

Opinion / Politics

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Support Richardson and Pierce

To the Editor:
All too many times I hear it said “We here in Eastern Oregon cannot do anything to help to change the direction that our State Government is going.” Oregon State is at a crossroads with this year’s election. We can continue this downward slide with the lack of leadership that has been in place for far too long or we can now rebuild our State with new, better, stronger and accurate leadership for the betterment of all the citizens of Oregon.

I am asking for all of Baker County citizens to join me in supporting Dennis Richardson for Secretary of State and Bud Pierce for Governor of Oregon. Together we can choose a new direction for Oregon. One of Job creation and one of bringing back businesses instead of losing them as they go out of state. We must rebuild our economy through reducing job killing regulations and unrealistic mandates along with over taxation of our businesses and citizens. Oregon is the highest tax and spend state in the west and any tax on businesses is a tax on you and I, the people. Oregon can again become a state that not only supports businesses but once again become competitive with any state out. A robust economy that serves all of our citizens within our State including Eastern Oregon as well as the western side of the State.

This can only be done with New Leadership from people who are willing and able to support the needs of all citizens of our State with new ideas. We now have the opportunity to vote for this change of ideology by bringing back common sense leadership in our State Government. Please come along side many fellow citizens of our great State and vote for Dennis Richardson for Secretary of State and Bud Pierce for our next Oregon State Governor.

Bill Harvey
Haines

Vote Ash for Sheriff

To the Editor:
With the November general election approaching we are starting to see numerous campaign signs appearing throughout the County. As everyone knows I am supporting and voting for Travis Ash for Baker County Sheriff.

Sheriff Ash has the experience, training, maturity, education and proven abilities to continue to lead the Sheriff’s Office, Parole and Probation and the Jail in a direction that will best serve the citizens of Baker County. This was also apparent to the Commissioners when they interviewed candidates to complete my term and appointed Travis to Sheriff in May, 2015. Since that time Travis has proven himself as a outstanding leader and also that he has the abilities to handle all types

of emergencies from wildfires to various crimes with a limited budget and staff.

I would like to encourage all Baker County citizens to become informed and vote for the only qualified candidate for Baker County Sheriff.

Mitch Southwick
Baker City

Sheriff’s race is important

To the Editor:
The race for Baker County Sheriff is far more important to us than the Presidential contest. In a time of ever-expanding unconstitutional federal regulations and enforcement, our small county with all its abundant resources appears to be at the mercy and whims of foreign and federal corporate business interests.

There is but one elected county official who can protect our rights, property, and families from the Federal usurpers and their unconscionable and egregious acts. That one is our elected Sheriff, sworn to uphold County laws that require federal agencies to coordinate with our local government for the overall benefit of all the people of Baker County. If a Sheriff fails in his solemn sworn duty and loyalty, he can be replaced.

The unelected federal bureaucrats in our county can only operate against our interests by the consent of our sheriff. The goal of these outsiders is to achieve their U.N.-inspired One-World agenda which assails the rights and freedoms and property of the local people.

Please take the time to do your own research and make your own determinations as to the content of the character, demeanor, intentions and commitment of the two candidates. Which one is committed to best serve YOU and protect YOU from the advancing attacks on your property and liberties?

Meet them and ask tough questions. Why does Deputy John Hoopes believe he will be a better Sheriff than acting Sheriff Ash? Thousands of people have known John Hoopes and his family for decades, and know his strengths and honest character. Do you?

Look hard at the record of Travis Ash, and see how closely he has tied himself to supporting and aiding federal agencies in their detrimental and disastrous intentions and acts. Job “experience” means nothing if that “experience” involves signing federal contracts and pursuing underhanded relationships with federal agents acting against the interests of our local people. You should understand WHY the miners and forest users and recreationists overwhelmingly support John Hoopes. Educate yourself and vote properly to protect your own vital interests in the times ahead.

Jim Iler
New Bridge

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Walden speaks out on bill regarding public trail health

The U.S. House of Representatives today passed the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (H.R. 845), legislation championed by Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) to help better maintain public trails on national forests and ensure they are accessible for outdoor recreation.

“Hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor activities are cherished pastimes here in Oregon, and they should be enjoyed for generations to come. But as many people in Oregon know, the public trails in our state are in desperate need of better management,” said Walden. “The National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act

makes a number of common-sense improvements to how the Forest Service maintains our state’s trails and landscape, and helps put us on the path to more sustainable trail management.”

Last year, Walden met with backcountry horsemen, snowmobile users, and other forest enthusiasts to discuss the legislation in Bend. The National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act addresses many of their concerns with trail management by breaking down barriers for volunteer efforts and collaboration with outside groups. Notably, the bill would encourage fire crews to perform maintenance during the off-season, and allow outfit-

ters and guides to reduce their fees by providing trail maintenance.

