

# Governor: Winner will help set the state's direction

Continued from Page A1

or wood chips, or potato chips out in Boardman, or fish and chips in Astoria, that we have throughout Oregon different microeconomies, and the governor needs to understand that.

**Drazan:** The opportunity to bring Oregonians together is a big part of why I'm running. When we have a Portland focus and hard, progressive Democrat agenda, you end up taking that agenda and you impose it on the rural parts of the state.

Too often in the public policymaking process, you have folks drive six or eight hours to Salem and testify for two or three minutes. No one asks them questions and their proposals do not change outcomes because this single party control machine — they've got the votes.

Having a Republican governor ensures (lawmakers) have to compromise. They have to listen to the stakeholders, because if they don't, they'll get a veto in my administration.

**Kotek:** For me, it is about how you listen to people, making sure you're out in local communities, engaging with local leaders.

As speaker of the House, it was really important for me to represent the entire state. I made a point to encourage my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to visit each other's districts.

As governor, getting out of Salem more often — it's important. You bring people together by listening. And focusing on issues that I don't think are very partisan. Every part of this state has a housing problem. That's not a partisan issue. I honestly think water's not a partisan issue. We all need water. So, focusing on issues that aren't highly politicized is a good place to start.

**Q: What marching orders will you give the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality?**

**Johnson:** Big ones. I want that agency to stop torturing Oregonians and to help Oregonians. Frequently, DEQ's answer has been 'no' — to everything. I want can-do, want-to, will-do people running state agencies. I want them to start at 'yes.' I want agencies with regulatory authority to work with farmers and not constantly be looking for fault or wanting to over-regulate.

**Drazan:** My favorite thing that's going to happen on my first day is asking all the agency heads to turn in their resignations — all of them. And we're going to sit down and have a conversation. My commitment to Oregonians is to lead in a new direction. We're not going to get that done if you keep the entire bureaucratic machine crankin' along like nothing's changed. I have an expectation that my agency heads are expert in the subject matter, committed to customer service, to being problem-solvers, to getting to 'yes' first and 'no' second and to partnering with Oregonians rather than standing as a barrier.

**Kotek:** I think one of the biggest issues right now is to make sure (DEQ has) the resources and staff power to meet current regulations.

Nothing is more frustrating for me than to hear someone say, 'I want to expand my business, but it's taking 18

months to get my new water permit or my air permit renewed.'

The other issue is making sure our rule-making processes and rules are inclusive. Oregonians support regulations that have goals. We believe in clean water, clean air — we all agree on that. And things have to be set up in a way that businesses can function.

**Q: Do you think agriculture has too large a claim on Oregon's water supply?**

**Johnson:** I do not. Oregon's economy rests on the back of agriculture. Farmers, fishing interests, ranchers, other producers are part of the backbone of our economic past and certainly our economic future.

**Drazan:** I don't. Oregon agriculture has always been a critical partner in Oregon's economy, to Oregon culture, to Oregon families. And we cannot overlook the need for access to local food production.

**Kotek:** I don't know if I can comment on that. What I do know is Oregonians like the fact that we grow things, that we are a leader in export products in the ag sector, and it's kind of in the DNA of Oregon to grow things. So, I think ag is really important.

**Q: What does good forest and public lands management look like to you? For example, do you support prescribed burning, grazing, thinning and logging?**

**Johnson:** Yes, yes, yes, yes.

(Although Johnson supports all four practices, she described nuances.

Johnson said she supports prescribed fire but has 'questioned the competency of the Forest Service not to let some of those prescribed burns get away.'

Johnson said there are "subtleties" on grazing: 'Do you keep the critters out of the streams?'

On thinning, she said, 'We have got to thin.'

Johnson said she also backs post-fire salvage logging.)

**Drazan:** There's a place for all of that, to be clear. We need to have active management of our working lands, and that has got to include forests.

Technology exists for us to be able to identify, say, when lightning strikes occur, which may result in a fire start. We also have the Good Neighbor Authority program; we should continue to invest in that. (The program allows states, counties or tribes to do forest, rangeland and watershed restoration projects on federal lands.)

