

# Quick takes

## Republicans divvy up states

I just think it's a snub to Oregon voters.  
— Linda Cole

I'm a Democrat, but watching this with utter amazement, as this is akin to, upon seeing a giant snowball gaining speed and size downhill, two guys wake up and rushing to the front of it saying "We need to stop that snowball before it wipes out our house!"

—Rod Wayne Nixon

No I already know who I'm voting for. Neither one of the Democrats and not Trump.

— Kristina Ream

## Corps determines Kennewick Man is American Indian

Bring him home.

— Matthew Otten

## Lots on fast track to auction

Remember...when you think no one cares at all about you...just don't pay your taxes...

Last thing I recall is that we left England because taxation is theft....

— Nick Ritzer

*One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.*

# Not the end to the PGG legacy

By TIM HAWKINS

The Pendleton Grain Growers board of directors has proposed the sale of the co-op and is taking the final decision to members for a vote on May 2. Our recommendation to sell the assets of PGG was not made lightly or in haste, nor has it come without many sleepless nights. For the past 85 years, whenever you thought of the Northeast Oregon agricultural community, you thought of PGG. The suggestion of bringing PGG's time — in its current state — to an end has been difficult for the membership, employees and our entire community.

PGG lost its grain license in 2012, and in that same year we discovered that the yearly earnings from 2008 to 2012 were reported incorrectly. This board, which had just come together, made the decision to fight for this co-op and try to preserve it for the members.

Our determined stance was accompanied by the responsibility to make some tough calls to set PGG on a

path of greater stability. We made the necessary changes to have our grain license reinstated, we eliminated operations that were no longer profitable, and we restructured the entire company.



TIM HAWKINS  
Comment

The board built a new management team, implemented accurate accounting systems and refinanced the company through a new lender.

The board's efforts and transparency have earned the confidence of PGG's membership. Last December, the membership overwhelmingly voted to extend the terms of board members, and that decision was made with full knowledge of a potential sale of the grain assets. Last spring, we communicated details about our financial situation and the dire need for members to support the co-op by bringing their grain to PGG. Despite the board's plea, not enough grain was received to ensure a sustainable business.

Despite efforts to revitalize the company, too many factors have combined to create an insurmountable challenge. In recent years, the loss in market

share as members took their grain elsewhere, the impact of the drought and the discovery of the underreported earnings have combined to take a huge toll on the financials. Today, postponing or avoiding a sale altogether puts all of our operations at risk, even those that are profitable or show potential.

The board weighs every decision based on the impact to our members and employees. We are continuing in our work to communicate with members and employees and present the best possible outcomes as the next step for PGG. We are seeking companies that have capacity to provide the services and marketing tools our members need, have the resources to invest in assets, and can be community partners in continuing the traditions established by PGG.

The sale of PGG offers the best outcome for our members, employees and community. The grain, energy, seed and Precision Rain divisions of PGG are positioned to attract

strong buyers. Such buyers would have the necessary resources to reinvest in the businesses, keeping them on track and operating to serve the community's needs. These operations need continued support to ensure they remain attractive to potential buyers and maximize their value. In addition, a sale at this time would offer greater potential to distribute

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some equity to our committed members.

If the members agree with the board's recommendation to sell the remaining assets, which include energy, seed, grain and Precision Rain divisions of PGG, it will not be an end to the PGG legacy. The sale will be a way to preserve PGG's heritage by providing these operations with an opportunity to continue to thrive and serve the agriculture community in Northeast Oregon.

■  
*Tim Hawkins is the Chairman of the Board of Pendleton Grain Growers.*

## Dale Primmer for Pendleton council

My name is John Trumbo and I am the retired sheriff of Umatilla County. In the spring of 1997 I received a call from a young man named Dale Primmer. Dale said he was about to graduate college from Western Oregon University, as such had needed to do a practicum and would like to do it in Umatilla County. I eventually hired Dale later that year in what was then a division of the sheriff's office, Umatilla County Community Corrections.

Over the years I watched as Dale committed to his career and promoted through the ranks. He now sits at the helm of that department as the director of Umatilla County Community Justice. I know Dale to be hardworking, honest and committed to his community.

The city of Pendleton is currently presented with a unique opportunity. The city is going to elect several new council members as well as a new mayor. These individuals will have a fresh set of eyes on the problems, the resources available to the city, as well as opportunities before it. I support Dale in his efforts to become elected to Pendleton City Council Ward 3, and hope the citizens of the Pendleton will take advantage of a well-qualified individual and candidate.

