

EAST OREGONIAN

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

Tip of the hat to two local school districts, who took advantage of a few old-fashioned financial moves that will save taxpayers a boatload of money.

Last week, the Hermiston School District refinanced \$18 million in general obligation bonds. Because we are living in a climate of ultra-low interest rates, the refinance cut the district's APR in half and shaved two years off the term of the loan. In total, the move will save Hermiston taxpayers \$2 million.

They weren't the only one to take advantage either.

The Umatilla School District joined them last week by refinancing its general obligation bond, thus saving taxpayers \$451,000 over the life of the loan that stretches into 2022.

Both are smart moves that benefit their constituents and increase the

support and trust of the community. And we should expect organizations to do everything they can to stretch our dollars — which we have voted to give them — as far as they will go.

Other municipal organization should take advantage of the cheap lending terms and follow the lead of these two school districts.

Three cheers to accountants!



A tip of the hat to Hermiston residents who helped haul away more than 60 tons of junk during the city's first Clean Sweep event last weekend.

Most of the drop-offs were difficult-to-recycle items such as tires, electronics and hardened concrete, the kind of stuff that can't really be left out on the curb for pickup either. That's where Clean Sweep comes in, making it as free and easy as possible for citizens to get rid of the kind of junk that can make a city look grubby.

Now Hermiston has 60 tons of that grubbiness off its streets and lawns, and the city is better for it. At a cost of just \$4,000, it's an economically efficient way to clean up a neighborhood or a

street.

About 200 people took advantage of this first opportunity, and as word of mouth spreads and a high profile presence expands, you can bet it will be a service that many more Hermiston residents will take advantage of.



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.

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.

Deadline!

Editor's note: Letters to the editor regarding issues on the May ballot must be received by the *East Oregonian* by 5 p.m. May 7 to ensure publication in our May 9 edition. Letters received after the deadline will be posted online but not in print.

Not too late to move Don Requa statue

Well, I am with Mr. Fritz Hill about the Requa statue: It's not a done deal.

The location of the bronze statue of Mr. Don Requa was apparently determined by the Pendleton City Council meeting April 21.

Who actually made that decision? I still believe the citizens of Pendleton and the surrounding area have a right to another appeal that the Requa statue be placed at Pendleton High School.

If it is up to the city council to appoint a Pendleton Arts Advisory Committee, I suggest no city council member be on the committee, nor the mayor or city manager.

The city council and Pendleton Arts Advisory Committee should create a comprehensive set of rules and guidelines, as suggested by Mike Forrester, for any public art within the city limits.

It should be up to the Umatilla County commissioners to form a similar arts committee for the county.

Mr. Requa is not likely to attract tourists as will other historic figures on Main Street. In keeping with Pendleton's pioneer theme, a statue of Moses Goodwin, or a covered wagon, or both, would be much more appropriate at Brownfield Park near where the

pioneers crossed the Umatilla River. The size of such statues should be considered.

The statue of Mr. Requa will overpower the little Brownfield Park. People have asked me why he is more important than other well-known Pendleton residents. He isn't, except for high school students.

I predict, in years to come, if Pendleton retains its western and Round-Up reputation, the statue of Mr. Requa will be moved to where it belongs: Pendleton High School.

Dorys C. Grover
Pendleton

Pendleton schools need levy funds to operate

Please continue to help the children in our local schools by voting yes on the renewal of the Pendleton School District local option levy, Measure 30-105, which will be on the May 19 ballot.

This levy, continuing with no increase at a maximum tax rate of 40 cents per assessed value, provides additional school operating funds that are not provided by the state.

Failure of this levy to pass would mean a loss of approximately \$470,000 per year for the next five years, or over \$2.25 million in revenue to the Pendleton School District.

Imagine what another \$2 million loss to operating funds

would look like: a reduction in funding of salaries for teachers, meaning layoffs that would result in increased class sizes again, cuts to academic programs again — when we've just started building them back up — a freeze on adding critical technology into the classrooms, and more. The loss of even one teacher impacts our students.

This local option levy was initially approved by voters in 2000 and renewed in 2005 and 2010. It is not a new or additional tax. The tax rate does not increase.

