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OUR VIEW

Pardon the dust

When a business is ready to expand or remodel, but wants to keep customers coming in during the project, it will often hang a sign on the front door that reads “Pardon our dust,” promising the end product will be worth the short period of ugly inconvenience.

Hermiston might consider temporarily painting that logo on its water tower while the new brand is being finalized.

You can’t pass from one side of town to the other without seeing signs of growth. The new hotel going up downtown, featured on today’s front page, is rising quickly. Oregon Department of Transportation crews are at work day and night on intersections and sidewalks up and down Highway 395. McDonalds, the fast food staple of town, is undergoing a remodel that will expand its footprint at the county’s busiest intersection.

That’s not to mention the new homes going up in multiple subdivisions, the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center taking form south of town, the Ranch & Home store slated for construction by the Wal-Mart Distribution Center or the senior center soon to be built next to the library.

When the dust settles, the town will have a different look and feel. And that’s a good thing.

Nobody likes to sit in traffic (if that’s what you want to call it) while one employee in an orange jacket works on a road while four others supervise. And seeing an old building torn down to be replaced with a new one can stir strong emotions from those who remember way back when.

But as any business understands, if you’re not moving forward, you’re dying. The growing pains and mess of the process can be frustrating, but the end product is worth it.

Hermiston has shown a willingness to embrace such change, and that has been a large part of its success. The town’s history is filled with dramatic changes, from the construction of McNary Dam to the boom of irrigated agriculture to the storage and destruction of chemical weapons at the Umatilla Chemical Depot. Every shift in the economy was capitalized on, which led to the fast growth.

So, please, pardon the dust. Remember that the temporary traffic slowdown is going to make Hermiston more accessible to everyone, the noisy construction sites will lead to more places to eat, shop and stay, and the demolition of old buildings can be part of a healthy cycle of rebirth.

Construction — while certainly a hassle — is a sign that Hermiston is a growing town.

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OTHER VIEWS

Economic outlook of state depends on where in Oregon you live

The (Salem) Statesman Journal

Gov. Kate Brown is right. Oregon’s economy is blossoming ... if you live in the right areas.

“I am pleased that, on the whole, Oregon has turned a corner on the Great Recession,” Brown said Friday in her second State of the State address. “But that recovery has been slower across our 36 counties, with some rural counties struggling with unemployment as high as 7 or 8 percent.”

“The key to continuing to grow the economy in every corner of our state is Oregon’s small businesses.”

Her attention to small businesses is much appreciated. More than half of the Oregon workforce is employed in small businesses.

And it is a state, like many others, that is heavily reliant for tens of thousands of jobs on out-of-state companies that have chosen to locate some operations in Oregon. Those companies range from fast-food franchises that give youths their first jobs to high-income software developers.

Consequently, the actual key to sustaining and widening Oregon’s economic growth is to align the state’s tax, political and environmental policies with the state’s economic goals. But Oregon’s policymakers seem to be doing almost everything they can to deter business development. That is curious, because at the same time they are highlighting Oregon’s desperate need for affordable housing. It should be obvious: More family-wage jobs would mean

greater housing opportunity.

It was disconcerting to hear Brown, during a question-and-answer period after her speech to the Portland City Club, say that tax reform should include ensuring that out-of-state corporations pay their fair share.

“Fair share” sounds good, especially following the Panama Papers revelations about global investors stashing profits in low-tax havens.

But “fair share” is in the eye of the beholder. Oregon’s November ballot is expected to include a union-backed initiative to substantially boost taxes on some out-of-state corporations doing business in Oregon. That proposal already has had a deleterious effect.