I think we should make more of our forestlands available for logging. We're either gonna manage (our forests) or we're gonna watch (them) burn.

**Kotek:** My baseline is: Talk to the experts. OSU (Oregon State University) is a huge resource for us, understanding what the experts at OSU think we should be doing.

I believe we do need some level of prescribed burning, and it has to be done safely.

In terms of overall forest practices, the Private Forest Accord is a template of how we can improve forest practices. (The accord was a deal that timber and conservation groups reached last fall.)

**Where does Kotek stand on logging and grazing?**

I don't have a particular agenda on either of those issues because I'm not an expert.

**Kotek says solving Oregon's housing crisis is a top priority. Does she support using timber harvested from Oregon's forests to build houses?**

We're gonna have to build 36,000 housing units per year for the next decade to actually meet our gap and get ahead of it. I love the cycle of using Oregon-based mass timber to construct homes. Mass timber is a very viable product that we have to promote.

**Q: Was it a mistake to shut down schools and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**Johnson:** Hell, yes.

I think we did enormous damage. I don't think we've measured the social, emotional, mental health and academic damage that we've done to our kids. A lot of the hospitality industry is not going to recover. We've dissipated the workforce.

And our response to the distribution of money was not consistent or objective.

**What would she have done differently?**

I would have approached the issue with more humility. I would have talked to county commissioners and city councilors and mayors. If you don't have the affected people's opinion(s), you just have what emanates out of Salem.

My reaction to what happened was that the agencies were punitive (and) retaliatory. They didn't work with business to try to prescribe the safest conditions for patrons and workers. Rather, they

just had their little regulatory Bigger Book of Bureaucracy out, running around trying to tell people what they were doing wrong.

**Drazan:** I'm a mom of three kids. I had my daughter at home online trying to teach herself algebra in middle school. It was absolutely a mistake to keep schools closed as long as they were.

Those first days where we did not fully understand how to navigate COVID, who was at risk, how this was going to move through our communities. ... As House Republican leader, I sent a letter to the governor on behalf of our caucus saying: Whatever you need, however we can work with you, we need to do everything we can to protect public health.

And that suddenly became: She did whatever she wanted. And she mandated everything. I think that the duration of that shutdown was heavy-handed and was an absolute abysmal failure.

## OREGON IS HOSTING AN UNUSUAL THREE-WAY RACE AMONG A TRIO OF WOMEN WHO ARE ALL RECENT MEMBERS OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE.

*What will Drazan do differently if there's a future pandemic?*

I'd give more local control to our school boards with recommendations.

*And businesses?*

And businesses. You can trust Oregonians with the best information and the most support possible to make the right choices for themselves, their customers, their clients and their families.

**Kotek:** There was certainly disagreement across the state on how best to do this. I think it was important that we instituted public health requirements that kept people safe, and frankly, alive. There are a lot of people walking around today because we tried to do the right thing.

*Will Kotek keep schools and businesses open moving forward?*

The No. 1 priority to me is, no matter what, we have to keep our schools open. We have to have students in person.

*What about businesses?*

I think one of the things (that) didn't go well is you can't tell businesses they are open and give them 48 hours and say, 'Oh, and you're closing in two days.' You have to give people advance warning. It's important to have businesses part of the conversation and give them adequate notice whenever you're gonna do something that could impact their business.

**Q: Rural economies are largely based on agriculture and natural resource industries. What do you see as the ideal jobs of the future in rural Oregon?**

**Johnson:** I think that industry in rural places is doing it. Walking through the plywood mill in Elgin, realizing how much of that is now computer-driven.

We're innovating new products we had never even dreamed of. Oregon is uniquely positioned to do the things we've already talked about — thinning, logging — but also, I think we're uniquely positioned to innovate.

**Drazan:** Across every generation, you see the evolution of community. What we have to continue to protect and preserve, though, is the autonomy of local communities.

We live in a free society. That is the beauty of our nation — its independence. Oregonians should have the right to choose for themselves and their families their best lives.