We know it's still tough economic times for individuals, businesses and organizations. Renewal of this existing levy is greatly needed. Our schools are a critical link in the development and education of our community's youth.

I urge you to join us in voting yes on the continuation of PSD local option levy.

Debbie McBea
Pendleton School Board member

BMCC graduate appreciates college

I feel compelled to write a letter in support for the Blue Mountain Community College bond. One of the great things about Eastern Oregon is the ability to receive a high level of education locally that helps drive our own economy. I attended BMCC because I

knew I needed some type of degree past a high school diploma. I stayed at BMCC because I found that teachers were well versed in their subjects, in many cases they had or still were working in the field they are teaching in. I also stayed at BMCC because the level of dedication from the community had made departments like the science and agriculture departments an up-to-date facility that compared to large four-year schools.

The current BMCC bond would help to ensure that our region is still in the forefront of improving our local economic work force. I am in support of the bond because it is one of the few ways we can ensure our tax dollars go to what we want them to go for.

This bond also takes advantage of a state match of dollars making our local tax dollars stretch. I hope you will join me when you get your ballot and vote yes for the BMCC bond.

Aaron Duff
Milton-Freewater

BMCC bond dollars necessary for upgrades

I am writing to ask for your support in voting yes for the Blue Mountain Community College bond levy.

I would like to point out several of the reasons why we need to give this initiative our support. This bond will allow the college

to update and expand technology and infrastructure to improve instructional capabilities and operational efficiencies.

It will also generate significant operational savings for the college by replacing aging, inefficient heating, cooling and plumbing and electrical systems.

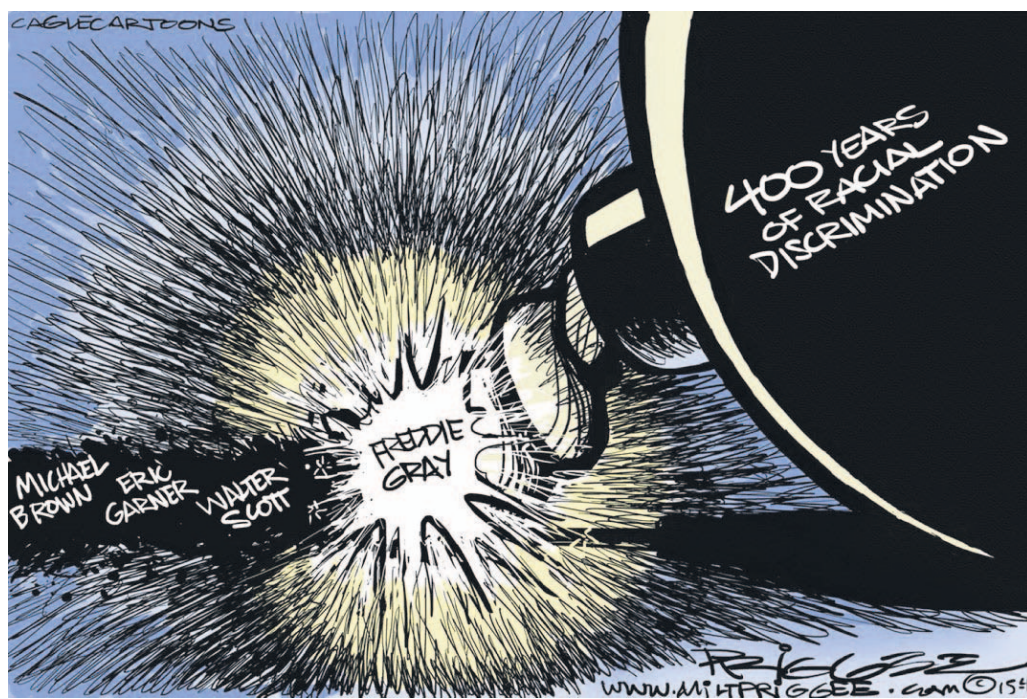
BMCC serves 10,000 students each year, and an average of 82 percent remain in the local area, making positive economic and social contributions. Investing a dime a day for a 15-year bond will raise \$23 million to support capital improvements at all BMCC locations in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

I received my AA from BMCC in 1980, which allowed me to continue on to OSU where I graduated with a degree in business.