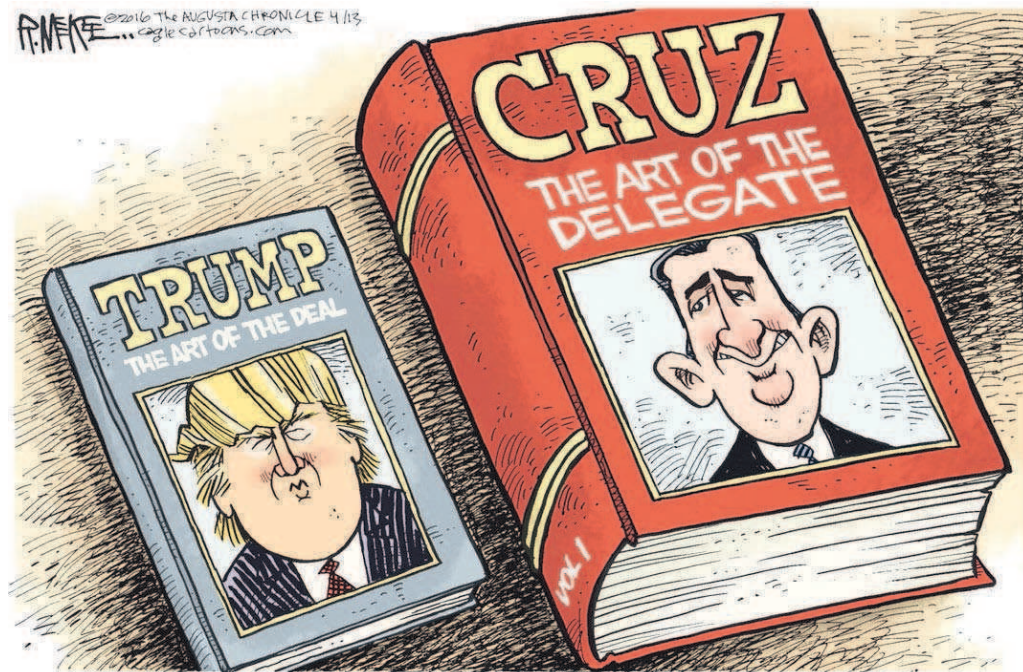
And the irony of that tax proposal is that backers promote its expected \$2.6 billion revenue as a way to fund more state services. If Oregon voters dampen the economy by approving the measure, those services definitely will be needed.

Government grows in times of need. In contrast, a robust economy lessens the need for government services.

Tom McCall, the legendary governor whom Brown quoted in her speech Friday, understood that. Known today for protecting the environment, he also cannily marketed the state’s economy. His successors also recognized that Oregon’s quality of life depended on its being a business-friendly state.

Brown has done a lot during her first year-plus as governor. She had reason to be optimistic. But storm clouds not only are on the horizon, but they have been raining on much of Oregon far too long.

OTHER VIEWS



Is GOP headed for its own Bush v. Gore?

It’s now likely Republicans are headed toward a contested convention in July. But they might be headed toward more than that — the party could be on its way to an internal version of the 2000 election, the race in which the candidate who lost the popular vote won the presidency, leaving injured feelings and diminished faith in the legitimacy of the electoral system.

And it could be worse than that. The 2000 winner of the popular vote, Al Gore, lost the presidency because of the constitutional structure under which

electors, not popular vote totals, determine who enters the White House. Seeing the popular vote loser, George W. Bush, win the election was unfortunate — it hadn’t happened since the 19th century — but it was specifically provided for in the Constitution. Democrats unhappily accepted the result because they accepted the Constitution as the bedrock of our system of government.

In an intra-party Republican fight, on the other hand, the winner of the 2016 nomination could be determined not by the Constitution but by rules written by party activists and insiders the week before the GOP convention. If those rules can be reasonably viewed as unfair, they won’t command the fundamental respect and consensus of a constitutional provision. And the resulting nominee won’t command that respect, either.

There’s no guarantee it will happen. Right now, the popular vote leader, Donald Trump, is also the delegate leader. According to RealClearPolitics, through the Wisconsin primary Trump has won 8,197,535 votes to Ted Cruz’s 6,263,349. Trump leads the delegate race with 743 to Cruz’s 545. (Yes, there are complicated ways to count delegates, but Trump still has a substantial lead.)

Even with losses over the weekend in Colorado’s delegate selection, it’s possible Trump will win the 1,237 delegates required to clinch the nomination before the convention.

If he did that, he would certainly be the vote leader, too. It’s far less likely — actually, almost impossible — for Cruz to hit the delegate mark before Cleveland. But if he could pull it off, in addition to his delegate-convention efforts, it could only be by collecting many, many more votes than Trump in the remaining big contests.

The more likely scenario is that Trump will go to the convention leading in delegates and the popular vote. The delegate totals will change on multiple ballots. The popular vote won’t; there will be no more to win. And at this point it seems difficult for Cruz to overtake Trump’s 1,934,186-vote lead. So it seems possible that, should Cruz become the nominee, he would do so as the popular vote loser.

Of course, winning the popular vote over a series of primaries and caucuses is not the same as winning the general election popular vote on a single election day. But winning the popular



BYRON YORK
Comment

vote is the single most important factor in the Republican primary and caucus system

Some states award delegates winner-take-all — that is, to the winner of the popular vote. Other states award delegates winner-take-all to the winner of the popular vote in congressional districts, with an additional number of delegates going to the winner of the statewide popular vote. Other states award delegates proportionally, with the most going to the winner of the popular vote, either in districts or statewide.

