

SPOKESMAN Opinion

OUR VIEW

Regional food bank needs your assistance

NeighborImpact's food bank is in trouble. There's an explanation. But for people's access to food in Central Oregon to be in such uncertainty is not acceptable.

NeighborImpact's food bank was delivering 14,000 to 16,000 meals a couple years ago.

It delivered 52,000 last month. That more than tripling in demand has meant NeighborImpact has run through 80% of its reserves in the last four years to keep up. It's been costing it about \$700,000 a year to run its food bank. It used to be half that.

NeighborImpact has had to start buying food. That didn't used to be necessary. Gas prices are up making delivery more expensive. Its labor costs are up as it tries to hold on to employees.

Demand for meals is higher, driven by what we all know. Inflation. High housing costs. People will sacrifice food to ensure they can pay the rent. They turn to their local charities for help.

If those challenges were not enough, NeighborImpact's food warehouse is too small. The nonprofit is now bringing in more than two semis full of food a week. It turns that around quickly. There is still a need for more space. The new warehouse, which is four times larger, costs \$5 million. Fundraising for that is \$500,000 short.

NeighborImpact is like the regional wholesaler, delivering food to the local organizations that actually pass on the food. Food banks don't have full state or federal sponsorship. NeighborImpact's food bank does get some help from the federal government's emergency food assistance program. That only covers 10% of its budget. Another 20% of its budget comes from the Oregon Hunger Relief Fund.

That help is great. It does mean 70% of the food bank's budget counts on charitable giving. For an essential that people need to live.

For food.

It's up to people like us to donate to ensure that people can eat. We don't want to see NeighborImpact have to make cuts in its food program. What is it supposed to do? Should it cut into its other programs – Head Start, utility and rent assistance? None of those are good options.

You could donate food. That's not the best idea. Give money, if you can. With the discounts Neighborhood Impact gets on food, for one can of soup you might donate, it can buy five cans.

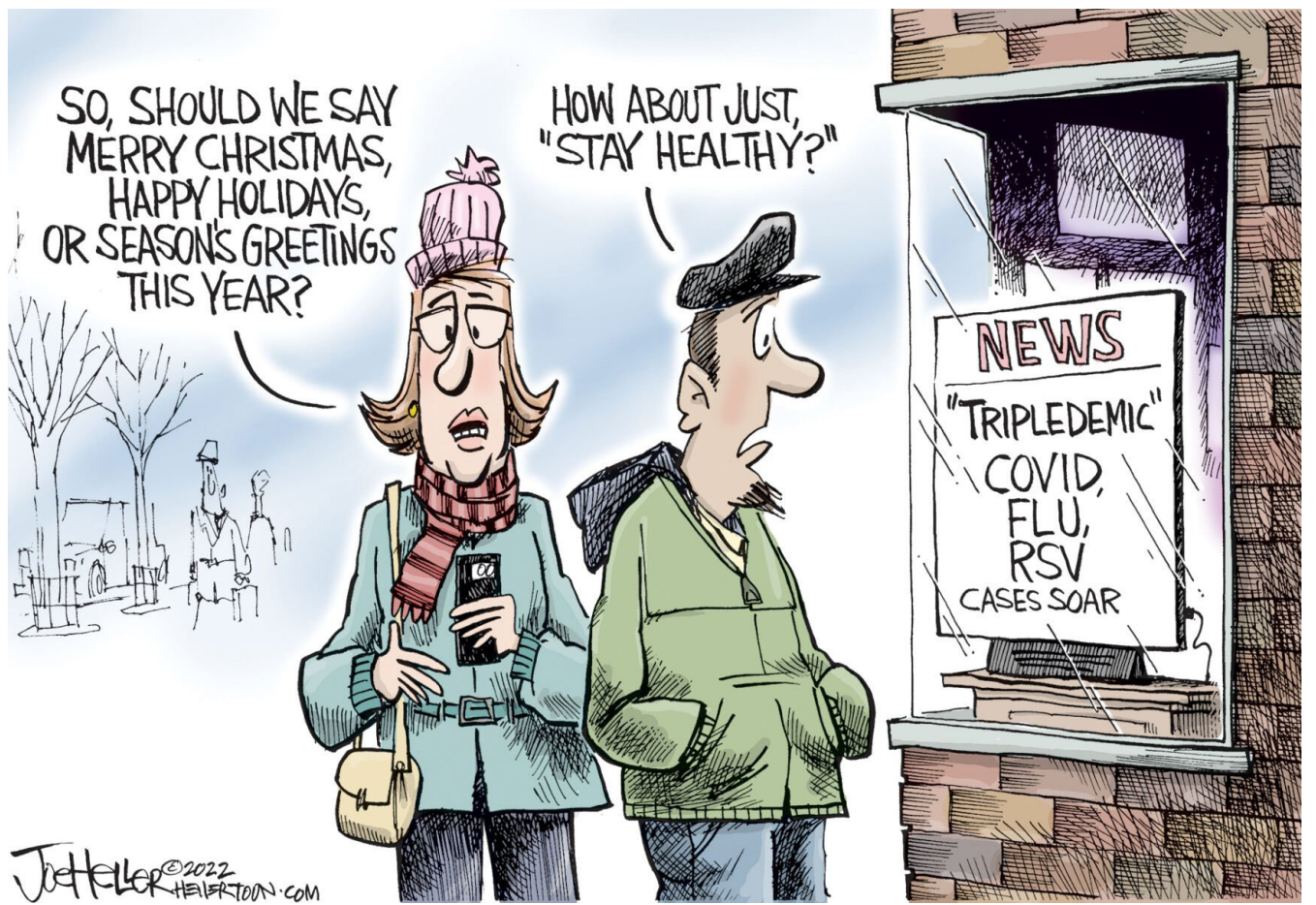
There is more information here about NeighborImpact, neighborimpact.org. If you want to donate go here, neighborimpact.org/donate-online/. And you can also find a partial list of the more than 50 organizations they work with here, neighborimpact.org/get-help/get-food/. Those organizations have had to ramp up to feed the demand. They could surely use your help, too.



