

Opinion

— SPECIAL COLUMN —

So I was thinking ...

Life by the battery bar

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press

If you've spent any time in an airport in recent years you may have noticed the most popular spots are within three feet of an electrical outlet.

It's a place where businessmen in suits, 20-somethings traveling to Europe, and 10 year old kids with iPads rub elbows and fight for positioning like NFL linemen and guard their spots like a mother bear protects her cub.

After all, little strikes fear in the hearts of millennials more than the dreaded red battery bar.

It may sound strange but lately I've become overwhelmed with rechargeable batteries and the cords that give them life. Cordless power tools, cell phone chargers, laptop chargers, rechargeable razors, cameras, gps, Bluetooth devices. A/C and USB chargers are everywhere in my home.

Half the time I can't remember what cord charges what.

I'll sift through drawers of cords tangled like last years Christmas lights praying that the one I've managed to wrestle away is the one I need. Nope, wrong one. I don't even recognize this one. That's a shoestring. I give up.

Don't get me wrong, the convenience of our electrical devices keeps us on the go, informed and in touch. It also turns us into crazy people.

The panic that accompanies the



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

red battery bar is like the fear of being stranded in the desert. We quickly send out group texts to family and loved ones to notify them of our impending dead battery as though we're about to exit the earths atmosphere and may not return.

And of course we've all had that moment when we left for a trip and realized two hours later we forgot our cell phone charger.

"What am I gonna do?! I'll be completely disconnected from the universe for four to six hours!"

We bravely carry onward crossing our fingers that aunt Martha or cousin Eddie will have a charger compatible with our phone ... but we know better. They've both had their phones since Clinton was president. Off to the store to buy (you guessed it) another charger.

Somewhere in a parallel universe is an unknown planet with piles of socks without mates and mountains of misplaced/misidentified electronic chargers.

Until that planet is discovered, or until someone can patent a universal charger and manage to sell their idea to every tech mogul in the world we'll just have to deal with the amalgam of cords and chargers that fuel our batteries.

Just try not to panic when the red light flashes.

National Work Zone Memorial Wall to be displayed at Union County Fair

The National Work Zone Memorial wall will be on display at the Union County Fair this year near the Oregon Department of Transportation fair booth, August 3 – 7. Unveiled in April 2002, "The National Work Zone Memorial - Respect and Remembrance: Reflections of Life on the Road" program is a living tribute to the memory of lives lost in work zones. The Memorial travels to communities cross-country, year-round to raise public awareness of the need to stay safe in roadway work zones.

ODOT's Region 5 Traffic Safety Coordinator Billie-Jo Deal coordinated efforts to bring the memorial to Union County.

"Summer construction season is a busy and dangerous time for city, county and state maintenance crews, as well as contractors working along the highways," Deal said.

Having the National Work Zone Memorial on display provides an opportunity for fair patrons to learn more about work zone safety and the need to be extra cautious when traveling through highway construction projects.

The 20-foot-wide by seven-foot-tall memorial wall lists approximately 1,400 names of people who died in work zones, including motorists, contractors, maintenance crews and other people working on highway proj-

ects. The name of ODOT maintenance employee Don Kendall was added to the memorial last year. Kendall died in July 2014 while working on a chip seal near Echo, Oregon.

Although several states have created memorials to acknowledge their sacrifice, the National Work Zone Memorial stands as the only monument to the loss of roadway workers, drivers, and public safety personnel in all states.

More information about the National Work Zone Memorial program is on-line at <http://www.atssa.com/TheFoundation/TheFoundationPrograms/TheNationalWorkZone-MemorialRespectandRem.aspx>.

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— GUEST OPINION —

A better way forward for America

By US Rep. Greg Walden



Submitted Photo

Greg Walden represents Oregon's Second Congressional District, which covers 20 counties in southern, central, and eastern Oregon.

As I listen to people during meetings throughout our state (I recently held my 51st town hall since the beginning of last year), Oregonians too often voice the same concerns: an overreaching federal government that ignores our pleas, overregulates our lives and depresses job growth in our communities.

That's why I put forward legislation that positively addresses the problems we face. Seven of my proposals have passed the U.S. House so far this term—most with unanimous support—including my bills to help bring commercial air service back to Klamath Falls, provide needed funding for bridges in the Columbia Gorge, and to improve rural internet service for consumers.

Within the past year, Congress has given law enforcement and drug prevention advocates new tools to help fight addiction in our communities. We've passed plans to help veterans get better health care in the communities where they live. Seniors no longer face a planned drastic spike in Medicare premiums or a cut for Social Security disability recipients. A long-term transportation funding plan and a major education reform proposal have also become law.

While I'm proud of these successes, there is still much to be done to push back against an overreaching federal government. That's why House Republicans have proposed a new agenda—called "A Better Way"—to offer solutions to some of the biggest challenges we face in Oregon and America. I encourage you to go read it yourself on my website: www.walden.house.gov/abetterway. Some highlights of our plan include:

Growing jobs and the economy: Too many small businesses, farmers, and ranchers in Oregon face overbearing federal regulations that are often written by agencies far away in Washington, D.C. Last year alone, federal regulations cost the national economy about \$1.89 trillion in lost growth and productivity. Our plan makes sure the regulatory regime works for us—not against us. For instance, we'd require that the Congress, accountable to the people, approve all major regulations. Our plan would also help boost affordable, reliable energy and preserve internet innovation so that jobs can flourish.

Combating poverty: Fifty years ago, the U.S. government launched the

"War on Poverty." American taxpayers have invested \$22 trillion since then, yet you are just as likely to stay poor if you were born poor today as you were then. And according to a state report last year, Oregon's poverty rate is higher than the national average (and the rate is even higher in many rural counties). The current system too often replaces work, instead of encouraging it. There's a better way to help the over 46 million Americans who are trapped in a cycle of poverty. Our plan offers solutions to expand opportunity and reward work.

Implementing real health reform: The new health care law, known as Obamacare, is driving up insurance costs and reducing choices for too many Oregonians. The state wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on Cover Oregon and now is mired in costly litigation. Meanwhile, people are left to cope with more insurers leaving the market, and two new health "co-ops" set up by the law have already folded. There's a better way to give everyone access to quality, affordable health care. Our plan would replace Obamacare with a new one that provides consumers more choices, lowers costs, focuses on curing deadly diseases like cancer, and strengthens and preserves Medicare.

Our "Better Way" plan upholds our Constitution rights and makes government more accountable and transparent to the people. We have ideas to boost our national security, combat terrorism, and ensure our troops and veterans have what they need. And we propose reforming the nation's tax code to make it simpler and fairer for Oregon families and small businesses.

I'd encourage you to go read the entire plan, with hundreds of ideas to solve problems in our communities, on my website at <https://walden.house.gov/abetterway>. There, you can let me know what you think of these ideas or offer some of your own. Together, there's a better way to get Oregon and America back on track.

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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.

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Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

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