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OUR VIEW

Demolition offers opportunity

In January, Pendleton should be the new owners of 20 acres of prime development land.

The property, which was home to the Blue Mountain Recovery Center and a nearby training center, had long been off the tax rolls and owned by the state of Oregon.

But due to legislative maneuvering, and the work of former Rep. Bob Jenson and current Rep. Greg Barreto and Sen. Bill Hansell, that land is set to transfer to the city when the calendar flips to 2016. The final hurdle is a signature from Governor Kate Brown, but there seems to be no desire from her office to keep pen from paper.

The second advantage given to the city is that the state has agreed to fully finance demolition of the two buildings, which are ill-suited to the kind of development the city wants to attract to the space.

Falling into ownership of two level, build-able lots in a good location is a real opportunity for the city of Pendleton. City officials have said the newly available land could

create as many as 80 jobs. What should the city do with it?

One of the properties has obvious industrial or manufacturing potential. Located next to Keystone RV and Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, it's not a good spot for much-needed rental housing. Its location near the highway lends it more toward some light manufacturing, or transport and transfer facility, rather than retail.

While the BMRC site seems limited, the old training center has a wider variety of possible uses. It's located north of Westgate, on the BMCC side rather than the EOCI side. That means it would be more attractive to the college crowd and to prison employees. An apartment complex that could provide new, affordable housing for students and working class people would shore up a major missing piece in the Pendleton livability puzzle.

The city is in the catbird seat. They have an asset on their hands and the ability to court the kind of development they want to a long-forgotten part of town.

City officials have said the land could create as many as 80 new jobs.

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

Trying to find common ground on a transportation bill

The (Albany) Democrat-Herald

One of the big questions remaining on the Legislature's docket as it races toward its conclusion is whether it will be able to reach some sort of deal on transportation.

You'll remember that a transportation package to find money to pay for badly needed improvements on state roads, bridges and other infrastructure was a top priority for former Gov. John Kitzhaber and his successor, Kate Brown. In fact, Brown said she wouldn't let legislators leave Salem until they had crafted a transportation package.

But then Democrats passed, and Brown signed, a bill extending the state's controversial clean-fuels program, a measure meant to cut carbon emissions. Republicans vehemently opposed the bill, arguing that it was certain to increase the cost of gas — and they went on to make it clear that they could not support a transportation package funded by an increase in the gas tax.

The clean-fuels program, coupled with a gas-tax increase, Republicans argued, would mean that consumers would have to cope with two separate increases in the price of gas.

Because any increase in the gas tax would require votes from Republicans, even with the majorities Democrats enjoy in the Legislature, that appeared to be the end of chances that the session would reach a deal on a badly needed transportation package.

And, in fact, that's still one likely result.

But *The Oregonian* reported over the weekend that longshot discussions on the issue between Brown's advisors and legislators of both parties — first

reported a month or so ago — are continuing. The participants were generally mum on the details, but the frequency and length of the meetings (sometimes twice a day, with at least one meeting stretching over seven hours) suggest that momentum for a deal might be building.

The Oregonian was able to report on the general outlines of the potential deal, and they won't come as much of a surprise to people who have been following the debate: The negotiators are considering rolling back, to some extent, the clean-fuels program in a bid to win enough Republican votes to pass a gas-tax increase.

That means lawmakers are looking for methods to reduce carbon emissions that wouldn't result in an increase in gas prices.

With less than a month to go before the Legislature's scheduled July 11 adjournment, though, this will be a tricky bit of business. For many Democrats (and some of the well-heeled supporters who contributed to their campaigns), the clean-fuels program was a top priority. Rank-and-file Democrats may well be unwilling to accept a compromise that would gut the program.

But they should keep an open mind on the matter. We think a well-designed transportation package could do more to reduce carbon emissions than the clean fuels program ever will. And the transportation package also could help deliver good-paying jobs all through the state, especially in its more rural areas.

It's still a long shot that the Legislature will come up with a transportation deal. But the fact that these talks still are going on is one of the rare bits of good news the session has delivered thus far.

With less than a month to go before adjournment, this will be a tricky bit of business.

YOUR VIEWS

Pick up your dog poop and condoms from city parks

My dogs and I just got back from our morning walk in our Pendleton Community/McKay parks. As usual I carry my doggie poo bags and pick up after my own dogs along with other dogs.

Here lately I have had to pick up lots of drink containers where people won't go a few feet out of their way to throw them into the many trash cans provided.