And I frankly don't believe there is a future for our state and nation without rural communities that continue to provide the values and benefits that our agricultural community has provided for centuries.

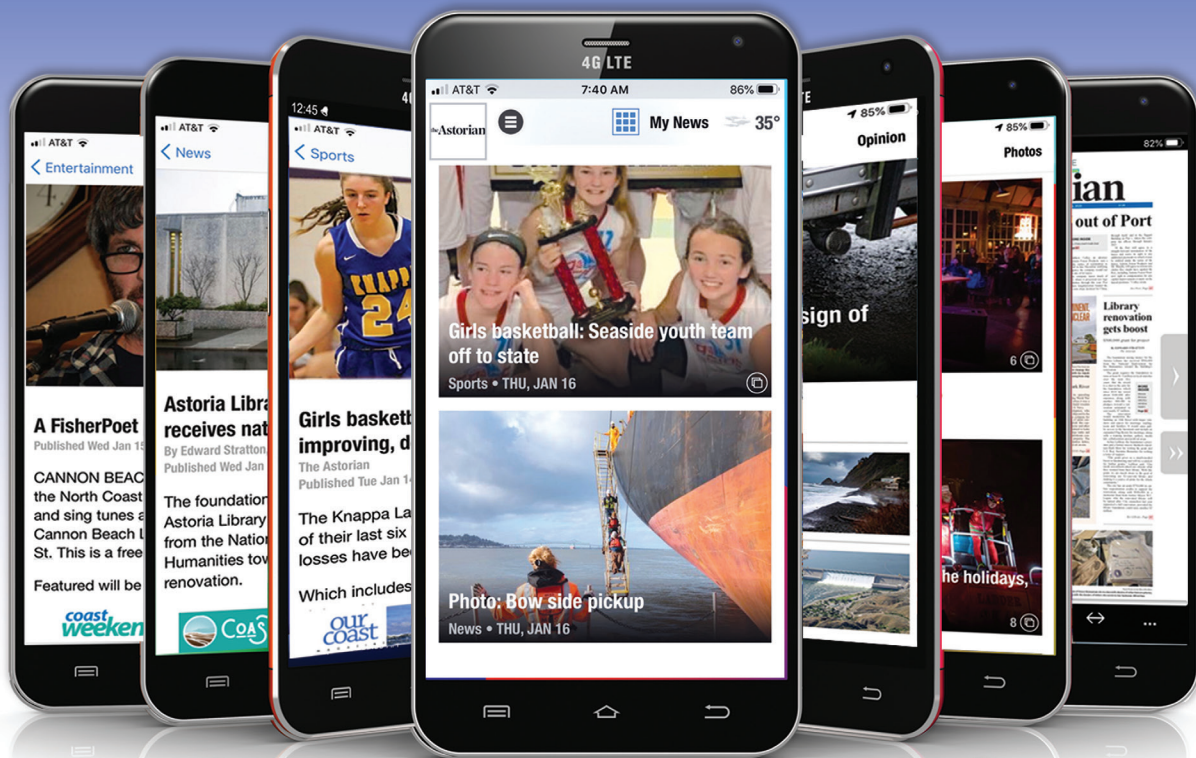
**Kotek:** I'm super bullish about the strides we're making on broadband infrastructure. The other issue for me is clean energy jobs.

We have to produce more clean energy in our state. That is jobs for rural Oregonians. That is large-scale solar. It's offshore wind. It's the pumped storage (hydropower) facility down in Klamath.

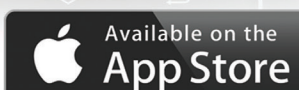
One of the things about large-scale solar in particular (is) finding properties that are on low-grade or low-value farmland. We have to protect the land use system. So, clean energy jobs and broadband (are) very important and supporting our traditional industries as well.

## Local News at your fingertips

DOWNLOAD THE ASTORIAN'S APP FREE TODAY



- Breaking News Notifications
- The Latest Local News
- Explore Photos, Videos and More
- Personalize Your News Feed
- Easily Save and Share Articles



the **Astorian**