

OUR VIEW

Boards, commissions must represent all of Oregon

One of the least-heralded and most-important jobs a governor has is appointing members of the many boards and commissions that populate the state government.

In Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown is responsible for filling the rolls of 195 boards and commissions. In doing that, she shapes the voice and advice they provide to her administration.

That's why it is imperative that those boards fairly reflect the interests of all of Oregon, not just the

population centers. That is especially important for any board that deals with natural resource issues.

Currently, the state Fish and Wildlife Commission, which often makes decisions impacting rural landowners across the state, lacks any member who is involved in farming, ranching or forestry.

Ten Oregon natural resource organizations recently sent a letter to Brown pointing that out and urging her to include a farmer, rancher or forester on the commission.

We agree.

According to the state website, currently on the commission are a retired National Park Service superintendent, a wildlife biologist, a fish feed manufacturer, a former legislator and "passionate outdoorsman," the head of small business development for the City of Portland, a lawyer who likes to hunt and fish, and a fish market and restaurant owner.

But no farmers, ranchers or foresters.

It's time to correct that shortcoming. According to the website, two members' terms have expired. As governor of Oregon, Brown must make sure that commission — and all others related to natural resources — represent all of the state.

One way to do that is to make sure the boards and commissions — especially those governing natural resources — include members actively involved in farming, ranching and forestry.

Guest comment

Tom Mallams



Klamath dam removal vote a victory for citizens

By TOM MALLAMS
For the Capital Press

A great victory for all the citizens of Klamath County, Ore., was achieved on Aug. 31.

This was accomplished by the Klamath County Board of Commissioners holding the line against the well-funded, well-connected, dam removal and Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement supporters.

At last, the Klamath County voters will have the opportunity to voice their opinion on Klamath dam removal during the November election.

The actual wording of the ballot isn't exactly what the citizens asked for, but it is certainly better than the option of having no vote at all.

I still find it extremely troubling that a few vocal dam removal supporters and PacifiCorp went to such great lengths in their attempt to prevent the voters from having their voices heard.

I would hazard a guess that they already knew what the outcome will be and would prefer to continue to ignore the people!

Remember some time back, Siskiyou County, Calif., voters were given the same opportunity and the result was 80 percent against the destruction of the Klamath River dams.

Even more troubling is the quoted comments from an incoming Klamath County commissioner: "It would be a waste of taxpayers' funds and county employees' time to conduct a survey that would have no impact."

Since when is it a waste of time to listen to, and follow through on, what the citizens have requested?

If this vote will have no impact, why was there so much effort expended attempting to stop the vote of the people from happening?

The citizens within the Klamath Basin have said time and time again that Klamath dam removal should not happen and that includes the one-sided concept of the proposed water "settlements." Blackmail does not equal settlement.

Our very national and especially our federal policymakers are watching intently on what is happening in the Klamath Basin. If you think this basic scenario could not happen in your area, you are sadly mistaken.

Take a look around our nation, especially in the Western states, and note how it is being dismantled piece by piece.

Never ever forget the comment from then Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation Michael Conner when he stated, "This is a precedent-setting event."

The Klamath Basin continues to be a testing ground of out-of-control government and environmental extremists.

A "real" healing of our community can only happen when there is a true, balanced resolution of this issue.

Allowing the voice of the people to be heard is a major positive step in that direction.

Tom Mallams is a Klamath County commissioner and a rancher. He lives near Beatty, Ore.

OUR VIEW

The Monsanto-Bayer merger and 'Big Ag'

Monsanto has agreed to a \$57 billion cash offer from Bayer AG, the German pharmaceutical and chemical company. If shareholders and regulators approve, the merger will form a giant international seed and farm services company.

We expect a thorough vetting here and in Europe. The sheer enormity of the deal requires a thoughtful review for possible antitrust issues.

Beyond the legitimate legal concerns raised by the deal, supporters and critics have attached every conceivable meme to the potential consequences of the merger. Here are a few:

- "Big Ag" is getting bigger. Obviously. The Bayer/Monsanto deal comes as state-owned ChemChina is taking over Syngenta and Dow and DuPont are merging.
- It's a legitimate concern. These are big companies with big market shares. As these companies consolidate and get bigger, farms in the developed world that are their customers are consolidating and getting bigger.
- While bigger isn't necessarily better, it is not necessarily worse. It's the natural product of evolution. But so is the rise of small companies with bigger, better ideas.
- Bayer, a big company with



James A. Finley/Associated Press File
The entrance to the Monsanto Co. headquarters in St. Louis is seen in this photo. The Germany company Bayer AG is buying the U.S. agricultural company.

lots of pull in Europe, could make GMO crops more acceptable to EU countries. Fearful critics and hopeful supporters have both floated this possibility.

It seems unlikely. Bayer has its supporters in ag circles, but large companies aren't always popular in Europe.

- Because Bayer is a big European company operating in countries that reject GMOs, it will move away from genetic engineering. This is a fear expressed by American farmers who have adopted the technology.

That seems unlikely, given Bayer is paying \$57 billion for a company that is the leader in ag biotechnology. It's not spending that money to kill GMO agriculture. Without

biotechnology and the patents from adopted varieties, Monsanto's assorted seed companies wouldn't be worth the price.

