

Opinion

— EDITORIAL —

Underground fine was over the top

The Oregon DEQ spent several years and thousands of dollars in man hours sending paperwork demanding Larry Dean Stratton make a plan for the old underground storage tanks at the former store in Unity.

The tanks weren't leaking. The \$8,194 penalty was for failing to submit a plan on time.

The same day, the DEQ fined the City of Portland roughly the same amount after it dumped raw sewage into the Willamette River.

Both were considered moderate offenses. We're probably not the only ones to see the disparity there.

Such is the endless loop of big government at its finest: generating paperwork to fine a former business owner for not submitting his paperwork, all in order to fund a department so it can continue generating ... paperwork.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Recipe for locking up lands

To the Editor:

A recipe for locking up public lands to motorized use.

Ingredients – 1 Regional Forester, 3 Forest Supervisors, Environmental Groups and State Agencies (ODFW preferred), Seasonings - flouting rules and ignoring the public.

1) You take one forest supervisor that is within retirement age and willing to sellout entire communities to get his high 3 for retirement, add in 2 others that will blend smoothly with a Regional Forester picked ripe from the vine to force motorized use restrictions on the public. Blend in a yearly bonus of somewhere around \$5,000 dollars a year to turn a deaf ear to local residents' calls for keeping their mountains open.

2) In a separate bowl collect a ratio of "interested groups" 4 to 1, anti-motorized use to pro-motorized use to cover the supervisors and regional forester.

3) Spread the "interest group" topping over the blended Forest Supervisor/Regional Forester mix and cover heavily as to disguise any sense of pre-conceived agenda.

4) Apply a generous seasoning of flouting rules on how public engagement should occur, smothered with a heavy application of ignoring the public on their concerns.

Place in a "consensus" oven set at, till hell freezes over, and wait to see when the Forest Supervisors and Regional Foresters actually act upon locals concerns.

Meal will be done when the supervisors and regional forester are soft to the touch, poking with an email or phone call to test tenderness, and are ready act upon local residents concerns.

Until they reach that point you should place the meal back into the oven and increase the heat till such time as the Forest Supervisors and Regional Forester act accordingly or are done, whichever comes first

John George
Bates

High hopes for new leadership

To the Editor:

Good morning. It is a good morning for Baker County. Now is the beginning of a new day! After 12 years of the status-quo we can now anticipate some economic progress and freedom in Baker County. That is our goal.

Our County is rich in resources, natural and human, but poor in opportunity. One of our greatest problems has been that the federal agencies, which we have hired to manage and protect the natural resources on our **public lands**, now appear to believe they own those lands and resources. Their management technique is largely that of precluding our access and use. As a result each year large areas of forest burn for lack of constructive use and on-the-ground management. Then salvage lumber from the remaining dead trees is precluded, all wasted resources and money. Would intelligent forest management permit this?

Mineral resources are also held hostage by the federal agencies. The agencies have delayed the mining of some claims for very long periods asserting the time is required to make sure that no environmental restraints are violated. Some mining applications have been delayed for years in stead of a few months as envisioned by

Letter to the Editor Policy: The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com.

Advertising and Opinion Page Disclaimer: Opinions submitted as Guest

the laws that govern the process. A vigorous, and safe, mining industry would add very greatly to the local economy. Then why can't it be?

Local controls are robbing our prosperity also. The process required for permission to build a new house is tedious and expensive. Each step of the way requires study or inspection each of which has a time delay and dollar fee attached. The cost of approved access in some cases precludes building. Both the extra time and money required by excessive local control discourages construction of, particularly rural, new homes.

The above is but a tiny tip of a gigantic iceberg that has brought our economic and social progress to a grinding halt. We now have a leader, Bill Harvey, who understands basic economics and our rights under the Oregon and U.S. Constitutions. Let us all give Commissioner Harvey our enthusiastic support and enjoy the benefits of the new day.

Jasper Coombes
Haines

BLM mustang program a waste

To the Editor:

Politicians by nature are a pretty gutless bunch of people. Maybe that isn't a fair assessment because of the nature of our political system. On the local level a person running for office can pretty much take a stand on some issues and will have a pretty good idea of what the local feelings are. Move away from the local and things get murkier. They have to appeal to a wider range of voters. I can mention an issue or two that will illustrate this fact. Take the management of "wild Horses and Burros" for example. This 1971 is out of control and grows more ridiculous every year. Grab your smart phone and check out these facts.

The BLM manages 40,815 wild horses and 8,374 wild burros in 10 western states in a free roaming condition. Off the range, there are 15,862 horses and 961 burros in corrals and 31,624 in pastures for a total of over 48,000 in BLM holding, and they figure they have a 50,000 holding capacity. Feeding and gathering costs run into the millions. Wild horse populations will double every four years.

Here is where political guts come into play. It is simply time to end this ridiculous program and greatly reduce the number of free ranging horse that are damaging the environment for native species of animals like big horn sheep, deer, antelope and endangered sage grouse and prairie chickens. The problem is that the vocal urban left tends to think with their hearts instead of their minds and they intimidate the politician.

We are short on environmental history in this country. I'm old enough to have heard my grandfather talk about the dust clouds that the wild horses made when they ran on the range or the hydrophobia outbreaks when coyotes and other predators built to high numbers.

