

Opinion / Politics

— EDITORIAL —

Beware the free subscription

“We stopped subscribing to that publication a year ago, but they just keep sending it!”

We heard this phrase three times last week alone regarding one publication—at least 50 times in the past year. We imagine that for every time we’ve heard it, there are probably ten more instances of this situation happening.

In the cases we’ve heard, the former customers of XYZ Newspaper quit subscribing one, two—and in one case, six years ago because they didn’t care for the publication, didn’t read it, and no longer wished to receive it.

At first blush, receiving free copies of a magazine or newspaper sounds fairly innocuous.

After all, as a customer, if one has legitimately cancelled or decided not to renew a subscription and continues to receive the publication every week, the responsibility falls on the publisher, right? Worst case, the issues get tossed straight into the recycle bin at the post office, correct? Maybe not.

Let us explain the common reasons a customer keeps receiving a publication months and years after cancellation. Sometimes the error is simply due to sloppy bookkeeping—but so very often, it’s not.

When a newspaper or magazine has drastically falling circulation numbers, this is not a fact they’d like publicized. The number of subscribers to which a publication is mailed shows up on their bulk mailing reports, and whether a large publication in a large city or a smaller publication in a small area, those numbers tend to leak out to the public one way or another.

Thus, publications of the not-so-honest variety will pad their numbers by continuing to mail out a certain

amount each week or month, using the addresses of cancelled subscribers to amp up their dwindling circulation.

There are laws regulating this practice—somewhat. For example, at least in Oregon regarding newspapers—because this is the industry we know—a subscriber is not considered a legitimate subscriber in terms of adding to the circulation count for advertising bids, etc., unless they actually pay for their subscription and aren’t more than six months behind in that payment.

So while it isn’t exactly illegal to continue mailing to a cancelled subscriber, it does become potentially criminal if a publication deliberately claims a circulation it doesn’t have when approaching advertisers.

With circulation numbers miraculously maintained, or even showing an increase, the publication, which relies in large part on advertising dollars to operate, can verify on its rate card that it mails out a certain number of copies per issue. Do the recipients actually subscribe? No. Do they read the publication? Not often. But nonetheless, a publication like this will fraudulently claim they do.

For advertisers who are spending their hard-earned dollars, the effect of this fraud is devastating, particularly on small businesses. Imagine thinking your ad is being seen by 2,000 residents inside your own home area, when in reality you’re reaching just 1,000 people who never shop anywhere near your business.

As you can imagine, this practice is also damaging to all the honest competitors who present themselves and their numbers accurately.

There is a simple way to fight back against this deliberate fraud—and that’s to force the publication toward more accurate bulk mailing numbers.

If you’ve been receiving a newspaper or magazine under these circumstances, call the editor or publisher. Help protect the businesses and the economy in your community. Demand that your name be removed from their mailing list immediately. If that doesn’t work, report the issue to your local postmaster.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

Bentz summarizes complex legislative session at luncheon



Brian Addison / The Baker County Press

Baker County resident Steve Culley speaks to Oregon Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-District 60-Ontario) during the Chamber of Commerce luncheon August 5. Culley worked with Bentz to pass legislation to provide relief on fines to recovering drug addicts.

• BENTZ SPEAKS AT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LUNCHEON

BY BRIAN ADDISON
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Oregon Representative Cliff Bentz (R-District 60-Ontario) addressed about 35 Baker County residents at the monthly Baker County Chamber of Commerce luncheon, Wednesday, August 5.

Bentz provided a brief summary of the latest Oregon legislative session that began February 2 and adjourned on July 6, 2015.

Bentz had the task of summarizing a very active and complex legislative session in a short one-hour time period as he addressed the luncheon crowd. This included a list of what he referred to as “bad legislation Republicans stopped. Bad legislation Republicans tried but failed to stop. Bentz bills passed. Bills Bentz supported which passed. Tried but failed bills.”

During the last legislative session, Bentz had drafted a total 82 bills. Of that number, he told the crowd that 10 of his introduced bills were passed into law.

Changes in land use laws regarding Greater sage-grouse habitat in Oregon topped the concerns voiced by Bentz.

The Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission passed regulation last week that greatly curtails all activities on public and private land classified as primary habitat for the Greater sage-grouse.

He said that exemptions were made to allow cattle grazing and haying operations but warned that environmentalist organizations in the state are continuing to target and limit those agricultural activities as well. “This is land use planning of steroids—that’s what just happened on all public and private lands,” Bentz said.

Interest in the Greater sage-grouse habitat protec-

tion effort is expected to heighten next month as the US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to reach a decision on whether or not to include the bird on the nation’s endangered species list.

Included on the list of what Bentz referred to as “bad legislation Republicans tried but failed to stop,” is Oregon SB 324 Low Carbon Fuel Standard. The new law directs that carbon emission in the state of Oregon be driven down by 10-percent during the next decade.

Bentz explained that carbon emission reduction will require conversions to lower carbon emitting fuel sources and by adding corn based alcohol to fuel. He said that a failure to meet the 10-percent carbon emission reduction would result in the required purchase of carbon credits.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality published estimates that place the increase in fuel prices at 19-cents per gallon under the new carbon emission standard. Bentz referred to industry analysts who put the increase of fuel prices more toward \$1.06 per gallon in order to adhere to the new law.

There is a local connection to two of the bills drafted by Bentz and passed into law during this last legislative session.

HB 3166 Teacher Licensing, originally brought to Bentz by a former Baker 5J District Superintendent, relaxes the licensing requirements for some technical industrial teachers.

This law comes as the Baker Technical Institute, part of the education program offered by the Baker School District, offers a core technical program and has faced difficulty in finding licensed instructors for some training programs such as welding.

HB 3168 Monetary Obligations of Defendants, was passed into law and was originally brought to Bentz by Baker County resident Steve Culley. The law provides relief from fines on recovering drug addicts.

Also included on the list of Bentz bills passed into law are the HB 3011

Self Service Gas Stations allowing Oregon citizens in counties with a population less than 40,000 to pump their own gas during nighttime hours; HB 3089 Mining Audit of Mineral Potential; HB 3402 Speed Limit Increase that will raise the interstate speed limit in Oregon to 70 mph; HB 3015 Options for Last Name Changes; SCR 16 Honoring Mabry Anders by renaming the state highway from Baker City to Sumpter in honor of Anders who sacrificed his life in military service to his country; and, MOA and SB 5544 Sage-grouse Habitat Reservation and Preservation Funding.

Making the list of what Bentz referred to as “bad legislation Republicans tried to stop but failed” are, the SB 324 Low Carbon Fuel Standard; SB 941 Background Checks requiring private person to complete transfer of firearm by appearing with transferee before gun dealer to request criminal background check or shipping or delivering firearm to gun dealer in certain circumstances; underfunding K-12 education, with the budgeted amount for the 2015 through 2017 biennium passed at \$7.373 billion. Bentz said that he had pushed for education funding at \$7.5 billion of the states expected \$70 billion biennium expenditures; SB 454 Misdemeanor Paid Sick Leave; and, HB 2177 Automatic Voter Registration “Motor Voter,” which automatically registers to vote all people using services at the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles.

Bentz provided a list of internet sites where detailed information may be found on all the legislative activities from the 2015 legislative session. Those interested may visit the following web sites: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/2015-01-12>; <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/Documents/2015-17%20Co-Chair%20Budget%20Framework.pdf>; and for revenue information, <http://oregon.gov/dor/pages/index.aspx>.

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