NeighborImpact

A small sample of NeighborImpact's food bank operation.

Editorials reflect the views of the Spokesman's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright and Editor Tim Trainor.



GUEST COLUMNS

Become involved with SCORE in Central Oregon

BY JIM DARCEY
SCORE Central Oregon

Chances are, if you own or have owned a business, been involved in sales, finance, management or any other position of responsibility, you have a lot to share in terms of your experience and knowledge.

If you like to help, and would like to aid the success of others in business, volunteering as a mentor with SCORE may be the real sweet spot for you.



Darcey

Our local SCORE chapter provides business mentoring/consulting services free of charge to those considering starting a new business, as well as those already in business who want assistance in expansion, finance, operations or any other area.

Affiliated with the Small Business Administration, SCORE is a national organiza-

tion with over 230 chapters nationwide, all providing free one on one mentoring services as well as an array of educational opportunities via workshops and webinars.

Locally in 2021, the Central/Southern Oregon chapter support helped in the opening of 52 businesses and the creation of 137 jobs. Collectively, close to 1000 hours of service were provided.

Some mentors are retired, some semi-retired, and some are still active in business.

The common thread is an interest in helping others by sharing what they know.

The "perks" are many. It is always empowering to share what you know; you tend to expand your professional knowledge and skills along the way, i.e. "lifelong learning."

You also get to meet more people in the community and connect with other professionals. More personal/social friendships sometimes emerge with others in the group. You can make a difference in helping

with as minimal a time commitment as 4-5 hours per week, totally on your own schedule. New mentors are supported with a well-structured onboarding program, as well as connection to more experienced team members who can help and advise.

Here are some thoughts from some mentors sharing their experiences:

"It is a pleasure to be able to share the business knowledge that I have built from decades of work experience"

"During my business career, I was very fortunate that some wonderful people wanted to help me succeed. Now those folks are indirectly helping SCORE clients succeed with me in the middle. What an amazing circle of life!"

"I get to experience the creativity of working with all types of new and experienced business clients. Mentoring for SCORE is a great way to give back to my community."

Of course, the core outcome is results from the help pro-

vided. Here are a few of the many comments and feedback we receive from those who have received mentoring:

"I am loving the insight and support to help get me going"

"My mentor listened first and then guided the planning process and helped fill in my blanks. I am extraordinarily grateful for the experienced advice."

"My mentor is extremely helpful, helped me understand the industry and is helping connect me to the right people to get my business up and running."

SCORE is expanding. More mentors are needed to handle the many requests for help that are received every month.

The application process is very simple and accessible via the website centraloregonscore.org. You can also call 541-316-0662. Consider becoming part of a group that is helping the business community grow and prosper.

■ Jim Darcey is a volunteer with SCORE Central Oregon

A tough injury to talk about



with Slim Randles

"No, Doc," Windy said, "Don't hurt or nothin' like that, but you know, with all the plagues goin' on right now, figured it's better to be safe than ..."

"Sorry?"

"I ain't never sorry I come to see ya,

Doc. You know that. Fell to sleep t'other night when all them ad shows is on ... you know. Like how to cut yer boots with a knife and feel younger by wearin' a new shirt ... that stuff."

Doc nodded. Windy Wilson was one of his closest pals, as well as being a patient. The adventures of this old cowboy camp cook and mule packer were usually good for a laugh, anyway. But of Windy really seemed upset this morning.

"Windy," Doc said, kindly. "I'm thinking this is a sorta personal problem? I deal with personal problems all the time,

so why not just tell me about it?"

"Thass what's so strange, Doc. I only caught a part of it when I was a-dozin' off, ya know? But I told myself ... Self, I better go talk to Doc, 'cuz that jest might be whass been holdin' me back on startin' some colts."

"Starting some colts? What's keeping you from starting some colts is you're old enough to know better! So what's this problem that the teevee said is keeping you out of the saddle?"

Windy looked up shamefaced.

"They called it a deviated rectum."

■ Slim Randles is a nationally syndicated columnist.

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Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

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