

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## OUR VIEW

# Community's support is helping college

Some great things are happening at Clatsop Community College with the help of the region's residents. The Patriot Hall redevelopment project is nearly finished, and some fundraising efforts are on the uptick. Both pieces of news are especially timely as the college continues to strategically position itself for the future while state budget shortfalls present difficult financial challenges ahead.

The Patriot Hall project began two years ago, and the college's leadership hopes the \$16 million, 30,000-square-foot academic hall will be available for graduation ceremonies on June 16. The building, funded equally by a countywide bond measure and state bond money, will have a new 540-seat gymnasium, several new studios and classrooms, expanded cardiovascular and weight training areas and a third-floor elevated running track looking out over the scenic Columbia River.

The college plans to open the gym for the graduation ceremony, then close Patriot Hall afterward to bring in additional equipment. Then it intends to have a pilot opening of the building during the summer term with several physical education and community courses, followed by a more robust fall-term opening. As college President Christopher Breitmeyer said, "Patriot Hall will be a center of community engagement on our campus whether it is through the educational programming, special events or recreational opportunities. Patriot will be a valuable resource for years to come."

On the fundraising front, the Clatsop Community College Foundation's Art & Experience dinner and auction recently generated \$123,000, far surpassing the amount raised in the event in each of the past two years.

A special appeal during the event generated \$37,000 which will be dedicated to scholarships. The foundation awards scholarships entirely from the interest earned on its investments.

The event also featured live and silent auctions with international trips and vacation packages, artwork, dining and recreational opportunities all up for grabs.

Both pieces of news show the community's deep support for the college's success, an investment in the future that we hope will continue for many years to come.

# Rare roundtable only a start in combating region's issues

It's not often 40 elected officials and staff from throughout the region get together to discuss pressing issues and potential solutions.

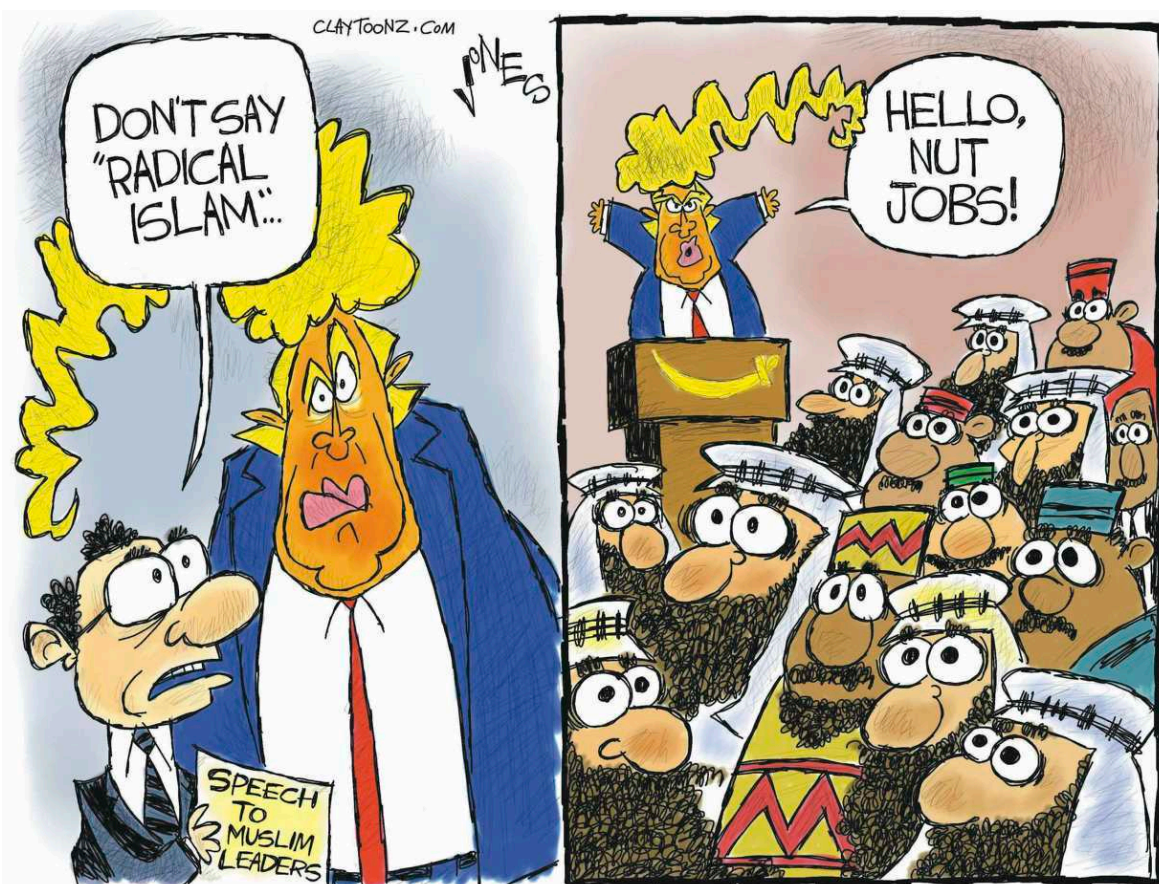
In fact, last week's gathering in Gearhart, organized by Clatsop County Manager Cameron Moore and presided over by County Commission Chairman Scott Lee, was only the second time in recent years for a roundtable to identify and discuss the region's top issues. The attendees included mayors; city councilors; county commissioners; the county's top planners and emergency manager; and city managers and staffers. Those attending agreed housing and emergency preparedness top the issues' list.

