

OUR VIEW

What should La Grande do with its \$3 million?

La Grande residents have a great opportunity to give feedback soon regarding where a large chunk of federal cash should be spent.

And everyone should take advantage of that opportunity.

The city is set to receive \$3 million as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, and officials want input from residents about the influx of funds.

Believe it or not, that's the easy part. The hard part will be whittling down what is sure to be an array of different places and projects where the money could be of great help.

The other challenge will be collecting enough ideas from the public. As easy as this seems — just think up a good idea and give it to the city — apathy and busy lives can prevent participation.

We hope that isn't the case. We hope, instead, that the city is inundated with good ideas about where the money can be best spent. Putting together those good ideas though will take some work. The \$3 million isn't going to last forever. That means ideas should be plausible and workable.

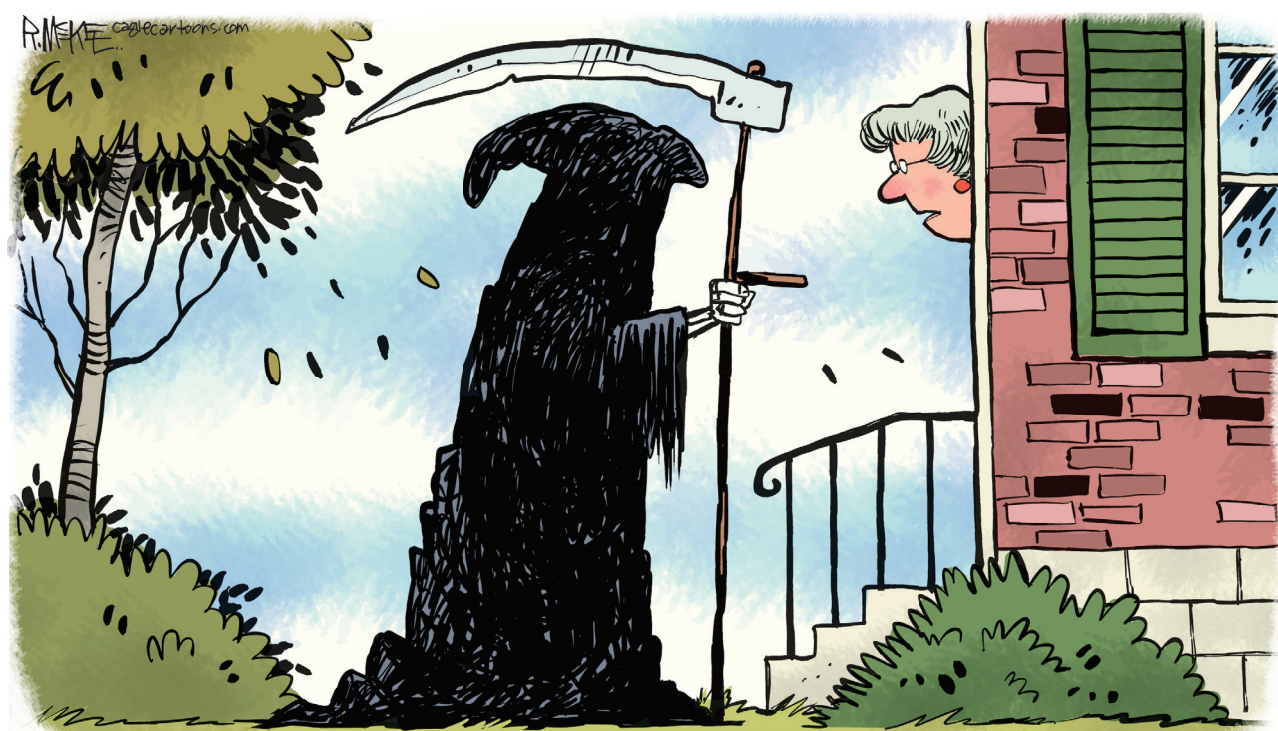
The city deserves a great deal of credit on this particular move. City leaders could easily have just announced the money is on the way and then regulated the decisions on it to council meetings.

