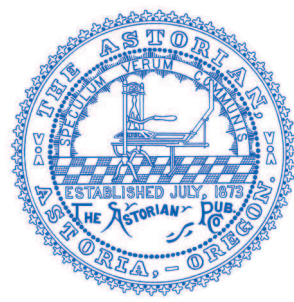


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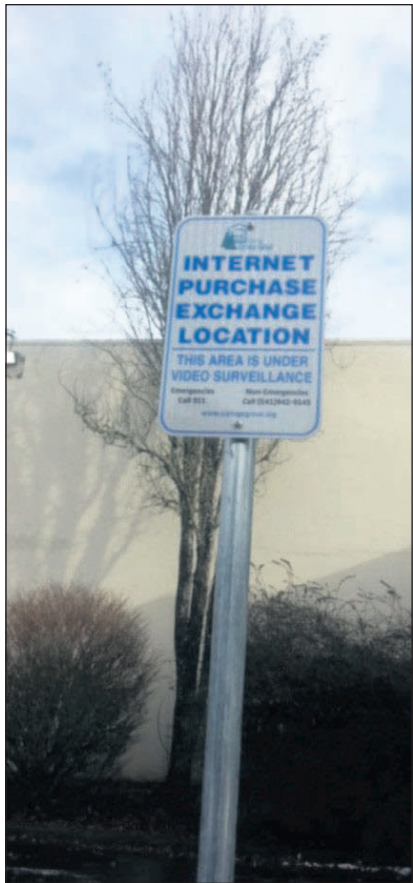
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OUR VIEW

Innovative internet ‘Safe Zones’ are worth considering

Buying or selling items online that require a face-to-face, cash-for-property transaction to conclude a sale or purchase can be a scary — and sometimes dangerous — proposition. Buyers and sellers usually don’t know each other, or their backgrounds, which creates a safety concern for those involved.

Cottage Grove, a small community south of Eugene, recently took a low-cost, innovative idea utilized by more than 300 police departments across the country to help make those transactions safer for its residents. The city created a designated “Safe Zone” where those face-to-face transactions can occur under the



Submitted Photo/Amy Slay
 The idea of a “Safe Zone” for internet purchases has merit.

watchful eyes of police officers. It’s a simple, proactive safety concept that could be implemented here, too.

Following the leads of police elsewhere, Cottage Grove’s city leaders decided to install cameras near the police station to create 24-hour-a-day video coverage. The city also posted a sign noting that the specific area is an “Internet Purchase Exchange Location” and is under video surveillance at all times. Police officers do not participate in the transactions, but the department’s dispatchers monitor the cameras. The recorded videos are saved for up to 75 days, according to Cottage Grove Police Chief Scott Shepherd. Purchasing and installing the cameras along with the sign only cost the city about \$200, he said.

The site isn’t limited to Cottage Grove residents, it can be used by anybody, anytime. It can also be utilized for other things, like custody exchanges, adding an increased level of safety to them.

The “Safe Zone” concept is direct and simple. While the overwhelmingly vast majority of internet-related transactions are legitimate, the idea for “Safe Zones” percolated from a series of horrific, high-profile crimes across the country in the past few years stemming from transactions that originated online. According to a variety of websites that track what some have labeled as “Craigslist killings,” there have been more than 100 murders associated with such meetings since 2007. By its own numbers, Craigslist generates 50 billion page views per month with approximately 60 million users in the United States, and the bargain behemoth isn’t the only company in the business of digitally connecting buyers and sellers.

Daily Astorian reporter Jack Heffernan contacted each of the police departments on the North Coast about “Safe Zones” and none have an existing program. We believe they should. It’s a proactive idea the departments should investigate and consider initiating.

The logic for a “Safe Zone” is brilliantly simple. If a buyer or seller goes into a deal intent on committing a crime, chances are the last place that person wants to be is near a police station and on videotape. And if a person balks at the idea of the transaction taking place near a police station, it’s a good bet it’s probably someone you don’t want to meet.

Police also recommend consumers always take common-sense safety steps for internet transactions: Don’t go to a transaction alone; make sure a friend or family member is aware of the details; always insist on meeting in a public place during the daytime; and never go into a stranger’s house or let a stranger into yours.

Internet-associated crimes are a byproduct of the digital revolution and initiatives like “Safe Zones” can help curb their growth and possibly save lives. While it may not have been a problem here in the past, it only takes once for it to become one.

Let’s not let that happen.



