

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Oil refinery in Longview?

Does it make sense to build a new oil refinery on the banks of the Columbia River in Longview, Wash., especially one that will be supplied with crude oil via rail? No, but this answer is not quite so clear cut as environmental advocates make it seem.

Riverside Energy Inc. indicates it is looking into several locations in Oregon and Washington for a new West Coast refinery that would turn crude oil — likely from the Bakken field of North Dakota and Alberta — into gasoline and other products. The company says it is far from firmly settled on Longview, though its very name — Riverside — suggests that a facility based on Columbia River transportation and water may be a fundamental aspect of its business plan.

This will be anathema to many in the environmental and fishing communities. Even pipelines are susceptible to spills, but rail-based tank cars are a particularly potent source of concern. There is no disputing that they have suffered derailments, explosions and other mishaps that have cost lives and forced expensive cleanups. Even a relatively minor spill at the wrong time could wipe out a critical salmon run, while a major accident could put an end to fishing, clamming and tourism for years. Lives have been lost under such circumstances and doubtless will be again, and we don't have to go along with accommodating such risks in our neighborhood.

However, much as some might wish to permanently end fossil fuel exploitation immediately and forever, economic realities dictate that time is still at least two or three decades in the future, if we're lucky. The vast majority of Pacific

Northwest residents continue to depend on petroleum products for a broad range of necessities, from transportation to home heating, plus many uses that aren't so immediately apparent, from tires to fertilizer. Only about 19.4 gallons in a 42-gallon barrel of oil becomes gasoline.

The entire West Coast is plagued with gasoline prices that tend to be significantly higher than those in other parts of the U.S. In part, this is because we lack refinery capacity. The loss of a single refinery for routine maintenance or to make repairs following an accident causes a month-long spike in Western fuel prices. With a growing population, we could certainly use additional refining.

Technological advances mitigate some concerns raised by Riverside's opponents. For example, existing refineries in highly environmentally conscious Whatcom and Skagit counties in northwest Washington state are not permitted to emit "a toxic soup of carcinogens and neurotoxins" as Columbia Riverkeeper states is true of refineries in general. Such scare tactics aren't helpful.

As always with industrial proposals, Riverside's plans to build a refinery must be forced to fully internalize costs and risks. Promises of jobs, taxes and useful products must not sway communities and regulators from ensuring that wherever a new refinery is eventually built, neighbors and regional citizens are in no way left on the hook for coping with pollution or other costs. Any plan that can't fully immunize the Columbia River and its creatures and communities must itself be refined or rejected.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Middle-ground Republican could give Brown a race

By **STEVE FORRESTER**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — If there is a conventional wisdom about Kate Brown's first campaign for governor it is that a middle-ground Republican could make a race of it. Especially if the Democratically held legislature goes over the top with a liberal, Portland-centric agenda.

Brown also goes into the governor race without the high name familiarity of a governor who won the first race and has served three years. John Kitzhaber's name familiarity registered in the '90s.

Two names surface as prospective Republican challengers — Dr. Bud Pierce and Allen Alley. Pierce, a Salem oncologist, has announced his candidacy and Alley says he's "seriously considering it."

State Rep. Knute Buehler is mentioned by Republican players, but he has no plan to make the governor's race. The Bend orthopedic surgeon lost to Kate Brown in the 2012 race for secretary of state in which he was endorsed by all Oregon newspaper editorial pages. Other, outside prospects mentioned are Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, who serves in an executive role and impressed many in the March Dorchester audience, and Rep. Julie Parrish, of West Linn/Tualatin.

Dr. Pierce — like Chris Dudley and Dr. Monica Wehby — is a first-time candidate and is personally capable of providing a base of campaign funding. The drawback of the novice candidate in a statewide race is that they haven't been tested under fire. Of Dudley, Pierce says: "I think he actually ran a strong campaign. He could have been a little better prepared about issues."

The big question is whether Alley will make the race, because he would en-

ter the Republican primary with relatively high name familiarity. While Alley engaged Republican pollster Bob Moore in 2014, Alley says he has no poll presently in the field.

Alley ran a convincing race for Oregon treasurer in 2008, securing the endorsements of a number of Oregon newspapers and losing to Ben Westlund by a margin of 51-44 percent. He lost to Dudley in the 2010 Republican primary for governor.

The trick of the Republican primary, says Alley, "is whether you alienate the rest of the electorate."

With the Oregon electorate split into thirds — Democrats, Republicans and Independents — Alley says: "The day is gone when Democrats can win on their own." They must attract Independents. "A Republican must get crossover from Democrats."

The race for Oregon governor costs between \$5 million and \$10 million.

Pierce, who is 59, has retained Paul Phillips of Pac/West Communications and is being advised by Sen. Jackie Winters of Salem. Pierce says he "was thinking 2018" until Gov. Kitzhaber unraveled.

"I'm willing to commit personal resources to this. But if you can't get others to support you, you're not valid as a candidate."

Pierce's next step is to "get the PAC going." Phillips will advise him on when to file.

Rep. Buehler, who is 50, is on the board of the Ford Family Foundation, whose focus is rural Oregon. Buehler says: "I'm in no hurry." He adds: "I have laser focus on representing Bend. My future plans are a distraction from more important issues."

This story first appeared in the Oregon Capital Insider newsletter. To subscribe, go to oregoncapitalinsider.com



STEVE FORRESTER
Comment



OTHER VIEWS

NRA is winning gun battle

It is now fair to ask whether the National Rifle Association is winning — or has in fact won — this era of the gun debate in this country.

Gun control advocates have tried to use the horror that exists in the wake of mass shootings to catalyze the public into action around sensible gun restrictions. But rather than these tragedies being a cause for pause in ownership of guns, gun ownership has spiked in the wake of these shootings.