All of those allocation methods are based primarily on the popular vote. It is the foundation of the primary and caucus system.

Republicans have not recently had to face the prospect of a popular vote winner losing the nomination. In 2012, Mitt Romney won 9,809,662 primary and caucus votes to second-place Rick Santorum’s 3,909,460. In 2008, John McCain won 9,902,797 votes to Romney’s 4,699,788. There was no question who won.

Democrats in 2008 faced a much more difficult situation, when Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton ran neck-and-neck in the popular vote. In the end, Obama played Democratic Party rules much more

craftily than Clinton, and won the delegate race. But he also came out ahead in the popular vote. By one count, Obama narrowly won — really narrowly, by 41,622 votes out of 35 million cast — while by another count, including vote estimates from some caucus states, Obama won by 151,844.

Both were narrow, narrow victories, but victories nonetheless. Still, being close in the popular vote gave Clinton a powerful argument as she stayed in the Democratic race. When she said she was “proud to have put 18 million cracks in the highest glass ceiling,” she wasn’t talking about delegates.

Now, Republicans could be headed toward an end in which the popular vote loser becomes the party’s nominee. Many Republicans undoubtedly have no problem with that. They are fond of pointing out that we live in a republic, not a democracy. That the rules are the rules. And that the Founders didn’t much like democracy.

There are counter-arguments for all — we live in a representative democracy, the rules are changeable, and the trend in the past 150 years has been to make American electoral practices more democratic. But don’t expect any of the arguments to be settled.

Donald Trump will spend the next few days, and perhaps weeks, railing about the unfairness of the system. Of course he’s doing it out of self-interest. But his campaign has raised a healthy question for debate: How representative of the voters should a party’s nomination process be?

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

In an intra-party Republican fight, the winner of the nomination could be determined not by the constitution, but by rules written by party activists and insiders the week before the GOP convention.

YOUR VIEWS

Letter proves existence of village idiots

I compliment Mr. Kishpaugh’s letter to the editor confronting Al Plute’s comments concerning the “village idiots.”

Bob Ehmann
Pendleton

Emergency measures hurt rural Oregon

It is time for those of us in rural Oregon to take responsibility and charge of our needs. We have stood by and waited too long for Salem to take notice of the difference in rural and urban communities.

They have continuously ignored our pleas to help stabilize funding in counties dependent upon our natural resources for county funding, yet they push for clean energy reforms that are not proven to be cost effective, and will roll

out by 2025.

To add insult to injury, they classify them as emergency measures, to take effect immediately, and push them through the short legislation session. Do they not understand the word emergency?

Where was the \$2 billion that would have given rural counties the ability to provide basic public safety services to its citizens, and saved nearby jurisdictions from sacrificing their own public safety concerns and dollars? Why did we not see the PERS financial time bomb addressed? This will financially affect every city, county, state agency (and yes, that means taxpayer), as they scramble to fund PERS liabilities now, not 2025. Could it be because their own pocketbooks are at stake?

It is time for a grassroots movement to bring local control back to local communities.

We can begin by reclaiming 50 percent of lottery funds being taken from our local counties currently going into a “honeypot” in Salem. We need to show Salem that rural Oregon has a voice, and demand it be heard. It is time.

Valerie Lovelace
Grants Pass

Primmer the choice for Pendleton council

This letter is in support of Dale Primmer for the Pendleton City Council, Ward 3 position.

Dale Primmer is someone we have known for many years, both personally and professionally. You won’t find a man of greater character, work ethic, judgment or humor than Dale Primmer.

Dale is first and foremost a family man, and because his family is so important to him, he is passionate about the place he and

his family have chosen to live, here in Pendleton.

Dale will live his life here, and he cares deeply about the quality of life in our small town.

Dale is not one to sit back and criticize, but rather likes to become involved and help influence decisions. His intelligent mind can easily identify a problem and understand the financial implications of decisions made. He is a skilled leader who can gather people together to work toward solutions and develop a vision for

the future.

There have been times we have differed with Dale in some of our politics, but there has always been open conversation and a willingness on his part to “reach across the aisle” and listen to another point of view. Dale is a man of integrity, and without hesitation, we believe he would help steer the citizens of Pendleton toward a healthy future.

Mark and Marla Royal
Pendleton

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.