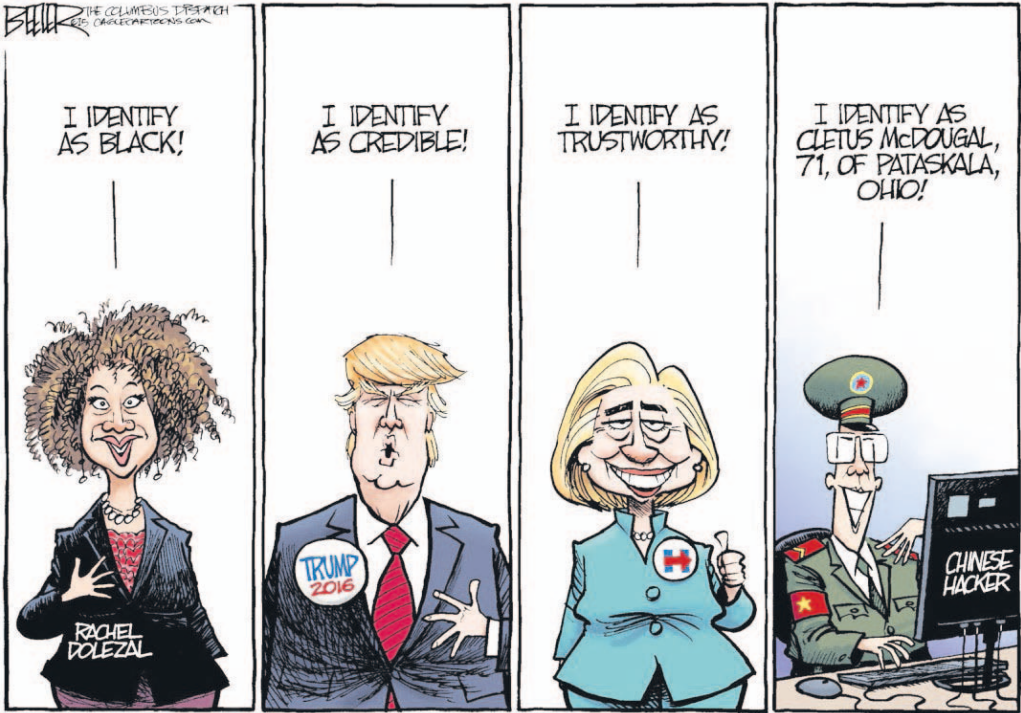
Plus I have picked up condoms

with my doggie bags. I'm glad they are practicing safe sex. But it would be nice if all would practice using the trash cans.

Our parks are family parks. Children and adults use our parks. No one wants to step in a dog pile, or see trash all around our park or their children seeing used condoms.

Please, the summer has just begun. If you use our parks do your part in keeping them clean and safe for all.

Virginia Beebe
Pendleton



OTHER VIEWS

The GOP's blinkered contenders

SAN DIEGO — The Republican Party keeps announcing its new modernity, declaring its new inclusiveness, swearing that it has changed and then showing that it hasn't.

Witness Rand Paul, who is supposed to be one of its fresher, unconventional faces.

He spoke at a dinner here Saturday, in a blazer and khakis instead of a suit, and once again presented himself as a Republican unusually in touch with the sensibilities of younger voters, especially concerned about the welfare of minorities and uniquely positioned to expand the party's reach.

It was a refreshing pitch — until a medieval metaphor revealed an antiquated mindset.

He was describing people's need to feel that their personal information in cyberspace is as safe from indiscriminate government snooping as the documents in their dwellings have long been, and he mentioned the adage that "a man's house is his castle."

Then he updated it: "Now we would say a man or a wife's home is their castle."

A man or a wife's?

Aiming for a less sexist, more sensitive vocabulary, he came up with a more sexist, less sensitive one, casting women as auxiliaries of men.

This was no way to rebrand the party, no way to retire any image of it as a preserve for old white guys.

But it was emblematic. For all the party's self-congratulation about a field of official and unofficial presidential candidates who depart from the fusty norm, the truth is that they don't depart nearly enough.

Yes, they're a racially diverse group, including Bobby Jindal, who is Indian-American; Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, who are Cuban-American; and Ben Carson, who is African-American.

Yes, Rubio and Bush speak Spanish, as Bush did in Miami on Monday during his formal campaign announcement, which had the multiethnic flourish of a Coca-Cola Super Bowl commercial.

Yes, Cruz and Rubio are both under 45. Rubio in fact looks young enough to be Bernie Sanders' grandson. He advertises an affinity for hip-hop and rap. He name-checks Pitbull and Nicki Minaj.

Paul, an ophthalmologist, highlights his travels to Central America to perform eye surgery on indigent Guatemalans. He cuts his own hair. And he urges criminal justice reforms, including lighter punishments for marijuana possession and use.

But he came across as more backward-acting than forward-looking during that strange sequence of interviews with female journalists a few months ago, when he

admonished and interrupted them.

And his Republican rivals, beneath their playlists and campaign choreography, aren't so impressively in touch with the times either.

Although more than 70 percent of American adults under 35 support same-sex marriage, not one candidate in the sprawling Republican field has explicitly taken that position, and most have expressed impassioned opposition.

Although an increasing fraction of American adults, including about a third of those under 35, pronounce themselves religiously unaffiliated, there's no sense of that drift in the emphatic religious testimonials of most of the Republican candidates, including Bush, Rubio and Scott Walker, who introduces himself as a preacher's son.

Almost all of them are at odds with young Americans' belief in climate change and stated desire for immigration reform.

And none of the leading contenders has a pitch that strongly reflects a recent Gallup poll's finding that more Americans label themselves socially liberal than at any point in the last 16 years. These Americans finally match the percentage of those who call themselves socially conservative.

Where's the Republican presidential contender for them?

Where's the Republican candidate who can enter into an important, necessary debate about the size, role and efficacy of government without being weighed down by a set of statements and positions on social issues that seem tailored to placate the religious right and to survive the primaries, not to capture voters in the center? You're not allowed to say George Pataki unless he reaches 5 percent in the polls. Last I checked, he's about 4 points shy of that.

Yet again there's a void, and Hillary Clinton and her advisers have certainly noticed it. That awareness informed her own speech Saturday, on Roosevelt Island, where she made many references to young Americans, to LGBT Americans, to minorities, to working women. Her remarks constituted a road map of the precise terrain that Democrats want to keep — or put — beyond Republicans' reach.

And she sought to counteract the familiarity of her presence with the novelty of her promise. She pictured a woman in the Oval Office.

On the other side of the country, Paul pictured a woman in a castle — and all he saw was a wife. The ophthalmologist needs better vision. So does his party, if it wants passage across the moat to the White House.

■

Frank Brunni, an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times since June 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995.

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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.