In the discussions, two things were apparent: the region is further ahead on emergency preparedness than it is in finding housing solutions; and there is an appetite among the region's leaders to work together to resolve them. While solving either problem won't happen overnight, it's important that our region's leaders work jointly and keep the dialogue going.

On housing, details that emerged included that most in the county and cities are aware of the discrepancies between wages and the location, availability and housing cost and its impact on business retention, recruitment and expansion. But the county has only anecdotal evidence and lacks enough hard data to support it. The attendees were enthused hearing about a recent six-month, \$100,000 study Tillamook County undertook that identified specific data about that area's housing markets and possible solutions. All agreed part of the solution is to have the political will to make difficult and often unpopular decisions, especially in matters of zoning and land use.

On emergency preparedness, all acknowledged more needs to happen. Gearhart City Councilor Dan Jesse pointed out the need for everyone to keep the issue at the forefront, saying, "No one is going to solve this problem but ourselves."

He's exactly right, and it applies to both issues. There is strength and knowledge in unity, and hopefully political will that can match it. That's the reason the dialogue needs to continue.



## GUEST COLUMN

# How Oregon can cut carbon — and boost its economy

By JACK HARRIS

Special to The Daily Astorian

Earlier this year, Oregonians got a reality check on the state's carbon pollution. We're less than three years away from a deadline to cut planet-warming gases, yet the latest numbers show we're not even close to making the goal.

The shortfall isn't for lack of consensus. About three-quarters of people in Clatsop and surrounding counties believe carbon dioxide should be regulated as a pollutant, according to an estimate from Yale University. And transitioning to a clean energy economy creates good jobs — more than 50,000 of them in Oregon alone, according to an analysis of U.S. Department of Energy data by the national business group Environmental Entrepreneurs.

My own business here in Astoria, Fort George Brewery, is a good example. We hired a director of sustainability to help keep our carbon footprint low and our operating efficiency high. Whether we are donating food scraps to a local farm or upgrading our boiler systems, our investments contribute to the broader economy here.

We need a stronger statewide plan to ensure the largest emitters, such as large oil and gas companies, utilities, landfills and industrial manufacturers, also do their part. State lawmakers are now considering the Clean Energy Jobs bill (HB 2135), which will establish a limit on greenhouse gas emissions from the largest sources in the state and put a price on each ton of pollution. Proceeds would then be reinvested into local communities for clean energy projects, which help create new jobs and lowers energy bills.

Capping and pricing emissions is a low-cost way to cut greenhouse gases. It gives businesses the flexibility they need to comply and the certainty of long-term, enforceable limits. It stimulates investments in renewable energy and efficiency — technologies that ultimately pay for themselves for businesses and homeowners — while creating more jobs for the installers and technicians who make up Oregon's clean energy workforce.

Not only will the proposal help us redefine — and actually achieve — our climate goals, it will also generate funds to boost communities.

Language in both the House and Senate versions of the bill specifically directs funds to programs in economically disadvantaged areas, with an emphasis on job creation



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Pasture raised chickens roam at Blackberry Bog Farm in Astoria. Blackberry Bog Farm has raised and processed chickens for Fort George Brewery. The brewery hired a director of sustainability.

and training. Proceeds will also provide electric bill assistance for low-income customers and bill credits for small businesses.

**Despite the perplexing inaction on climate change from the White House and Congress, states can and will take the lead on smarter policies, because it is states that will feel the brunt of unchecked warming.**

The Clean Energy Jobs bill would work in tandem with other innovative initiatives such as the Clean Fuels program and the Renewable Portfolio Standard,

encouraging a transition to cleaner energy across sectors. Gains made under one approach will help offset obligations to another.

Despite the perplexing inaction on climate change from the White House and Congress, states can and will take the lead on smarter policies, because it is states that will feel the brunt of unchecked warming.

Oregon stands to lose billions of dollars from the impacts of a hotter, drier climate, from forest fires to decreased viability of livestock and aquaculture. With support from state legislators such as Betsy Johnson in the Senate and Deborah Boone and Brad Witt in the House, we can change that course.

We need look no farther than this district, which is home to more than 160 clean energy jobs, to see how local action on climate is already creating opportunity. A new E2 fact sheet for our state Senate district notes that EV charging stations and alternative fuels are growing, while Tillamook County's Misty Meadow dairy digester is generating revenue and power while keeping at least 7,000 tons of greenhouse gases out of the air every year.

Let's expand this type of growth by putting a price on emissions and reinvesting the proceeds so we can reward businesses for innovating, clear the air and keep the clean energy jobs coming.

Jack Harris is the co-owner of Fort George Brewery.

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