

OPINION



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGES
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW



Short Sand Beach at Oswald West State Park.

OREGON, OUR VALENTINE

We wish the state a happy 160th birthday, and a happy Valentine's Day, too

It's fitting that Oregon's birthday is on Valentine's Day. It's the loveliest state we can imagine, and we're glad to call her ours.

From the expansive deserts to the rugged coastline, from the breathtaking Columbia River Gorge to jaw-dropping Crater Lake, from the hidden gem of the Eagle Cap Wilderness to the eclectic neighborhoods of Portland, from Hell's Canyon to Mount Hood; every square mile of the state is filled with unique beauty.

We don't take that for granted. There are entire countries that would kill for this geographical diversity. You could set out on a field trip every weekend to a different corner of the state and see something new and interesting each time.

Have you been to the caves in the Siskiyou Mountains, with their twisting marble hallways? Or the lava fields of central Oregon, where astronauts prepared for space travel in the 1960s? How about the Pendleton Underground Tours, telling the frank and wild history of that western town, or the Astoria Column, towering above the mouth of the mighty Columbia River?



East Oregonian

Lower Oneonta Falls at the end of Oneonta Gorge.

It's no wonder Oregon has become one of the most popular states for relocation. United Van Lines, which runs an annual survey on which states people are moving to and from, had Oregon as the second most-popular destination in both 2017 and 2018 behind Vermont.

Young and old alike come looking for the high quality of life. It's something you can't manufacture. It goes way back, to the days of the Oregon Trail, when people from the east set their eyes and their wagons on this place.



Tim Trainor/East Oregonian

Perfectly still Tombstone Lake reflects the granite cliffs that surround it in the Eagle Cap Mountains.

The urge to come here has been called "Oregon Fever," as recounted by Stephen Dow Beckham, a professor of history at Lewis & Clark College in the Oregon Blue Book.

"It caused dreams, persuaded men and women to give up all that was familiar, risk their lives and fortunes, and set out for the far shores of the Pacific. The overland emigrations of the mid-nineteenth century were one of the epochal events of human history. Seldom had so many people traveled so far by land to seek a new beginning."

Oregon bears a resemblance to Eden, providing a cornucopia of nature's bounty.



E.J. Harris/East Oregonian

Sand dunes north of Lake Abert, off Highway 395.

We're famous for our fish and forests, pears and potatoes, wheat and watermelon, hazelnuts and berries of all kinds.

A certain spirit has shaped the state in the last century and a half, as we've come to understand the land we inhabit.

We've passed bills to protect our beaches and keep them accessible to the public, making our coast a wonderful place to visit.

We've gone out of our way to protect the environment (admittedly, sometimes to a fault), because we want to be able to hand this state to the next generation the way we found it.

So we wish Oregon a happy 160th birthday, and a happy Valentine's Day, too.

OTHER VIEWS

Selected editorials from Oregon newspapers

The Bend Bulletin, on letting locals make zoning changes

We'll agree with House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, that Oregon has a housing crisis and solving it is going to take creative thinking.

That said, Kotek's belief that the Legislature is somehow better equipped to solve the problem than are local governments in Bend, Medford or La Grande is wrong. She ignores the role played by state land use planning laws that strangle city expansion and is the driving force behind a measure that does away with single-family zoning in much of Oregon.

She's going after local governments with House Bill 2001, a measure that orders cities to do away with single-family zoning. Communities with more than 10,000 residents would be required to allow duplexes, triplexes and/or quadruplexes on all land currently zoned for single-family housing.

But, as the House Committee on Human Services and Housing heard Monday from a member of the Sherwood City Council, the change could

have unintended, and ugly, consequences. For one thing, it could make it more difficult for school districts to predict and accommodate growth within the limits of their bonding capacity.

Another unintended consequence could be a shift from neighborhoods that do not restrict property owners' rights with formal covenants, conditions and restrictions, to ones that do as people who can, seek out neighborhoods where multifamily housing is prohibited.

The worst problem with Kotek's bill, however, is the way in which it cuts local citizens and local government out of decision-making about their communities and the way they grow. In Bend, duplexes and triplexes are currently allowed in residential zones, and the city is working to add fourplexes to the mix.

But Bend's changes were made locally, not forced by Salem. They came about after local discussion and local public hearings, as state land-use law now requires. Because they were a local creation, there's been considerable local buy-in.

None of that will occur with Kotek's bill. Instead, it effectively prohibits locals from deciding what's best for their communities. It should be defeated.

Albany Democrat-Herald, on colleges wary of governor's budget plan

When she released her proposed state budget for the two years beginning in July, Gov. Kate Brown didn't include any additional money for higher education — but she did express a hope that legislators would be able to push through a \$1.9 billion tax increase, and that some of the extra money could be funneled to help hold tuition increases to 5 percent or less.

It's possible that part of Brown's strategy on this was to persuade education officials to lobby legislators to support the tax increase. The governor has declined to offer specifics about what sort of tax increase she'd like to see, and has left that task to the Legislature.

It's fair to say that some education officials have been, shall we say, cool to Brown's approach: For evidence, look no further than Oregon State University President Ed Ray's state of the university speech, delivered last week in Portland.

"Under the governor's budget," Ray told a crowd of 700 or so OSU partisans, "universities would be forced to shunt even more costs onto the shoulders of students, and cut

staffing and programs even more. Or both."

A little later in his remarks in Portland, Ray added this: "I appreciate the governor for seeking new funding, but I must plan the university's operations on what I know, not what I hope legislators and voters might approve at some future date."

And certainly, considering how tax proposals have fared in the Legislature and among the state's voters, it doesn't seem like a good bet to count on that extra dough just yet, especially since it's not at all clear yet what shape a tax increase could take.

To that end, Ray said last week that work to identify potential cuts is underway at OSU.

Although Brown's proposed budget is the first step, the process doesn't really get going until legislative committees release their first budget drafts. That will happen after state economists release their latest revenue estimates. (As an aside, it's worth noting that legislators likely will have a record amount of revenue at their disposal, but it won't be enough to cover increased costs. Two big factors drive those costs: the state's public pension system and the decision to expand Oregon's Medicaid health insurance plan, also known as the Oregon Health Plan.)