A striking report released Friday by the Pew Research Center revealed that "for the first time, more Americans say that protecting gun rights is more important than controlling gun ownership, 52 percent to 46 percent."

One of the reasons cited was Americans' inverse understanding of the reality and perception of crime in this country. As the report spells out, in the 1990s, people's perception of the prevalence of crime fell in concert with actual instances of violent crime. But since the turn of the century, things have changed: "A majority of Americans (63 percent) said in a Gallup survey last year that crime was on the rise, despite crime statistics holding near 20-year lows."

Furthermore, it used to be that the people most worried about crime favored stricter gun control, but "now, they tend to desire keeping the laws as they are or loosening gun control. In short, we are at a moment when most Americans believe crime rates are rising and when most believe gun ownership — not gun control — makes people safer."

The report adds: "Why public views on crime have grown more dire is unclear, though many blame it on the nature of news coverage, reality TV and political rhetoric. Whatever the cause, this trend is not without consequence. Today, those who say that crime is rising are the most opposed to gun control: Just 45 percent want to see gun laws made more strict, compared with 53 percent of those who see crime rates as unchanged or dropping."

Another cause is most likely the intermingling of politics and high-profile crimes. As The Christian Science Monitor reported in 2012: "As sure as summer follows spring, gun sales rise after a mass shooting. It happened after the shooting rampage at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999. It happened after the Tucson, Arizona, shootings last year that killed six. Now, after the killing of 12 people last week at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, gun sales are spiking again — not just in Colorado but around the country."

It continued: "Self-protection is part of the reason. But a bigger factor, say gun dealers,



CHARLES BLOW
Comment

is fear of something else: politicians, specifically, their ability to enact restrictions on gun ownership and acquisition of ammunition. When a high-profile shooting takes place, invariably the airwaves are full of talk about gun control."

It appears to be an extreme example of unintended consequences, or a boomerang: The more people talk about gun control, the more people buy guns. And not only do gun sales surge, but apparently so does NRA membership.

As *The Huffington Post* reported in 2013: "The National Rifle Association's paying member ranks have grown by 100,000 in the wake of the December school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, the organization told Politico."

The report continued: "In the week after the shooting, Fox News reported that the NRA was claiming an average of 8,000 new members a day. High-profile mass shootings are often followed by periods of increased interest in the NRA, but representatives said this rate was higher than usual."

It was after the Newtown shooting that President Barack Obama established a task force, led by Vice President Joe Biden, to develop a proposal to reduce gun violence, which the president said he intended to "push without delay."

Those proposals, including expanded background checks (which were characterized as "misguided" by the NRA's Chris Cox) and a ban on some semiautomatic weapons, were roundly defeated in the Senate, although polls showed about 90 percent public approval for expanded background checks.

In fact, this month *The Washington Times* reported: "The American firearms industry is as healthy as ever, seeing an unprecedented surge that has sent production of guns soaring to more than 10.8 million manufactured in 2013 alone — double the total of just three years earlier."

It continued: "The 2013 surge — the latest for which the government has figures — came in the first full year after the December 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, signaling that the push for stricter gun controls, strongly backed by President Obama, did little to chill the industry despite the passage of stricter laws in states such as New York, Maryland, Connecticut and California."

One may begrudge and bemoan the fact, but it is hard to deny it: The NRA appears to be winning this round.

Charles M. Blow is The New York Times's visual Op-Ed columnist. His column appears in The Times on Saturday.

YOUR VIEWS

Trans Pacific Partnership puts U.S.A. in a corner

I wish to explain my opposition to the new Trans Pacific Partnership (a trade agreement herein called TPP).

First, if it is so good for America, why must it be secret? This fact alone should wave big red flags for everyone who calls himself an American. Some are touting its good provisions for American jobs. If this is true then tell me why every labor union in the country (yes, every single one) is against it. Even those dock workers who would certainly get more work are saying no.

The environmental rules are a sham, the currency manipulation is totally unregulated, the methods for dispute resolution take away American sovereignty over disagreements and sets up a court system totally controlled by the big business interests which can even fine the USA for causing a loss of profit to them via our environmental, trade, labor, or any other issues. Our Congress and courts will have no recourse whatsoever. We will just have to pay. Where are you tea party, which hates the UN? Big international companies want to do worse than the UN ever could but your voices are silent.

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

This must be stopped!

It will cause jobs, right here in Pendleton, to be lost as the RVs will be made abroad and then imported to America. It will cause our Oregon raw logs to be exported, cut, and shipped back to us. How is this good for America? We must rise up — right now — so please get off your chair and call Senator Wyden at 541-962-7691 or 503-326-7525 or 202-224-5244. Do it now.

Dave Fitzsimmons
Pendleton

Other western options for Brownfield Park

A recent viewpoints column "Western theme at Brownfield Park" by Fritz Hill caused me to think once again of a common sight from the 1950s and 1960s on Pendleton's Main Street.

It was a pleasure to see Chief Clarence Burke and a salesman "tilikum" (meaning friend) Chlouie Chloupek standing beneath the awning at Oylear-Howard Pontiac passing the time of day. I was too young to join in the conversation but I was old enough to appreciate the friendship and western theme represented by the two of them. Today that spot is Brownfield Park, a place to pause for a moment and perhaps to think of other impressions such as Reverend Dr. Earle Cochran manning the 20 mule team around the corner at the Pendleton Hotel, keeping the energy of the mules focused and providing truly astounding entertainment for all.

Folks, this is not entirely about tourism. An additional idea might be the use of historical photos designed to be weatherproof, which would record the significance of that place and its treasured memories.

Barbara Howard
Milton-Freewater

(Editor's note: An earlier printed version of this letter included an error not attributed to the author)