According to a 2013 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Forest Service is only able to maintain about one quarter of trails up to standard, and nearly two-thirds of trails receive no maintenance at all. The report also recognizes the benefits of utilizing volunteers for trail maintenance, and recommends steps to help the Forest Service maximize use of volunteers and partners.

The National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act passed the House with unanimous support, and now heads to the Senate for consideration.

Republican open house

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The evening was structured not as a debate or forum between opposing candidates or parties, but as an open house to introduce Republican candidates and present information on initiatives such as the nonpartisan issue, which the local party unanimously voted to oppose for the second year running.

Baker County Republican Chair Suzan Ellis Jones started the evening by introducing Barreto, who led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Invocation.

Measure 97. Barreto spoke to Ballot Measure 97, formerly known as IP28. Barreto said this measure, which conservatives oppose, has gathered some steam and is polling favorably. “It’s a huge concern,” he said.

Measure 97, if passed, would implement a state-wide tax on sales—a gross receipts tax—not profits, for C-Corporations selling \$25 million in products per year. This would include most fuel and grocery suppliers in Oregon, and even Barreto’s own company, Barreto Manufacturing, which employs 85.

“Every business in Oregon is looking for a way to escape it,” he said. Barreto said he would likely move the headquarters for his own business out of state in order to be able to compete.

The tax would begin at 2.5%, but could scale upwards of 7.5%.

“It will increase the cost of living on everyone,” Barreto warned.

Bentz took the microphone and concurred. He said, “Most grocery stores don’t have a 2.5-percent profit margin.”

Bentz said that if 97 passes, Oregon will “lose 38,000 private sector jobs and 18,000 in the public sector.”

“It’s a value-added tax,” he explained, “so it pyramids. Fuel will go up.”

The tax will add 14 cents per gallon to gas, Bentz estimates.

With the tax starting out at \$6.1 billion per year, Bentz said this would increase money in the General Fund by 27%.

“Then you can have everything. Your life is gonna

be perfect!” he joked of the Democrats’ point of view.

1-74. Initiative 1-74 would convert Baker County Commissioner seats from partisan to nonpartisan if passed.

The initiative is nearly identical to 1-63, which was defeated by voters last year, and supported by the same group of individuals within the county.

Precinct Committee Person (PCP) Jake Brown of Halfway presented a slideshow on the history of the nonpartisan movement worldwide and in the U.S., calling it a move to a “one-party system” with socialist roots.

Unions such as SEIU strongly support conversion to nonpartisan positions, as do other left-leaning groups such as the League of Conservation Voters.

The local Republican party contends that local Democrats desire more power within Baker County, and have teamed up with a handful of more liberal Republicans to create a system that would help hide their political ideologies—and make them more electable in a primarily conservative county.

“Statistics show that areas that have gone nonpartisan have steadily lower voter turnout,” said Jones. Proponents of 1-74 claim their measure will allow more people to vote.

Jones also pointed to loss of local control should this measure pass. At present, when a Commissioner resigns, the 48 elected Republican PCPs hold a nominating convention to select the replacement.

That basic grassroots layer of representation would go away, leaving that replacement as an appointment by only two people—the remaining commissioners. Should two commissioners resign, the Governor of Oregon would select the next Baker County Commissioner.

Mark Callahan. Five-time candidate Mark Callahan pointed to his “never give up” spirit. This time around, Callahan is taking on incumbent Senator Ron Wyden.

“He’s a 35-year career politician New Yorker ... We need to get rid of him this year.”

Callahan refers to himself as a devout Christian who believes God is guiding his political path.

“We have a shot to win,” he said.

Callahan stated that reforming the “77,000 pages” of existing tax code as one of his goals should he be elected.

Rep. Cliff Bentz.

Bentz spoke briefly for a second time, pointing out that at present there are 35 Democrats and 25 Republicans in the Oregon House.

He reminded those in the room that Oregon’s share of the Obamacare-mandated Medicaid cost—\$1 billion for Oregon—comes due next year.

John Hoopes.

“I’ve worked under four different sheriffs,” said Hoopes.

“I think we need some change in the county,” he said.

Hoopes, a fifth generation Baker County resident gave a rundown of his family’s history in the area. “I like the way of life here,” he said.

Hoopes said he made the decision to run for Sheriff five years ago and has been working toward realizing that dream.

Arvid Andersen.

Forester Arvid Andersen of Andersen Forestry Consulting is one of three Republicans running for City Council in Baker City.

Andersen joked, “I’m not voting for Bernie Sanders!” when asked if he would like to speak. He declined his time, as the two other candidates were not present.

Mike Downing was at the venue, but not in the room at the time. Daniel Lowe was out of time attending a League of Oregon Cities event.

Conclusion.

By the end of the open house, the Crowes were still involved with the aftermath of their vehicle accident, and unable to attend.

The Baker County Republican Central Committee is opening a campaign office at 1915 Broadway in Baker City. Those interested in obtaining information or signage for their favorite candidates are encouraged to stop by.

The office is manned entirely by volunteers, and hours open are 2-6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

— CONTACT US —

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