

Hood River News

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'Like' Local

*Keeping your money close
to home helps everyone*

Hood River is now a year-round destination, as publications including Sunset magazine have recently noted.

Yet May-to-October remains the "high season," and with the winds and warm weather kicking in, that season is now.

Canada's Victoria Day (May 18) is the traditional "soft opening" of the visitor season, and so we welcome all our friends from north of the border who have arrived to enjoy wind sports and all that Hood River has to offer.

Many wind-related businesses are year-round concerns along with a wide range of shops, restaurants, breweries, galleries and other businesses, and shopping locally is a 365-day idea around here. Hood River News works with local businesses in an annual campaign, happening now, as a way of showcasing the goods and services available to the community.

Locally-owned businesses deserve the support of fellow locals. There are few things anyone needs to buy that cannot be found in local stores, and those businesses are predominately owned and operated by a fellow local. The best way to support local jobs is to keep your spending money in the community as much as possible.

You don't have to use social media to "like" a business.

Lack of parking in downtown is generally a misperception, and the city has taken steps in the past year to free up off-street parking — namely the Fourth and Cascade lot — so that customers have a convenient place to park. On the Heights, parking remains free, and locally-owned businesses are helping add real vibrancy to that commercial area.

By supporting local business, residents can help with the multiplier effect that happens when local money stays local, and it's simply a good way to maintain community by making the direct and personal contact with businesses, and fellow customers, encountered at businesses close to home.

Flags Lowered

Honoring Peace Officers

Governor Kate Brown ordered all flags at public institutions throughout Oregon be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on Friday, May 15, in observance of National Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week 2015.

"We honor the brave men and women of Oregon who keep our communities safe and bring lawbreakers to justice," Gov. Brown said. "Let us keep in our thoughts and prayers those peace officers who lost their lives in the line of duty."

The full Presidential Proclamation is available on the White House's website.

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Not for CL

News coverage and a slick YouTube video produced by Nestlé might lead Oregonians to believe that everyone who lives in our home town of Cascade Locks supports a water bottling proposal here. But that's far from the truth; we have discovered many others who feel that the State and our city are failing to conduct proper due diligence of Nestlé's proposal.

Five years ago, it would have been hard for many to believe that Oregon, Washington, and the entire west coast would experience widespread drought. However, this new reality of global climate change gives us pause, especially with our own Gov. Kate Brown's recent announcement of droughts in seven Oregon counties. Is inviting an extractive industry into our community really the right way to meet our economic development needs when the future of water availability is so uncertain?

City Hall seems to forget that our water rights are given to us by the state, who has the final authority on how best to protect it for all. In the end, water rights don't matter much if there isn't enough water to fulfill them, and if the city were to sign a contract allowing Nestlé to pump a specific amount of water, are they really still our rights? If something goes wrong, will we be able to fight their expensive lawyers, and how long would it take to force them to cease and desist while they continue pumping?

As residents, we want local, sustainable, and socially responsible long-term economic solutions that benefit us for generations to come. The acceptability of selling public resources for private profit belongs in the past, and the only way to move forward is to discover new industries to develop.

Cascade Locks has a history of pulling together to get things done, and Nestlé does not seem like a good fit or an appropriate industry. We can do better.

It is disappointing that an agency charged with protecting our water as a public resource would disregard the potential long-term implications of this project. While we are especially concerned about what a water rights swap would mean for our community, we recognize that public water belongs to all Oregonians. So the time to weigh in is now!

**Deanna Busdieker, Cascade Locks City Council
Edward del Val
Cascade Locks**

Budget breakdown

I've always been confused as to why there should be a budget deficit when the expenditure per student is \$11,656 in our district (a very high figure). Taking an example of grades 4-5, with an average class size of 26 students, that equates to revenue for each class of roughly \$303,000 (26 x \$11,656).

An average teacher's salary is around \$65,000 (for a teacher with 14 years of experience). Adding in overhead of 35 percent (or \$22,750) to cover health insurance, sick pay, vacation pay, operating expenses. The total expenditure for a teacher would be around \$87,750.00 (or \$88k) for that classroom.

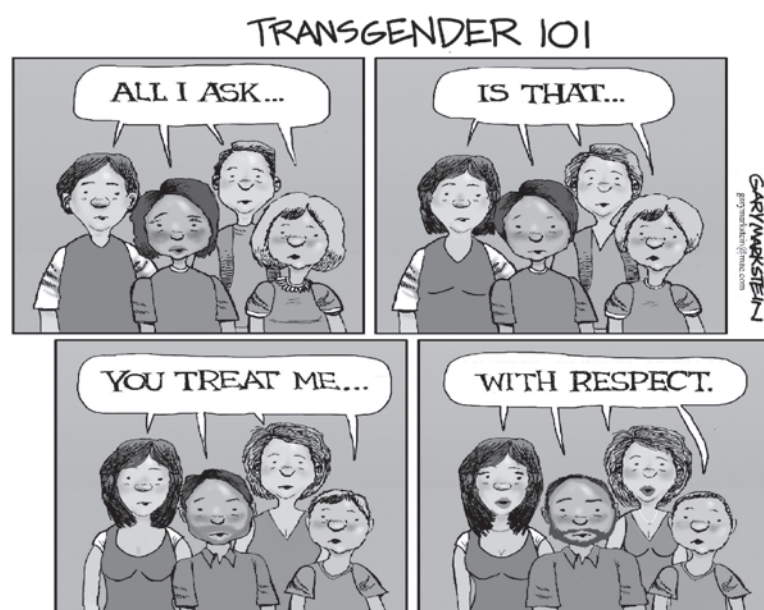
What is happening to the other \$215,000 (\$303k minus \$88k)?

