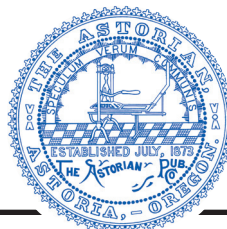


OPINION



the Astorian

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Founded in 1873

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PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

Astorians display resilience in 2021

Last Dec. 31, we looked forward to putting a chaotic 2020 behind us. Few expected that we were in for at least another full year of pandemic disruption.

Throughout 2021, there were business and employment challenges, events canceled or held online, schools, churches and community organizations meeting haphazardly or by video. There was a lot of guessing and uncertainty nearly every day wondering what variant or business challenge would arise next.



KARI BORGEN

It's no wonder we're all weary. And wary. Yet, one word continues to repeat in conversations with business and community leaders.

Resilience.

In 2021, our schools provided in-class learning, school sports and activities. Graduations for the Class of 2021 took place in person.

While hiring workers remained a challenge, businesses resumed serving customers. Lots of customers. Tourists flocked to the North Coast for well-earned vacations from work from home, school from home, 24-7 at home. Despite the pandemic, new businesses have set up shop, expanded and changed locations.

Councils and commissions moved plans for community improvement forward, even if it was via Zoom meetings. American Rescue Plan funds, infrastructure and cultural grants and local taxing districts have provided millions of dollars in new project funding to local governments.

Volunteers staffed vaccine events, hosted fundraising events for nonprofits and cleaned up parks and beaches.

Debate swirled in public meetings, social media and letters to the editor around land use for hotels, housing, public services and parks.

The Astorian has reported on all of it during the past year.

Reporters shined a light on the issues and challenges related to homelessness, child care, mental health, affordable housing and livability on the North Coast.

Elected representatives and government officials were asked about how



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Astoria High School students and guests sat socially distanced on the field at graduation, following coronavirus restrictions.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO TELLING STORIES ABOUT LOCAL RESIDENTS SHOWING US RESILIENCE AND PURPOSE, AND CONTINUING TO EXPLORE UNSOLVED ISSUES IMPACTING US ON THE NORTH COAST LIKE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, CHILD CARE, LIVABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH.

funds were spent, plans were being made and information was — or was not — being provided to the public.

What we have learned about resilience is that it's driven by purpose. A drive to make something better.

Although the newspaper has had challenges in 2021 with finding employees and shifting many of them to work from home, our readership continues to grow.

Our subscriptions have grown 3% over last year, and readers picking up print copies in stores or on racks has remained constant. Readers care about knowing what is happening in their communities.

At its heart, The Astorian's resilience comes from a nearly 150-year history of making our community better by connecting readers to their neighbors and communities. Our purpose, the

thing that drives us and makes us resilient, is to help our readers become better-informed, smarter and our community stronger.

We enter 2022 with plans to cover upcoming elections and still follow the pandemic and related restrictions, of course. But we are looking forward to telling stories about local residents showing us resilience and purpose, and continuing to explore unsolved issues impacting us on the North Coast like affordable housing, child care, livability and mental health.

We strive to continually add more value to your subscription — in print or online.

If there are things you'd like to see in 2022, I'd love to hear from you. You can reach me at kborgen@dailyastorian.com or 503-325-4955.

Kari Borgen is publisher of The Astorian.

GUEST COLUMN

A threat to farm families

Like many of you, I wrote my legislators, testified and fought against the cap-and-trade proposals in front of the Oregon Legislature in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

As a custom farmer in Tillamook and chair of the Oregon Farm Bureau Ag Production Committee, I knew that my operation and many farms and ranches around the state could not afford the fuel cost increases that were inevitable under the program. It would be one more in a long line of poor

policy decisions coming out of Salem that make it harder to stay farming in Oregon.

After it was defeated in Salem three times, I was floored when I learned last year that the governor had issued an executive order directing the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to move forward with the program via rule. I watched over the last several months as the agency ignored data about the impacts of the program, created sweetheart deals for investment in nongovernmental organizations and failed to analyze the impact of cost increases in fuel, natural gas and propane on Oregonians under the program.

The agency has now adopted the final rules for what it is calling the Climate Protection Program.

While DEQ opted to ignore the cost impacts of this rule on working families and the agricultural sector, it is clear that the program will increase the price of natural gas, propane and transportation fuels. For a governor who has built her administration on promises of transparency, concealing the



Statesman Journal

Farmers and other critics of a Climate Protection Program worry about the impact on fuel costs.

THE WORST PART ABOUT THE PROGRAM IS THAT IT WILL INCREASE THE COST OF FUELS FOR FARM FAMILIES AND RURAL OREGONIANS WHO CAN LEAST AFFORD IT — BUT IT WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE.

impacts of such a significant program to Oregonians is unacceptable.

Because DEQ failed to consider how the fuel sector would come into compliance with the program, it's highly likely that we will see fuels rationed in the state after the credits run out. I never thought I would see fuel rationed again in my lifetime, especially due to a regulatory burden created by our state.

For propane and natural gas, the goal is to eliminate those fuels completely. That approach totally ignores the needs of rural Oregon and is yet another impractical and out-of-touch policy pushed on us by a Portland-based governor who doesn't understand our needs.

In drafting the rules, DEQ totally ignored the impact the rules will have on the Oregon economy, particularly those industries that are trade dependent, like agriculture. Eighty percent of the goods produced by farmers and ranchers are exported out of the state, and the rules will render many farm families uncompetitive in the global marketplace because we will be priced out.

On the investment side, DEQ decided to only allow investments that would result in direct carbon reductions, ignoring the potential for working lands sequestration programs. The only reason I can think DEQ would do this is to penalize rural Oregon for our strong opposition to cap and trade as it

worked through the Legislature.

Further, those community groups and nongovernmental organizations who get funding do not have to demonstrate actual carbon reduction, just give a rough estimate of what they expect to accomplish. This is unacceptable and just creates a slush fund for environmental groups with no accountability.

The worst part about the program is that it will increase the cost of fuels for farm families and rural Oregonians who can least afford it — but it will have no impact on global climate change. It's simply a "feel good" piece for progressive Democrats, once again put largely on the backs of rural Oregonians.

Rural Oregon is tired of bearing the brunt of policies that do not accomplish what they set out to do, but instead have real costs for our communities.

Karl Zweifel is a custom farmer growing corn and chop grass silage in Tillamook. He is vice president of the Tillamook County Farm Bureau.