

OUR VIEW

City, county need to find solution

It is time for Union County and the city of La Grande to fish or cut bait regarding a proposal to build a major water and sewer line to connect the fairgrounds to the city system.

At stake, of course, is the future viability of what should be a pretty important venue, but city officials have recently raised questions about, essentially, who will pay for the long-term sustainability of the project. The project will include not only the line but a lift station. Both the line and the lift station will need to be built and maintained for many years.

The project — at least for now — carries about a \$2.1 million price tag. The venture will be divided into two phases. The first phase — at about a cost of \$1.52 million — is possible through state funding and local fundraising efforts. The second phase of the project includes construction of new restroom facilities at the fairgrounds.

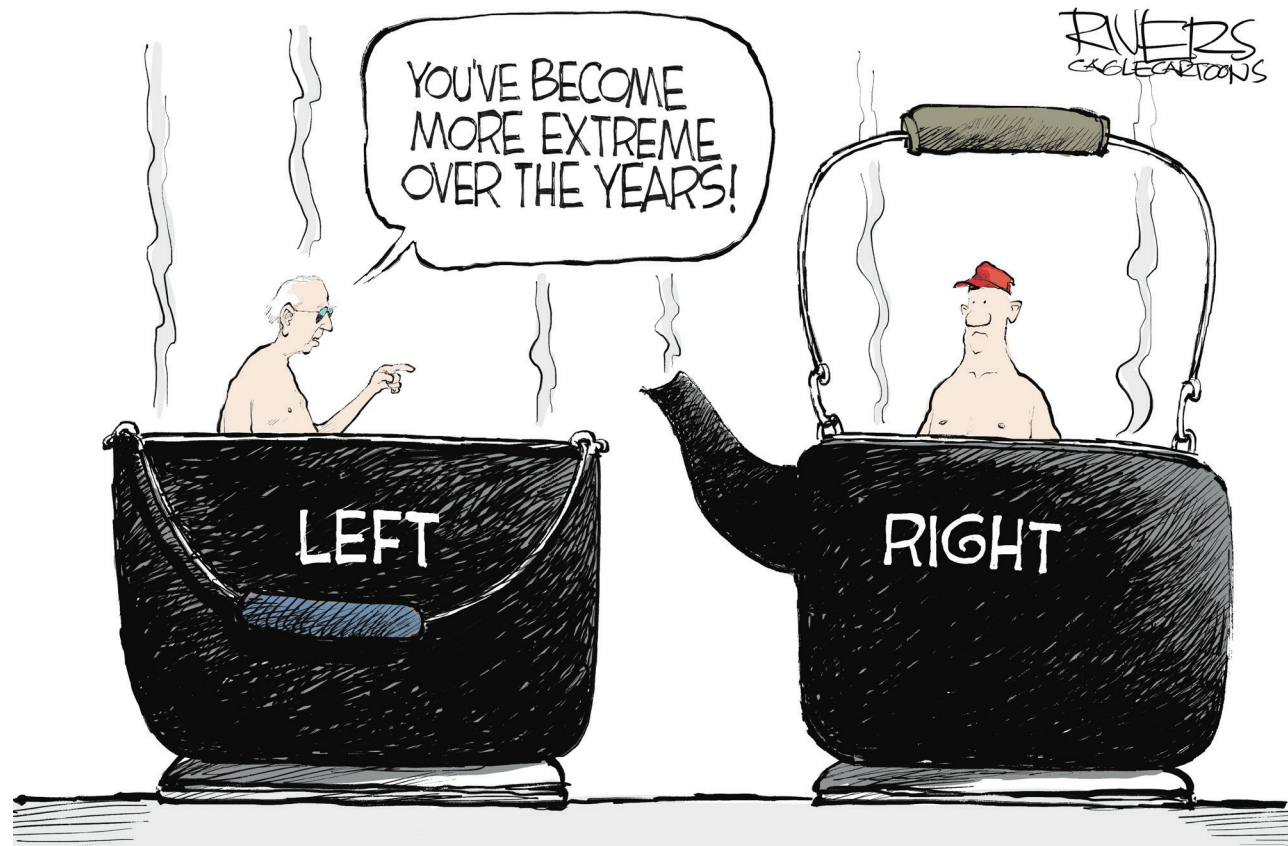
City leaders are quite right to list future costs of maintenance and ownership of a lift station as challenges. Taxpayers expect their city manager, public works director and elected members of the council to ask tough questions and seek answers. If they were not asking questions about items such as who will own the lift station and maintain it and the water/sewer line they wouldn't be doing their jobs.

The county, to its credit, earmarked funds — \$250,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act — to construct the sewer line as the Oregon Department of Transportation completes work on the Second Street bridge.

The county and the city appear to be working forward to make the plan a reality, but far more needs to be done. City officials and the fairground board need to iron out the details about future responsibilities of the line and the lift station as soon as possible. The county should explore ways to get more money for the project because there are other avenues.

For one, county officials need to be in active discussions with our state representatives to find more cash. Simply asking for help and taking no for an answer isn't going to fly on this project. The state Legislature's Emergency Board is slated to meet early this summer and there is no reason why county leaders, through their elected representatives, couldn't ask for some help.

The bottom line is a simple one: The county needs a fully functioning fairgrounds, and that means sewer and water. It's time for our elected and appointed leaders to solve this problem.



