

OUR VIEW

# Fairgrounds gets needed cash infusion

The major spending package approved by Oregon lawmakers at the end of the so-called short session will deliver a lot of money to Eastern Oregon, and while many projects of merit will receive cash the most significant outlay is money for the Union County Fairgrounds.

The fairgrounds are on track to receive \$1 million, and it will be able to use every cent of that to help fund renovations projects, not the least of which will be the building of a new sewer line connection. The new connection will allow sewage to run from the facility to the city of La Grande's wastewater system. That, in turn, will mean the fairgrounds will once again have functioning restrooms, an amenity — really a necessity — that has been missing.

The sewer line project will cost about \$2 million. The fairgrounds received around \$270,000 in state funds earlier this year, and the additional \$1 million from the new spending package will certainly go a long way to solving the sewer line challenge.

That should be great news to the residents of Union County. The fairground facility is more than just a place to hold a carnival once a year but an historic element to the county. Its worth cannot be evaluated in simple terms of expediency but must be seen through a holistic lens. The fairgrounds provide a place every year for the 4-H youth of the county to show off their hard work, and it also functions as an emergency site for such operations as COVID-19 vaccinations.

The \$1 million outlay is the work of a host of lawmakers who deserve to be lauded. Those lawmakers ensured that money could be sent to fairgrounds across Eastern Oregon, including Malheur, Baker and Harney counties. The money is needed and will arrive not a moment too soon.

We often can take a facility like the Union County Fairgrounds for granted. We shouldn't. That's because such facilities are part of our hometown fabric and should never be forgotten or dismissed. Is more money needed for the fairgrounds? Certainly. Yet this latest infusion of funds will help get a facility we need back on track toward the future.



YOUR VIEWS

## Elitist wolf policy is not equitable

Is the wolf policy equitable? We learned that introducing wolves to Yellowstone destroyed up to 80% of the elk population. Following that, we are now encouraging the destruction of peoples' food and their cultural existence by further encouraging wolves.

Indigenous peoples' treaties have hunting rights. The proliferation of wolves can vitiate these rights and we need not take responsibility for what we have done. Indigenous peoples' culture and religion and the hunt intertwine, as well as access to the health benefits of this nutritious protein.

Rural people with little money who have supplemented their diets and bonded in other ways around the hunt see the ending of this viable and healthy activity.

Is the experience of the individual who is eating a piece of jerky they made the same psychologically as the individual who is going to pick up their government cheese?

Is there going to be a difference psychologically in independence and self-satisfaction?

The ability to survive and shoot straight, skills of an unmoneyed rural people, have made us the people who fight your wars for you.

Our military is composed of all skin colors of rural people without much money. By feeding this food source to the wolves, access to the

skills that made us valuable soldiers is being lost.

The wolf policy is elitist, and the damage that it causes is suffered by the people who live on the frontiers and in the forest, Indigenous and other unmoneyed people. That is not equitable.

Katy Nelson  
John Day

## Americans should defend freedom in Ukraine

Before the USA entered World War I, an American contingent of pilots composed a group known as the Lafayette Escadrille under French command. These pilots became distinguished during that war. They felt it was necessary to defend freedom.

Before the USA entered World War II, there was the American volunteer group in China fighting the Japanese as pilots under Claire Chennault.

What has happened to the idea of Americans volunteering to support freedom from foreign invasion?

I propose calling on American veterans willing to support to help Ukraine. I am 78 and in poor shape to volunteer for such a venture. I am willing to die for Ukrainian people. I could be used as cannon fodder. We could use as our war flag the Gadsden flag (coiled rattlesnake with words "Don't Tread On Me"), known as the Rattlesnake Contingent.

Anyone interested please contact me.  
Rudy Candler  
Union

## Runaway spending gouges taxpayers

Every adult Oregonian should do the math as it relates to the Oregon Legislature's runaway spending of Oregon taxpayer money estimated at \$1.4 billion.

Then they should voice their yea or nay on this pork barrel giveaway to their local tax-and-spend senator and/or representative. I'm sure the majority-voiced vote will loudly, and resoundingly, cry "nay."

Why? Consider this. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the July 1, 2021, Oregon population to be 4.2+ million. Divide \$1.4 billion by 4.2 million and you get an astounding (potential refund of) \$333+ per person. For a family of four, it's a whopping \$1,332. A family of eight, \$2,664.

I'm sure the wide majority of pandemic-stricken Oregonians behind on their rent, unable to pay their utility bills, helpless to put food on the table, and/or can't afford to buy gas to get to and from work would appreciate that refunded money in their pocket rather than have it thrown at questionable projects, probably already eligible for federal funding, located way out in the most rural of Oregon's areas.

To boot, chances are highly likely most residents will never see the benefits of their own ill-gouged, legislatively appropriated money. Just because you have it doesn't mean you have to spend it. To correct the issue, adjust the tax rates biannually.

Fred Couzens  
Bend

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