One of the problems is that the biologist seems to be in the shadows and isn't often called upon to give an opinion. I would suggest that congressional hearings be started and televised on the wild horse and burro problem. This black hole is sucking up millions of dollars that could be used to fix some environmental problems

Steve Culley
Richland

Opinions or Letters to the Editor express the opinions of their authors, and have not been authored by and are not necessarily the opinions of The Baker County Press, any of our staff, management, independent contractors or affiliates. Advertisements placed by political groups, candidates, businesses, etc., are printed as a paid service, which does not constitute an endorsement of or fulfillment obligation by this newspaper for the products or services advertised.

— GUEST OPINION —

How to fix Congress (Final Installment)

By Sen. Mike Lee

5. Ryan-ize the Committees. Ironically (or not, if you know how Congress works), the most important policy development in the Republican Party in the last decade was not undertaken by party leaders in the House, Senate, or White House. In fact, formal party leaders largely discouraged it.

Paul Ryan and his staff dove deep into America's structural budget shortfalls and the long-term challenges to our entitlement programs and economy.

Instead, that work was conducted by Congressman Paul Ryan when he became the ranking Republican on the House Budget Committee in 2007. Ryan instructed his new committee staff to think big, to transcend the short-termism that plagues Congress and develop solutions to long-term problems. Ryan and his staff dove deep into America's structural budget shortfalls and the long-term challenges to our entitlement programs and economy.

The end result was what Ryan called his "Roadmap for America's Future." It called for major reforms to our tax system, our entitlement programs, our health care system, and across the federal government. It was controversial, of course. The immediate reception was predictable: Democrats trashed it and most Republicans ran for cover. But in time, people on both sides of the aisle were forced to admit that the Roadmap was a serious document. It warranted a serious debate, and it has gotten one ever since. When Republicans took back the House of Representatives in 2011, some of the broad outlines of the Ryan Roadmap became de facto positions of the Republican party—positions on issues Democrats still try to pretend don't exist.

For all the well-deserved plaudits Ryan gets for his brains, the Roadmap—whatever one thinks of it—was really an achievement of his guts. He had the courage to take his plan into the arena, and withstand criticism, even from his allies. That is, he did what all politicians say we want to do—and succeeded.

So the fifth step to a healthy Republican majority in the one hundred and fourteenth Congress is to use congressional committees to begin developing the agenda for the one hundred and fifteenth, and one hundred and sixteenth, and one hundred and seventeenth Congresses, too. We should "Ryan-ize" the committees, for lack of a better word, encouraging our chairmen to think big. House and Senate Republicans should make it part of the job description of "chairman" that each committee—and ideally, each subcommittee—propose at least one major, fundamental, long-term policy overhaul each year.

House and Senate Republicans should make it part of the job description of "chairman" that each committee—and ideally, each subcommittee—propose at least one major, fundamental, long-term policy overhaul each year.

These reforms could not be passed in



Submitted Photo

Elected in 2010 as Utah's 16th Senator, Mike Lee has spent his career defending the basic liberties of Americans and as an advocate for founding constitutional principles.

this Congress, of course. And conservatives are rightly suspicious of "big bill" legislating at all anymore. But such proposals would serve the valuable purpose of identifying long-term goals that nearer-term, incremental proposals can move policy toward. They would be outlines, not thousand-page bills, and they would help shape the small bills and gradual steps necessary to advance a conservative vision of government.

America's health care, energy, higher education, telecommunications, security, and criminal justice needs (to name just a few) appear to be in the midst of transitions, nearing tipping points that will help define our nation in decades to come. In such a moment, it's not enough to ask ourselves, "What can we pass this year?" without first asking—and investing every possible resource into answering, "How can our needs be met in the twenty-first century?"

Government itself is one of the prime candidates for this kind of thinking. Most systems we use to provide government services were designed decades ago, before the tech and telecom revolutions that have changed the way Americans do almost everything else. In 20 years, will we need, say, a Government Printing Office or Internal Revenue Service in anything like their current forms? If disruptive innovations continue to personalize and localize the economy, will centralized, monolithic bureaucracies be the right instruments to regulate it? Or is government just as badly in need of some disruptive innovations that would enable market forces, public desires, and longstanding constitutional principles to once again show us the way and make our institutions more accountable?

Of course politicians cannot predict the future, nor can government direct future industries any better than it directs current ones. But we know that our society and our economy have rocketed out in front of our government, and that the bureaucracy in its current form is unlikely ever to catch up. Insisting that today's leaders look beyond the next news cycle and the next election cycle will benefit the country and the Republican Party in the long run.

The only way to move incrementally in the right direction is to know which way the right direction is. Long-term reform projects will lay down markers for the Party while identifying opportunities for innovation in the nearer term.

— CONTACT US —

The Baker County Press

PO Box 567
Baker City, Ore. 97814

Open Monday-Thursday for calls
9 AM - 4 PM
Open 24/7 for emails
Office location: TBA

Phone: 541.519.0572

TheBakerCountyPress.com

Kerry McQuisten, Publisher
Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Wendee Morrissey, Advertising and Sales
Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com

David Conn, Advertising and Sales
David@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Published weekly every Friday.
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only. Payment in advance.

A division of
Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

Copyright © 2014

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

President Barack Obama

202.456.1414
202.456.2461 fax
Whitehouse.gov/contact

US Sen. Jeff Merkley

503.326.3386
503.326.2900 fax
Merkley.Senate.gov

US Sen. Ron Wyden

541.962.7691
Wyden.Senate.gov

US Rep. Greg Walden

541.624.2400
541.624.2402 fax
Walden.House.gov

Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber

503.378.3111
Governor.Oregon.gov

State Rep. Cliff Bentz

503.986.1460

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

541.490.6528

Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey; Mark Bennett; Tim Kerns

541.523.8200
541.523.8201