

OUR VIEW

# Key steps to avoid heat injuries

About the only good thing about the heat wave that is now descending upon much of the West is the Grand Ronde Valley will not suffer alone under the stifling rays of the sun.

The high-pressure dome that is sitting over our region will push temperatures into the triple digits in many places — including La Grande — and the danger from a heat injury will rise exponentially for area residents.

Last week, Observer reporters Carlos Fuentes, Davis Carbaugh and Dick Mason did a great job of outlining the risks from high heat in a story, but we want to add to that precautionary tale.

That's because the type of high temperatures the region will see this week are far above normal and pose a risk to those who disregard their potential impact.

Falling victim to the heat is not as difficult as it may seem. Especially for most of us, the hot temperatures this week are uncommon, which means our bodies are not prepared.

There are, of course, some easy measures all of us can take to avoid a heat injury. First and foremost, drink water. Sounds simple enough but often people in hot weather conditions forget this basic step. High temperatures can quickly dehydrate a person even before they are aware there is a danger. Another easy step, if you must work outside, is to pace yourself and to take breaks in the shade.

If you have air conditioning, use it. If you do not, fans are a good, safe bet to stay cool. If you can acquire neither, seek out publicly accessible air-conditioned places.

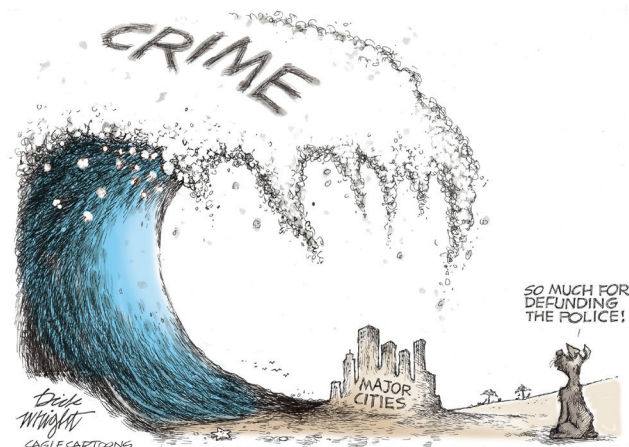
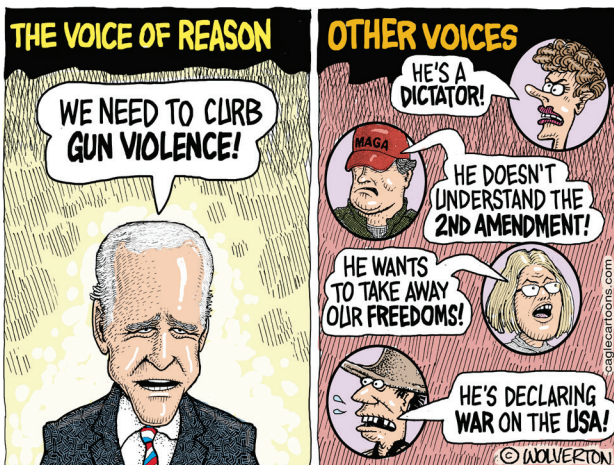
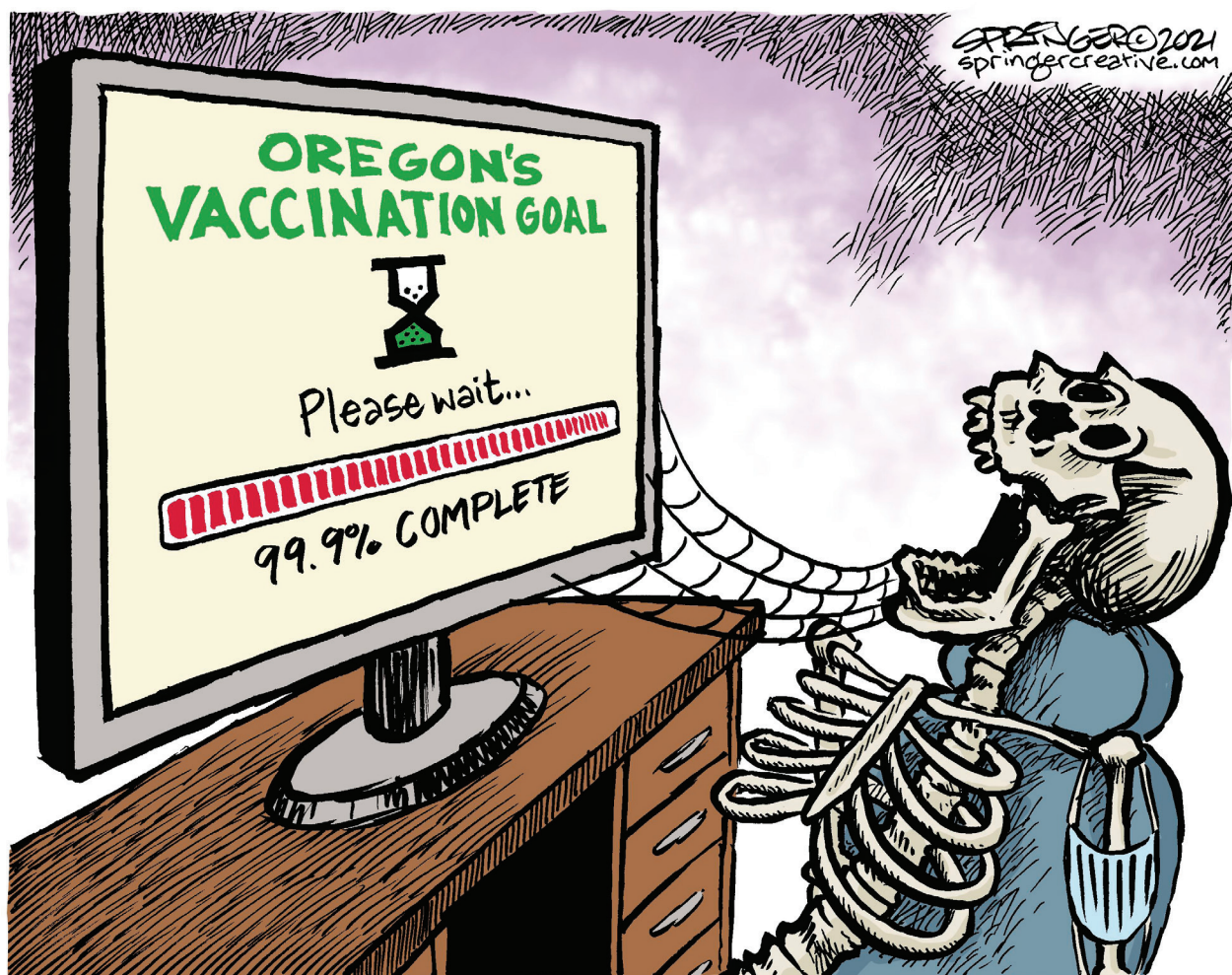
If you know an elderly person, or someone with a serious preexisting condition, check on them during this time of high temperatures.

