



LIZ WESTON
ASK LIZ

Keep some financial records on paper

Dear Liz: You've advocated for going paperless. My preference for paper financial documentation over electronic versions is that paper provides "proof" in the event something compromises online or email reporting. What am I missing?

Answer: Proof of what, exactly?

That's not a rhetorical question. If you don't understand why you're retaining a document, and what the alternatives are, you risk burying yourself in paper.

Consider your bank statements, for example. Your paper document is just a reproduction of the digital files that the bank securely stores and regularly backs up. If you do the same, regularly downloading statements and backing them up to secure storage, there's no reason to convert the files to paper. Paper is in fact more vulnerable, since it can burn up in a house fire, be destroyed in a flood or simply have its ink fade to illegibility. In the rare circumstance where you actually need to provide a paper document, you can simply print it out.

Many people don't even bother downloading their statements. Many financial institutions allow you to access five or more years' worth of statements for free, which is as long as you're likely to need such access.

There are a few documents you should keep in physical form either because they're most useful that way (passports and driver's licenses, for example) or because accessing or replacing them can be a hassle (birth certificates, citizenship certificates, divorce degrees and military discharge papers, among others). Even these documents, though, should be scanned and stored securely in case they're lost or destroyed.

Can Roth conversions reduce mandatory withdrawals?

Dear Liz: It appears required minimum distributions will force me to take an additional \$3,500 per month from my retirement funds starting in four years at age 72. This added taxable draw will greatly impact my income tax liabilities as I'm now fully retired. Are there any strategies at this time to reduce the hit? As my current income tax rate is 12% federal and 9% state, perhaps I should convert some of these funds to Roth IRAs?

Answer: Partial Roth conversions when your tax bracket is low can be an excellent way to reduce future mandatory withdrawals and save on taxes in the long run.

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'Joe Beans 2.0'



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

Colleen and Al MacLeod, right, the owners of Joe Beans Coffee, are all smiles on Tuesday, May 31, 2022, as they prepare to reopen their downtown La Grande coffee and sandwich shop. Kody Guentert, shown above in 2020, operated the Brother Bear Cafe in the location over the past two years. When the space became available again, the MacLeods welcomed the opportunity to come out of semi-retirement and again run the popular downtown gathering spot.



Al and Colleen MacLeod/Contributed Photo

Familiar faces set to take over downtown coffee shop

By **DICK MASON** • The Observer

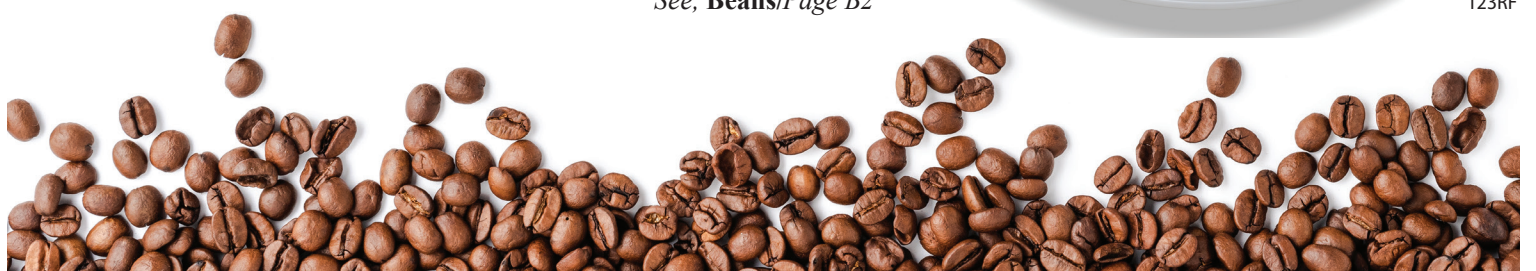
LA GRANDE — Change is brewing in La Grande. Joe Beans Coffee, a coffee and sandwich shop owned and operated by Colleen and Al MacLeod from 2010 to 2020, is opening again at its former site, 1009 Adams Ave.

"We should reopen next week," Colleen MacLeod said on Monday, May 30. The MacLeods' old shop has been run by Kody Guentert over the past two years after he became its owner in 2020 and operated it under the name Brother Bear Cafe. Guentert is moving out of the coffee shop business to pursue other career opportunities, a move that has allowed the MacLeods to come out of



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123RF



Working to get the 'lead' out of aviation fuel

FAA indicates ban coming on leaded gas for small planes

By **FARRON BROUGH**
Columbia Insight

PORTLAND — Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency issued a statement that many felt was long overdue.

In January, the federal agency announced it would "evaluate whether emissions from piston-engine aircraft operating on leaded fuel contribute to air pollution that endangers public health and welfare."



Jurgenhessphotography/Contributed Photo

Flying through a loophole: Unlike automobiles, small aircraft still rely on leaded fuel.

The EPA said it would issue a proposed "endangerment finding" for piston-engine aircraft that run on leaded fuel. The public

review and comment process will take place in 2022 and final action will be taken in 2023.

The decision was

more than a decade in the making.

In 2012, Friends of the Earth and Earthjustice filed a lawsuit against the EPA, challenging the agency's failure to respond to a 2006 petition from Friends of the Earth asking for the regulation of lead emissions from general aviation aircraft under the Clean Air Act. In 2014, the same group, along with Oregon Aviation Watch, a public advocacy group based in Hillsboro, petitioned the EPA to make an immediate endangerment finding.

The agency denied the petition.

While levels of airborne lead in the United States

have declined 99% since 1980, according to the EPA, small piston-engine aircraft that still operate on leaded fuel are the largest remaining source of lead emissions into the air.

"Protecting children's health and reducing lead exposure are interlocking priorities at the core of EPA's agenda," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan in the January statement. "EPA has been investigating the air quality impact of lead emissions from piston-engine aircraft near airports for years, and now we're going to apply that information to

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