Yet, city leaders decided they want feedback from the public. Instead of just spending the money, they want residents to get involved and be part of the solution.

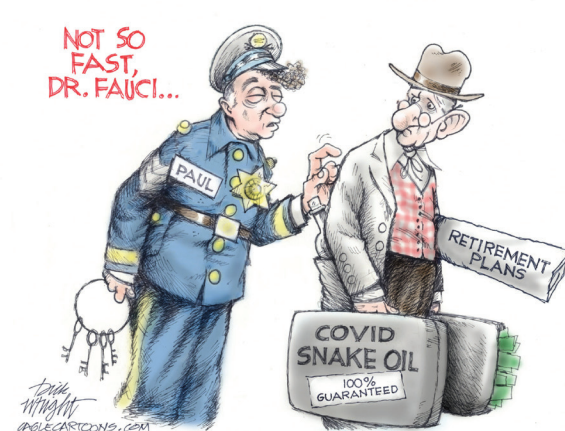
City leaders could have taken the easy way out, but they did not. They want all the ideas. They want to seek solutions and create an atmosphere where voters are truly part of the decision-making process.

Now it is up to the voters to come up with some great ideas. We hope every resident takes a little bit of time to think about what project should be funded and why it is important to fund it. The more ideas, really, the better. That way city leaders have an abundance of prospects instead of an empty idea cupboard.

La Grande residents should not let this golden opportunity slip by. It is an opportunity that will not be around forever nor come along again any time soon.



"I'M SORRY, DEAR, YOU'LL HAVE TO COME BACK LATER. IT'S FOOTBALL SEASON AND THE GAME IS ON."



An encouraging thought for the future



ANDREW CUTLER
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I am always amazed by how the people of our region respond when a natural disaster strikes. The most recent example — the work of so many in Wallowa County after an epic hailstorm delivered havoc — is just one of a number of cases when people have jumped in to offer assistance in the wake of a disaster. Yet that kind of resiliency isn't out of the ordinary. When the Umatilla River flooded in 2020, the area residents displayed the same kind of vigor to help their neighbors. We often spend a great deal of time focusing on what divides us as a nation, state or region. From the 50,000-foot level it might appear as if we are so bitterly divided that

Those who live in Eastern Oregon are a hardy and resilient bunch. We are used to challenge and familiar with overcoming obstacles.

helping each other out in a time of crisis would be a nonstarter.

True, there is a lot that divides us politically. Just a cursory glance at the TV news every night — no matter what network you view — shows that firm battle lines are drawn over a host of issues. And there is a whole lot of shouting going on.

I still, though, believe in the basic good nature of the people who live in our great nation. I agree it is difficult to see through the smoke of our current political discourse to be able to realize we have far more in common than not.

We seem to be eager to stand on the other side of a particular political fence and do a lot of yelling, but when a serious crisis appears, we jump to help. We step up and converge on places of crisis and do all we can to help others. Often, I am inclined to believe that kind of performance is simply unique to our part of the state. Those

who live in Eastern Oregon are a hardy and resilient bunch. We are used to challenge and familiar with overcoming obstacles.

When I really ponder it, though, I see that Americans in general are resilient. We flock to help out when a hurricane or tornado hits. We give up our time to lend a hand to neighbors affected by fires, floods and storms.

So just about the time I think we are so polarized we can barely function, a natural disaster strikes — such as the hailstorm in Wallowa County — and people run to help. They do it without payment and without the goal of praise. They do it because it's right.

We have a diverse and beautiful region and it is populated for the most part by good people who are willing to help when they are needed.

That's not only refreshing to see but also encouraging for the future.

■ Andrew Cutler is the interim editor of The Observer and the regional editorial director for the EO Media Group, overseeing The Observer, East Oregonian and four more newspapers in Eastern Oregon.

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