I returned to BMCC in 1987 to pursue additional studies, and it was during this time that I met my wife who was also a student at BMCC. Therefore I can personally attest to the value of having a community college in our area. I continue to live and work in Umatilla County, as well as serve on numerous boards and committees in order to give back to the community and country that means so much to me.

Let's get it done this time, and thank you for your support.

Jerry Baker
Athena



OTHER VIEWS

2016 will be here soon

It's conventional wisdom that the 2016 Republican presidential race is at such an early stage that the polls don't matter. They're just a measurement of name recognition at this point, some observers say, and the only people really paying attention to the campaign are reporters and hard-core party activists.

Maybe that was true in earlier years. But it doesn't seem to be the case now. "One thing about this election — Republicans are paying attention," says a GOP pollster not affiliated with any campaign. "They are very concerned about who the nominee is going to be, and the idea that what a candidate says now doesn't matter could not be further from the truth."

Look at the recent CNN/ORC poll. First of all, it's a huge field, and no candidate dominates — Jeb Bush is in the lead with just 17 percent. But nearly all the respondents surveyed have picked a candidate to support; add together every candidate's little share of the vote and the total nears 100 percent, with few undecided.

There's Bush's 17 percent, followed by Scott Walker with 12 percent; then Rand Paul and Marco Rubio with 11 percent each; Mike Huckabee with 9 percent; Ted Cruz with 7 percent; Ben Carson and Chris Christie with 4 percent each; Rick Perry and Rick Santorum with 3 percent each; and Carly Fiorina, Lindsey Graham, Bobby Jindal and John Kasich with 2 percent each. Then there are 5 percent who say they support some other candidate.

Add it up, and that's 94 percent of Republicans who say they support a specific candidate now. The rest — a pretty tiny number of undecided — say they can't make a decision or have no opinion.

Of course, that's just for now. Many will change their minds, but they are already taking the race seriously.

At this point, many voters are likely making preliminary decisions based on very little information. They know Scott Walker fought unions in Wisconsin. They know Jeb Bush is George W. Bush's brother and George H.W. Bush's son. They know Ted Cruz was involved in the government shutdown.

"That's why these announcements are important," says the pollster, "because it is the first time to associate more facts with each candidate. And you've seen each candidate get a little bump when they announced."

Some analysts describe this period as the



BYRON YORK
Comment

"pregame." The real game starts at some point in the future, perhaps in August when the first Republican debate takes place in Ohio. But the pregame, if that's what it is, matters too. Candidates are getting their only chance to make a first impression.

In the 2012 campaign, the first Republican debate was held May 5, 2011, in Greenville, South Carolina. The participants were Ron Paul, Herman Cain, Rick Santorum, Tim Pawlenty and Gary Johnson. (Don't remember Johnson? He's the former New Mexico governor who ended up running as a Libertarian.)

The big question that night was whether Pawlenty could ascend to the top tier of candidates. (He couldn't.) But the real lesson of the evening, at least in retrospect, was that the GOP field was still remarkably unformed at that stage.

This year's field seems much more stable at an earlier time. The basic structure of the Republican field seems nearly set.

This year's field seems much more stable at an earlier time. Yes, Kasich might enter the race — he certainly sounded that way last weekend in New Hampshire — and yes, perhaps another candidate will give it a try, too. But the basic structure of the Republican field seems

nearly set.

And strong, too. Back in 2011 and 2012, it was common to hear Republicans complain about the weakness of their field. Some complain today — some always do — but the fact is the 2016 GOP field is a pretty impressive group. Governors with solid records, senators who have made their mark in the Senate, plus intriguing figures who come from outside the world of politics.

Not all of them will make it even to the Iowa caucuses. And they'll drop off like flies after that. The key thing for the winning candidate is to realize that he will have to be able to assemble a coalition of those voters who support other candidates in the current 14-candidate field. That's what it will take to win.

One thing a candidate — or anyone else, for that matter — should not do is dismiss what is going on in the race now as meaningless because it is so early. Plenty can change, but it might be that when February 2016 comes around, and the voting begins, some themes (and front-runners) in the race will look a lot like they look now.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS