

OUR VIEW

Road construction a necessary hassle

It's that time of year when construction crews will be out on local roads completing a series of projects and for locals that can mean delays and long waits.

It should also mean, though, that area motorists pay especially close attention around road project sites.

Accidents in the area involving road crews working on roads and motorists are fairly rare, but that doesn't mean they don't — or won't — happen.

We all can relate to sitting on the road waiting for what seems like hours to get by an area where crews are working on our highways. Sometimes — especially if we are in a hurry — that frustration can build and then erupt in a spate of careless, or inattentive driving.

That kind of incident not only puts the driver of the vehicle in danger but also puts the crews working on the project at risk.

The road projects are necessary and part of long-term plans by the Oregon Department of Transportation to maintain the pathways we all use to get from point A to point B.

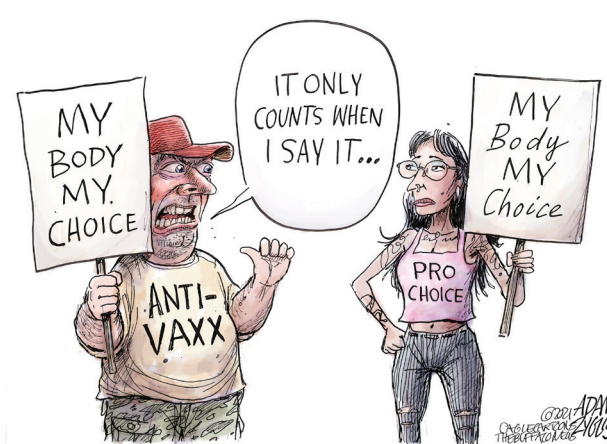
In short, the work is essential and necessary.

Every summer, construction crews fan out across the region to start a variety of projects, so their work has become sort of a time-honored tradition. We know when its summer from the high temperatures and from the amount of road construction projects that are going on throughout our local area.

Crews will be working on well-traveled arteries such as Oregon Highway 82 this month and throughout the summer. The delays will be there and so will the impulse to grow impatient. Try not to. We want everyone to be safe this summer and we don't want any local excursions to turn into a tragedy — either for area motorists or work crews.

Slowing down and being attentive will go a long way toward staying safe this summer.

We all want a good summer. Let's make sure we stay safe out there.



LETTERS

Anti-animal ag initiative is a very bad idea

I read an article a few weeks ago about Initiative Petition 13 ("Anti-animal ag initiative raises alarm among Oregon farm groups," May 20, 2021). I couldn't believe our state would even consider such a move. This would destroy any activities that involve animals.

Ranching of any kind could become a thing of the past. Animal control in regards to hunting, fishing would end, leading to an overabundance of crop-destroying animals.

This initiative would affect the production of meat and poultry (including eggs) and pork, which this bill says can only be used for consumption after the animal has died a natural death, meaning old unsafe meat. It also affects the safety of people in their homes. If this bill passes no one will be allowed to kill a rat or for that matter a bug in their home without breaking the law. The organizations like FFA and 4-H, which train ranchers and farmers, could become a thing of the past.

In the letters to the editor also on May 20 Duane Berry stated, "For way too long rural Oregonians have lived under the thumb of a Democratic governor and Legislature that design the rules and laws to fit the metropolitan scene, totally ignoring the lifestyle of ranchers, logger and citizens in rural Northeastern Oregon." This quote was in regards to Northeastern Oregon becoming part of Idaho, but it fits with Initiative 13.

This idea of meat production and ranching was brought up by our vice president as part of their new idea of a "Green New Deal," which so far has proven to be harmful for our country as gas prices are way up due to the shutdown of oil and natural gas production.

Mr. David Michelson, the chief petitioner of the bill and an animal rights activist, has presented this bill and has reached one hurdle of receiving 1,000 sponsorship signa-

tures. The next step will be to collect 112,020 signatures to have it placed on the November ballot.

This initiative is bad for our state as well as our nation and must be stopped here in Oregon. We still have time to stop this. It is the worst thing that could happen.

Gail Baker
La Grande

American Capitalism should work for employees, as well

The American capitalistic system is based on supply and demand. When there is not enough product to supply the number of people who want and can afford it, the prices increase. When there is more product than people want or can afford, prices go down.

Supposedly, this creates a balance that benefits both consumers and producers. According to the theory, there is no need for the government to be involved in this system. Because of a global pandemic, production has been low. Workers were furloughed, laid off or unable to work because of disease. The economy tanked and not enough goods were produced to keep businesses going.

The government, in order to prevent a serious economic depression, provided subsidies for furloughed, laid off or disabled workers to keep the people from doing without their basic needs. While receiving assistance to meet their needs, families survived and the economy began to show the possibility of improving.

To the surprise of many capitalists, unemployed workers are not eager to return to work for the low-wage salaries they were barely surviving on before the pandemic. Apparently, the potential employees are reluctant to go back to the low-paying jobs. They are unwilling to accept jobs producing goods they cannot afford to buy.

Now our American capitalists conclude that government must become involved. Because they are not getting their workers back, employers are demanding that the government stop

paying subsidies to help families survive. CEOs and business owners want the government to force workers back to work for less than sustaining wages.

So my question is, if capitalism works for pricing goods, why is it not useful for paying workers to produce the goods? Couldn't the theory of supply and demand apply here?

Evelyn Swart
Joseph

People need psychiatric care in their community

The Oregon State Hospital is nearly full. Members of the military have been called in to care for patients in need of 24-hour on-site nursing and psychiatric care. What led to the crisis? Our mental health system is meant to provide a range of care. Tragically, we have not yet built a key piece of this system: treatment services that people can access in the community.

People are surging into the level of care that's meant as a last resort — our state psychiatric hospital — and stressing it. This is a natural and foreseeable consequence of not building the other essential parts of the system.

In less than 10 years, people who do not have the mental capacity to stand trial because they are unable to help their attorney defend them in court have more than tripled. As a portion of the OSH's overall patient caseload, the percentage of these patients climbed from 11% in 2012 to 69% in 2021.

People who could have been treated in the community are ending up at OSH. Because OSH is the most restrictive, least cost-effective part of our system, the human and financial tolls of this practice are enormous. People do better when they can access treatment in their community. Subjecting individuals to unnecessary segregation and institutionalization is unconscionable.

We solve this by providing people housing, supports, and the treatment they need where they live.

KC Lewis
Portland

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