Connecting Trump’s dots



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais
 President Donald Trump sits at his desk after a meeting with Intel CEO Brian Krzanich, left, and members of his staff in the Oval Office of the White House on Wednesday.

By THOMAS FRIEDMAN
New York Times News Service

Every day, the president’s behavior becomes more worrying. One day he demeans a federal judge who challenges him; the next day, without evidence, he accuses the media of hiding illegal voting or acts of terrorism. His lack of respect for institutions and truth pours out so fast, you start to forget how crazy this behavior is for any adult, let alone a president, and just how ugly things will get when we have a real crisis. And crises are baked into this story because of the incoherence of President Donald Trump’s worldview.

How so? The world today is more interdependent than ever. The globalization of markets, the spread of cellphones, the accelerations in technology and biology, the new mass movements of migrants and the disruptions in the climate are all intertwined and impacting one another. As a result, we need a president who can connect all of these dots and navigate a path that gets the most out of them and cushions the worst.

But Trump is a dot exploiter, not connector. He made a series of reckless, unconnected promises, not much longer than tweets, to get elected, and now he’s just checking off each one, without thinking through the linkages among them or anticipating second-order effects.

It is a great way to make America weak — and overstretched — again.

Where do I start? Trump wants to get tougher with China on trade and security. That’s not crazy. But how would I do that? I’d organize an alliance of Pacific trading nations that surround China and enlist them in a trade pact that supports U.S.-style rule of law, greater market access for U.S. intellectual property and products and promotes U.S. values — as opposed to China’s. I’d call it the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP for short.

Oh wait, President Barack Obama did that, but Trump

scrapped TPP on Day 1, without, I am sure, having read it. Now there is every reason to believe our Asian-Pacific allies will fall even more under China’s economic sway and trade “rules.” How smart is that?

And by the way, why is labor in Mexico cheaper than in America? One reason is that Mexico has weaker labor rights and environmental standards. Let’s see ... what would TPP require of Mexico and other signatories? That they bring their labor rights and environmental standards closer to ours.

It’s amazing what a mess you can make when you only check boxes and don’t link them.

Instead, Trump is building a wall to keep out Mexican immigrants and force companies to move to the U.S. Let’s see ... what happened after 9/11, when the border crossings with Mexico and Canada were severely constricted for security? It forced some assembly line shutdowns at U.S. auto companies, like Ford, because their supply chains stretched to Mexico and Canada. The lower-cost work is done in Mexico and then integrated with higher-value-added work in America, which enables our car companies to compete on price in Europe, Japan and China.

So what did the U.S., Canada and Mexico do after 9/11? They created a North American security envelope, explained Seth Stodder, Obama’s assistant secretary of homeland security, so if you fly into Mexico or Toronto from the Middle East, our Homeland Security Department now probably knows about it.

“Since 9/11, we and our Mexican and Canadian partners have worked to secure the North

American perimeter by sharing information on people and goods coming to our countries, cross-referencing that information against terrorism databases and working collaboratively to identify potential bad actors trying to come to North America,” Stodder said. If we build a wall and demand that Mexico pay for it, how long will it go on cooperating with us?

And if Trump forces all these U.S.-based multinationals to move operations from Mexico back to the U.S., what will that do? Help tank the Mexican economy so more Mexicans will try to come north, and raise the costs for U.S. manufacturers. What will they do? Move their factories to the U.S. but replace as many humans as possible with robots to contain costs.

The U.N. says there’s a record 65 million displaced migrants and refugees, mostly from the developing world, trying to get into secure places like the U.S. or Europe. Why? A mix of civil wars, state failures, climate stresses and population explosions. What did Trump do his first week? Appoint climate deniers to key posts and ban U.S. aid to health groups that provide abortion as a family-planning option in developing nations.

Trump wants to partner with Vladimir Putin to defeat ISIS in Syria — a worthy goal. But Putin hasn’t been trying to defeat ISIS. He’s been trying to defeat democracy in Syria to keep the genocidal pro-Russian dictator there in power.

Will that be our goal, too? And who are Putin’s allies in Syria? Iran, Hezbollah and Shiite mercenaries from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Will they be our allies, too? No. We will enlist Iraqi and Syrian Sunnis to help us, says Trump. Really? But he just barred them from entering the U.S. How cooperative will they be?

And whom else might this ban keep out? Remember Steve Jobs? His biological father was Abdulfattah “John” Jandali. He came to America as a student in the 1950s and studied at the University of Wisconsin. He was from ... Homs, Syria.

It’s amazing what a mess you can make when you only check boxes and don’t link them.