

Our View



The Observer, File  
Young writers gather for a session in 2018 at Fishtrap, the literary nonprofit in Wallowa county. Fishtrap is one of dozens of local nonprofits and charities that could benefit from a boom during 2020's Giving Tuesday.

Giving matters

Today is Giving Tuesday. The idea came out of the nonprofit Mary-Arrchie Theater Company in Chicago, which nine years ago urged shoppers to donate to charity once they were done with their Cyber Monday shopping. Giving Tuesday went viral and became a global event.

Just as numerous local businesses are struggling under the constraints of COVID-19 mandates, so are dozens of local nonprofits. If you have a spare dollar or more, or spare time, consider giving to any of these or the other local nonprofits and charities operating in Northeast Oregon.

- **Northeast Oregon Network** — Works to improve health systems delivery and health systems planning programs for residents of Eastern Oregon: [www.neonoregon.org](http://www.neonoregon.org), 541-624-5101.

- **Shelter From the Storm** — Provides services to those who have been affected by interpersonal violence, sexual assault and stalking through advocacy, education and awareness: [www.unioncountysfs.org](http://www.unioncountysfs.org), 541-963-7226.

- **Union County Museum Society** — Presents and preserves the history of Union County and the surrounding area and operates the county's historical museum: [www.ucmuseumoregon.com](http://www.ucmuseumoregon.com), 541-562-6003.

- **Union County Warming Station** — Provides shelter and resources to preserve the life and health of those with no place to sleep during cold Union County winters: [www.ucwarmingstation.org](http://www.ucwarmingstation.org), to donate contact Ashley Smith at 541-786-6596 or [asmith@neonoregon.org](mailto:asmith@neonoregon.org).

- **Art Center East** — Community arts organization offers arts learning opportunities in regional schools and other accessible arts programming: [www.artcentereast.org](http://www.artcentereast.org), 541-624-2800.

- **Blue Mountain Humane Association** — Animal shelter and rescue committed to providing a safe, humane, high-save environment to connect all animals with their forever family, and reunite lost animals with their owners: [www.bmhumane.org](http://www.bmhumane.org), 541-963-0807.

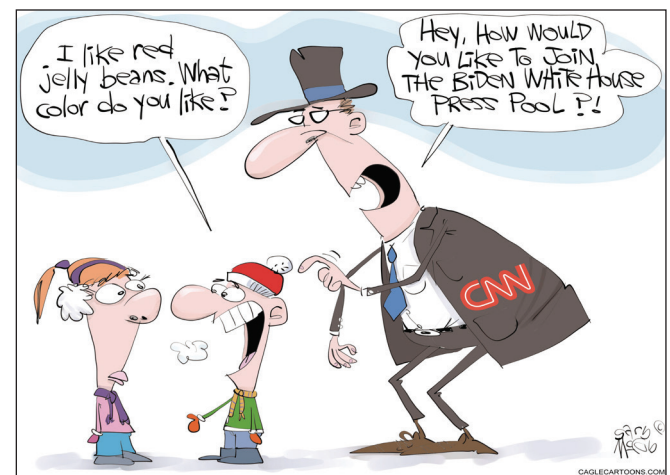
- **Wallowa Land Trust** — Works cooperatively with private landowners, Indian tribes, local communities and governmental entities to protect the rural nature of the Wallowa Country: [www.wallowalandtrust.org](http://www.wallowalandtrust.org), 541-426-2042.

- **Wallowa County Humane Society** — Committed to the well-being of companion animals: [www.wallowacountyhumanesociety.org](http://www.wallowacountyhumanesociety.org), 541-263-0336.

- **Wallowa Resources** — Creates strong economies and healthy landscapes through land stewardship, education and job creation: [www.wallowaresources.org](http://www.wallowaresources.org), 541-426-8053.

- **Fishtrap** — Promotes clear thinking and good writing in and about the West: [www.fishtrap.org](http://www.fishtrap.org), 541-426-3623.

- **Joseph Center for Arts and Culture** — Provides functional space so Wallowa County residents and visitors can view art, listen to music, watch theater, engage in workshops and classes and learn about and contribute to the history and culture of Wallowa County: [www.josephy.org](http://www.josephy.org), 541-432-0505.



Our View

Lawmakers should not hide tire tax

The new year will bring a new Oregon Legislature, and there are already discussions for new taxes.

There might be a new tax on tires. Other options are a new tax on the sale, lease and rental of off-road equipment; a new tax on new heavy trucks; and a new tax on diesel fuel used off-road. A legislative task force is set to discuss options on Thursday, Dec. 3.

It is for a good cause. Legislators are looking at these options to bring in money to provide incentives to help businesses reduce diesel emissions and get cleaner air. Waiting around for businesses to slowly adopt cleaner vehicles was believed to be happening too slowly. So legislators have been looking at ways to help vehicles burn cleaner fuel, burn

less or just burn cleaner.

The Legislature also won't necessarily move forward with all these taxes. It may just pick one. It might well be a tire tax.

There's already a federal tax on tires. Many states have them. The state taxes can be about \$1 per tire. West Virginia apparently charges the most at \$5 per tire.

The idea in Oregon might be to charge the tax and use the revenue to help with recycling tires and also put money into a fund to provide incentives to help businesses move to cleaner vehicles. That's basically what California already does. In Oregon, the Legislative Revenue Office estimates the annual average revenue from a surcharge of a \$1 per tire would be about \$3.1 million, growing with population growth.

The argument for a tire tax is it is related to the goal of reducing damage to roads and also reducing diesel emissions. Arguments against are pretty much the traditional against any new tax — the industry is already taxed in other ways and it just raises costs to consumers. There also is a fairly unique "equity" argument that there is no equivalent tax on railroads or transportation using waterways.

If the Legislature does move forward with a tire tax, lawmakers should require it be clearly labeled as a tax. Consumers should see it when they make their purchase. Legislators crafted Oregon's \$1 billion annual gross receipts tax to conceal the cost from consumers.

Don't do that with a tire tax.

Letters

More of Oregon's cherished rivers should be protected

I grew up hunting and fishing on public lands and waters all throughout Oregon, and now as a mother, I cherish what those memories, experiences and adventures do for my own children. My children thrive while experiencing the joy of nature and all it has to offer them. I see the importance of the outdoors through the lives and eyes of my children, especially when we are out exploring our public lands and waters.

Spending time on a river makes me happier, more attentive, more inclusive and more nurturing, and has an

enormously positive effect on the relationship I have with my children. The world today is hard to navigate, but when we are outdoors, we are focused on the present situation — the clean air, the clean water, the wildlife and the landscape. Wild and Scenic Rivers across the state of Oregon have improved the quality of life for my family.

There are 110,994 miles of river in Oregon. Only 2,173 of those river miles are protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Do the math

and that pencils out to less than 2% of our state's rivers that are protected. As a lifelong Oregonian, that statistic doesn't sit right with me, as I believe Oregonians overwhelmingly cherish our rivers and streams and the unforgettable memories we're able to create on them each year.

As such, my family was excited to see Sen. Wyden's public call for nominations for new Wild and Scenic River designations.

Chelsea Cassens  
Imbler

Write to us

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