It's becoming painfully obvious that there is a tremendous amount of overhead and unnecessary support and services.

For instance, there is a line item of almost \$5.5 million for health insurance on total salary costs of \$20,663,649. That equates to health insurance being 26 percent of salary costs. That is an outrageous figure. Most companies' health care costs are closer to 8 percent of salary costs. \$3.6m a year is spent on building maintenance. Considering this is for 8 schools for 8 months, that figure seems especially high. \$2 million for something called "office of the principal." I couldn't figure out if those were costs outside of the normal salaries. \$1.5 million for English as a second language. \$500k for counseling services. \$1.8 million for school transportation. The list goes on and on.

The other glaring figure is the amount of support staff. Within the entire district, there 505.9 full and part-time employees. Out of that number, only 214.4 are teachers. Support staff takes up almost \$8 million in

Our readers write



salary while teachers take up almost \$13 million. That figure is simply unacceptable. Support staff should be 20 percent of teaching staff and that number should be closer to \$2.6 million.

I understand that schools need to cater to a wide variety of needs and services. At a certain point, we need to get back to fundamentals of what services a school should be providing.

The question isn't getting more money, it's effectively managing the money we have. That means making hard decisions. Cutting down on support staff and services. Getting control of building maintenance and health insurance costs. I see no reason why any of the humanities (art, music, literature...) or athletics should need to be cut and we why we can't get the student ratio to 18-1 given our current budget.

I'd also really like to see the budget and expenditures for individual schools (rather than being lumped together). The budget provided was pretty good, but a lot of raw data without explanation.

**Joe O'Neill
Hood River**

For Fairchild, Fenner, Watson

As a student at CGCC, I have noticed firsthand how severely lacking the student services department is. We need Stu Watson, Lee Fairchild, and Guy Fenner on the board to fight the good fight. It is very clear to me that no one else on the CGCC Board of Education is going to fight for the wellbeing of the faculty and staff at CGCC or me and my education other than Watson, and I want to see the wellbeing of the school prioritized over the stagnant and political current Board of Education.

The current board wants to cut 110 classes. Do they know that enrollment will stop if degree-seeking students can't receive an education through Columbia Gorge Community College? Do they know that cutting staff and faculty will decrease the quality of the education available at the college further dropping enrollment? Apparently, everyone on the current board (except Watson) has not thought about those aspects of budget cuts and layoffs. Please help me receive the education that I deserve by voting for Stu Watson, Lee Fairchild, and Guy Fenner.

Watson is the only currently serving board member who is dedicated to the students and faculty of the college; at all board meetings I have attended he is the only one who demands that transparent and proactive decisions. Also earning my endorsement is Guy Fenner. He has a Master's Degree in Engineering believes that "it is CGCC's responsibility to provide these students with the support services they need to achieve their academic goals." He also believes in a transparent board, one in which the announcement of the potential closing of the Hood River Campus won't be a knee jerk reaction to a budget crisis thoughtlessly overlooked.

Lastly, Lee Fairchild is an extremely important addition to the CGCC Board of Education. He recognizes that "the CGCC budget over the last few years is unsustainable" and has experience in education. He has both taught at the University level and has worked in corporations and run his own business.

We need more board members who are engaging in open and honest communication with the employees and addressing their concerns instead of leaving a feeling of helplessness and

betrayal among staff members. Is it possible that the current board should be working with the staff and faculty to come up with decisions about how to fix the problems in my school? It's time for board members who are on the side of the employees and students of Columbia Gorge Community College.

**Ashley Platt
White Salmon, Wash.**

Forest Plan needed

Northwest logging towns and endangered forest ecosystems are in decline and will disappear unless we retain the current Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) and reverse these trends.

Timber workers are not heard demanding an end to mechanized logging and the export of raw logs and milling jobs to foreign markets. "Joy-stick logging" allows one person to replace many, costing careers. The culprit is not owls living in the few remaining old growth stands.

In Oregon there are already five times more jobs in forest recreation than in logging. These include habitat restorers, trail workers, guides, campground workers, etc. Indirect jobs are in hospitality, transportation, equipment sales and rental, etc. Decommissioning roads, defragmenting watersheds, and rebalancing the forest for nature increases its appeal as a recreational resource and supports towns and people even in the short term. In forestry, the motive is to reduce human participation. In recreation, the goal is to increase it. More habitat means more recreation and more jobs in rural towns. Forests will continue to provide careers in the wood products and recreation industries if we improve them via the protective standards of the NWFP and include buffers protecting riparian areas, reduction of the harmful impacts of old logging roads on streams, water quality, and fish habitat, and maintenance of public access to trailheads, campgrounds, etc. To achieve maximum profitability, USFS should manage the NW forests as a whole, not forest by forest. All mature and old-growth forests should be off-limits to salvage and logging to protect wildlife habitat, provide carbon storage, and build the recreation industry.

We can increase rural paychecks, protect habitat, and "sink" carbon in healthy old-growth trees, all by managing forests as one, limiting "no-labor" logging and exportation of unmilled logs, and embracing recreation and habitat.

**John Wood
Hood River**

A note on letters
Several of the letters in this edition of "Our Readers Write" are beyond the stated 350-word limit. They have been edited down from longer (and in two cases, much longer) original lengths. Realizing that this goes back on our repeatedly-stated policy of limiting letters to 350 words, we are allowing the average because in this case we lacked the time to send the letters back to the writers and ask for reductions.

In light of the circumstances, and the fact that some of these authors are first-timers, we are allowing these that go beyond 350, albeit in edited form. Meanwhile, we'll try to refine our system so that more timely response can be made when letters do go over 350, with the earnest reminder to all readers to limit letters to 350 words.

*Thank you.
Kirby Neumann-Rea, editor*



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Founded in 1905

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