and an owner. You belong. You are part of making a difference.

While the times may have changed, our mission and outlook have not. We view our role as a catalyst for sustaining and growing our communities. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our community now and in the future.

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