Suffering from a heat injury is no joke. Heat-stroke and heat exhaustion are real, and they can have serious medical complications.

However, a few key steps, as outlined above, can go a long way in avoiding becoming a victim of the unusually excessive heat.

The summer is here, and we all want to enjoy it. Clear blue skies and lots of sun are what summer is all about, but no one wants to see someone become sick or injured because of a heat wave.

So be careful out there.



## Act leaves more questions than answers



**DONNA BEVERAGE**  
OTHER VIEWS

As a Union County commissioner I do not support the efforts of Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley to designate an additional 4,700 miles of Oregon's streams and rivers as wild and scenic, as defined by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Union County is troubled by the lack of communication between county leadership and the senators in regard to the draft bill, "The River Democracy Act." It is a misuse of the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to address the issues the senators say they are concerned about — water quality, reducing wildfire threats and expanding recreation access.

The process used by the senators to identify streams was flawed, involving only a minor group of individuals and organizations. It did not include any consultation or coordination with local elected officials. I first learned about it when it was already nominated. When I asked who nominated it, I was told that was not public information. We have asked for maps of the proposed miles and have not received them. Not coordinating with local county officials

or even allowing them at the table before proposing such an act is just wrong.

The designation in fact will do nothing to reduce wildfire threats, protect drinking water or sustain endangered fish and wildlife species. In fact, through the management limitations required under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, just the opposite will occur.

This proposed act will add additional layers of bureaucratic overlays, complicating an already complicated management scenario while increasing opportunities for litigation and inaction by our federal agencies to accomplish their management directives. There will be no additional staffing nor money to manage the segments, and they will simply be words and lines on a map.

The multiple use requirement of these public lands, as defined in the 1960 Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act and others, must be maintained for the economic welfare and enjoyment of our citizens and visitors. The restriction or elimination of the customary uses on proposed and existing special land use designations must be minimized. Any proposed changes must be coordinated with local governments and others as defined through the Congressional Coordination statute.

I do not support any additional

designations such as those proposed under the RDA. For the health, safety, welfare and continued economic viability of our citizens, we must protect the use of public lands and water.

I am asking the senators to schedule a public meeting with commissioners in which we may interact with them regarding this proposed legislation, so the citizens of Union County may hear what they are proposing and have the opportunity to ask questions themselves.

Union County has been working with OWRD and a diverse group of stakeholders on a Place-Based Water Plan for the Upper Grande Ronde Basin for the last 4-1/2 years, including local ranchers, farmers, cities, state and federal agencies. At no time during these public meetings was the proposed River Democracy Act brought up or discussed. I attend Soil and Water Conservation District meetings as well as Grande Ronde Model Watershed meetings and this has never been discussed. We don't even know who nominated it for our area or who they might represent.

As an elected official, I don't think this is the way to handle such important issues.

*Donna Beverage is a Union County commissioner.*

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