- The merger will raise prices for farmers because there will be one provider instead of two. There isn't a lot of overlap in the product line, so it's hard to see why prices would necessarily increase. There will be just as many companies selling seed with traits under Monsanto's patents as there are today.

Bayer's LibertyLink pesticides and resistant seed are available for farmers who run into problems with glyphosate resistance. We would expect more seed developed with traits that complement the Bayer product line. Depending on what



Markus Schreiber/Associated Press
The Bayer AG corporate logo is displayed on a building owned by the German drug and chemicals company in Berlin, Germany.

other traits are stacked on top, it could get pricey.

Farmers will have to decide for themselves if the cost is offset by the benefits.

- The merged company will take over the marijuana seed business. This is our favorite. Pot industry observers say both companies have long eyed the legal marijuana market. Combine Bayer's pharma connections and Monsanto's proclivity for patent-protected genetically modified seeds and you get "Big Pot."

Reefer madness or viable business model? Only time will answer these and other questions raised by the merger.

We suggest stakeholders make an objective judgment after hearing from the regulators.

Farmers get a chance to rate the Capital Press

By CARL SAMPSON
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — A big part of our job as journalists is asking questions. Most of the time, we ask people about agriculture-related trends, events, research and other newsworthy items.

Last week, we switched gears and asked some of our readers about the Capital Press. We wanted to know what they think about the newspaper and its website and what we could do better.

Our goal was to get a reality check and determine how well we serve our readers and advertisers, and what we could do to attract more of both.

The answers we got were encouraging, helpful and more than a little flattering.

The first question we asked was what the most pressing issue is in agriculture.

"Water," was the imme-

Guest comment
Carl Sampson



diate answer. In Idaho, and across the West, water is the key for any farm or ranch.

"Labor," said another, adding that a lot of ag sectors rely on foreign-born workers.

"Commodity prices," said a third, referring to the slide in many prices.

Other answers included the conversion of ag land to other uses, the GMO debate, the public's lack of knowledge about agriculture and animal care, and the impression that Boise "drives the bus" on many issues in the state Capitol.

When we asked about our coverage, we were told that the regional approach we take to agriculture is appreciated. We have three reporters in Idaho, three in Washington state, two

in Oregon — plus four sister newspapers in Eastern Oregon that supply us with ag coverage — and one reporter in Northern California.

Our panel was composed of six farmers involved in a range of agriculture that includes dairy, hay and forage production, research, cattle and general farming.

"We need to know what's going on in those other states," one of the panelists said.

And, according to another panelist, farmers and regulators in others states could benefit from Idaho's experience, especially when it comes to managing wolves.

"Washington should have read what Idaho went through five or 10 years ago," he said, referring to the missteps Washington's wildlife managers have made.

Sometimes, the conversation took an unexpected turn. Agriculture is more than just another industry, one panelist

said. "Agriculture is a part of our national security."

He not only mentioned the importance of agriculture in feeding the world, but that most farms are vulnerable.

"All it takes is someone with a drone and bacteria flying over our farms," he said.

Besides printing a newspaper once a week, we also have a robust website that is updated daily and can be viewed on any computer or smart phone.

During our conversation we found a direct correlation between age and how much readers use our online edition: the older the reader, the less the online edition was viewed.

The youngest person in the room read the Capital Press online exclusively. She even suggested we expand our presence on social media such as Facebook.

The oldest panelist didn't read the Capital Press online at all. Those whose ages were in the middle said their online use

was also in the middle.

Other parts of the Capital Press that were singled out were the Opinion page — "a good voice for ag" — and the Western Innovator features that anchor Page 2 each week.

Readers also suggested areas for improvement. Mentioned were more coverage of wheat and barley variety trials, including more forage and milk prices on the Markets page, which they described as the "only place to find regional prices." Auctions are also a high-interest item.

One area on which all the panelists agreed was how much of what passes for "news" online really isn't news at all. It's either inaccurate, one-sided or just plain wrong, especially when it targets agriculture.

One exception, they said, was the Capital Press.

Carl Sampson is managing editor of the Capital Press and www.capitalpress.com.

Readers' views

Monumental damage in Malheur County

Rep. Earl Blumenauer's letter supporting a national monument in Malheur County, Ore., is not the first time an "over the mountain" politician has desired to save Eastern Oregon from its inhabitants.

Mark Hatfield exemplified the issue with his endorsement of the Owyhee wild and scenic river des-

ignation for the Malheur County river. He assured grazing would be grandfathered in. If there was a problem he was "just a phone call away." The problem arose when livestock was excluded but the senator didn't answer the phone.

Now Rep. Blumenauer supports taking 2.5 million acres of multiple use lands in the county via presidential executive order. If applied as has happened with other national monuments, ranchers

such as my family and neighbors will be forced out of business. Our communities will die and the remainder of the county's economy stripped of a large segment of its tax base.

Monument supporters tell us a tourist industry will develop, but as longtime Jordan Valley businessman Floyd Acarregui has said, "They come here with a \$100 bill and a pair of shorts and don't change either while they're here."

When Oregon applied for statehood Western Oregon was adamant that it didn't want the area east of the Cascade Mountains included because "it was fit only for coyotes, rattlesnakes and hostile Indians."

Some 157 years later we still have coyotes, rattlesnakes, and with Rep. Blumenauer's proclamation, increasingly hostile natives.

*Michael F. Hanley IV
Jordan Valley, Ore.*