OTHER VIEWS

Spending more taxpayer money is not the answer

I side with Mr. Phil Myer on the La Grande School Bond Measure 31-105. I am voting No on this school bond issue.

The Annex building's age has nothing to do with the fact that the building can continue to be of value and used. It could be painted and repaired for further use. We taxpayers have funded school district money for a new and beautiful Central Elementary building, new tennis courts, a new track, removal of the previous Central, and the list goes on. If the bond issue passes it is going to cost La Grande tax payers as Mr. Myer pointed out.

The La Grande School District spent a sizeable amount of money for yard posters and sending mail information to pass this bond issue. We taxpayers paid for that cost.

The district has done this before. A few years ago they had a drive to remove and replace Willow School. Willow is a beautiful older school building and has a gym that the district could not replace in quality. Making some needed changes to a building is not money lost and those changes are always made at a cost less than building a new structure.

The La Grande School District has spent \$32 million since 2014. Another \$4.845 million, plus a state grant of \$4 million, making it a total of \$8.845 million is not the answer.

Gary L. Feasel
La Grande

Nothing but positive words for Anderes

Fair, inclusive, thoughtful, responsive, trustworthy, leader.

These are only six of the positive words that define Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes. Paul has been strong and active commissioner from day one. He has advocated for Union County locally, regionally and statewide, always being mindful of his constituents and their needs.

Paul is approachable to all and truly listens to the voices of the people he represents. Commissioner Anderes has proven to be a strong and decisive leader. He successfully helped to guide the county through the challenges of a pandemic, as he maximized as many state and federal resources as were available.

Our agricultural community can count on Paul to forge relationships and build trust as he works tirelessly to relieve farmers and ranchers of the devastating effects of elk depredation, as he works to increase non-lethal wolf compensation, and as he understands the need for additional

local and regional meat processing. He truly understands the financial impacts of agriculture in Union County.

Union County voters can count on experienced proven leadership, successful cohesive relationships and intelligent, thoughtful advocacy for everyone. I urge you to cast your vote to reelect Paul Anderes for Union County Commissioner.

Cheryl Martin
North Powder

Anderes failed to assist

I am a longtime neighbor of Paul Anderes and I question his attendance at his office Monday through Friday.

In The Observer, Paul "explained that a number of projects he began have not been completed because of COVID 19." What are these projects and how did COVID prevent him from completing them?

When Paul was elected, I went to him with an airport billing issue that I had been dealing with for several years. The airport is one of Paul's "primary liaison" duties. It was a simple situation to clear up. Paul did nothing but refer the situation to the public works director. Paul never followed up with me regarding the outcome. To resolve this issue, I incurred legal fees as well as the county taxpayer through the county attorney's office. This is an example of how Paul has failed to assist a citizen of Union County.

Louie Lyman
La Grande

Impressed with Anderes' positive drive and enthusiasm

I am endorsing Paul Anderes as our best candidate for Union County Commissioner for a second term. He has served with 150% commitment for the county during his first term.

I have known about Paul for 15 years. My brother was his colleague at Oregon State University during Paul's master program in agricultural education. He is a well-known leader in the high school agricultural education venue. His FFA leadership was a boon for his current leadership role.

Mr. Anderes has been, and continues to be, a leader for multiple Union County objectives:

- Promoter for emergency fuel source at the Union County Airport.
- Active member of the Grande Ronde Hospital Foundation Board, advocating for the new hospital renovation.
- Community liaison for public health administration, county emergency management and hospital leadership initiative.

• Active supporter for Union County high school FFA activities. (I recently saw him at the Imbler FFA Annual Dinner where he was volunteering, serving up barbecue).

• Advocate for early opening for Union County Schools during COVID shutdowns.

• Prominent member of the community who is interested in constituents' concerns.

All in all, Mr. Anderes loves working for the members of our county, from hospital employees to ODOT snowplow drivers. I have never seen a county commissioner be more involved with positive drive and enthusiasm.

I wholeheartedly support Mr. Anderes' run for his second term as a Union County Commissioner. Please join me in voting for Paul for his second term.

Gerrie Gardner
Summerville

Photographs should be judged at face value

The category of "significantly manipulated" applied to photography in some exhibits today is confusing. I philosophically disagree with that premise. I believe photographs could be divided by things like portrait, scenery, abstract and so on. More is not needed.

All photographs are "manipulated." A photographer chooses variables, camera body, distance, lens, shutter speed, ISO, aperture, filters, gels, strobes vs. ambient light, etc. There is no precise definition of "significantly manipulated."

Cameras in cellphones change photographs taken with them. Do people applying "effects" consider that "manipulation"?

Photography in and of itself is the art or process of producing images by the action of radiant energy and especially the "manipulation" of light on a sensitive surface such as film or an optical sensor. A photograph is not necessarily "done" when it comes out of a camera.

I think photographs should be judged at face value. Tagging them "manipulated" is confusing. When you look at a picture you know what you like and do not like, we all do.

Throughout history "The Arts" have always alluded to free expression. That which had never been imagined was created by free thinkers. There was no criteria for the "how" of the creation, simply an awe of what was presented.

The category called "significantly manipulated" results in confusion for everyone and serves no legitimate purpose.

Michael A. Gove
La Grande

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