John Trumbo  
Pendleton

As a Pendleton business owner and volunteer, I have worked with Dale Primmer in both professional and personal situations over a number of years. I have watched Dale grow in his profession and his public service. He always works respectfully with others, including those whose ideas oppose his own.

Dale's enthusiasm and innovation are inspirational. He takes the time and interest to look at all perspectives, and makes a concerted effort to find solutions which meet everyone's needs.

Dale's integrity is beyond reproach, and his character unimpeachable. He will be an invaluable addition to our Pendleton City Council.

Vote for Dale Primmer, Pendleton City Council, Ward 3.

Susan McHenry  
Pendleton

## Scott Fairley for Pendleton council

Please join me in supporting Scott Fairley for Pendleton City Council Ward 2. I have known Scott most of my life and have found him to be honest and hard-working. He is a great communicator and a very approachable person. Scott has experience in both the public and private sectors and will be an excellent addition to the Pendleton City Council.

Darcey Ridgway  
Pendleton

## Cimmiyotti for Pendleton council

Young Cimmiyotti came to call at the Sunridge dining hall, he is only twenty-four but I think he really knows the score.

He is running for city office

and I hope he is elected, because I wouldn't want to see a smart young man like him rejected.

When on the council I have no fear he will get his rear in gear.

Being young and energetic, too, elect him to the council and I am sure he will work for you.

Both of the gentlemen are OK, but it is time our youth have a say.

Jim Hendricks  
Pendleton

## Rick Rohde for Pendleton council

Vote for Rick Rohde. Rick is an important person to this community. He cares about Pendleton so much, he has walked it streets making sure the beauty of Pendleton shows and he keeps us of informed of what the city council is doing. Not everyone can go to those meetings, and Rick has taken the time to keep us informed.

Rick is also a very kind person and someone that we can always trust to tell us the truth and encourages every one to read the newspaper to keep up with what is going on. It has never been about money to Rick; it is about the town and the spirit our town should have.

Candy Cook  
Pendleton

## Lindsay for Morrow County Judge

We are writing this letter in support of Melissa Lindsay for Morrow County Judge.

Melissa is the right choice for this position; she has a lot of passion and energy for making good things happen in Morrow County and will do a great job in working with the other commissioners to represent the county well.

We have known Melissa personally for years; she comes from a family of long-time Morrow County residents and wants to do her part in helping Morrow County continue to grow. Melissa is someone that you can count on to help get things done. We have worked with her on a professional capacity as well, whether it was when she helped us to get a loan for our home or working on committees, clubs or coordinating events.

Please join us in voting for Melissa Lindsay for Morrow County Judge.

Jim and Becky Kindle  
Heppner

## Rea for Morrow County Commissioner

We are writing in support of Leann Rea's candidacy for Morrow County Commissioner.

Leann has served as county commissioner for the past two terms and she has proven to be highly effective in her leadership role with county government. Leann is highly visible in all of the county and devotes many hours of time and energy to attend meetings throughout the county and state.

We have found Leann to be very transparent in her role as commissioner and she always takes the time to answer the public's questions and share any information requested about county government.

We feel it is important to

retain Leann's experience and institutional memory as the county moves from the county court system to three part-time commissioners and a full-time administrator.

Please join us in voting for Leann Rea for county commissioner

Larry and Betty Mills  
Heppner

## Milton-Freewater schools bond

Have you seen all the vote yes for Milton-Freewater School signs?

The upcoming bond issue that is being presented to the Milton-Freewater community is not only a generous gift on the part of the Valley family, but more importantly an investment in the future of our town.

Pay it forward is a statement that we've all heard. Someone paid for our education and our children's opportunities, now it is up to us to pay back and/or pay forward. If we don't approve this school bond, we will become a dying community. Without the pay-it-forward approach our future leaders (our young people) will not have the abilities to keep this community alive and healthy.

Sure, none of us want higher taxes, but I bet you don't want someone unskilled to fix your car, an uneducated dentist to work on your teeth or an untrained person to dispense your much-needed medications. The basis for these skills start at the beginning of a student's school years. Without up-to-date, safe facilities and equipment this will not happen. We can't attract favorable businesses or educators themselves without providing an alluring environment. Those who currently are working with our youth are doing the very best they can with what this community is providing, but is it enough? If we don't approve this bond now in a few years we will be asked to pay double or triple of what it will cost when the buildings actually come tumbling down.

We both worked out of this community for a number of years, but we chose to live and educate our children here. When our kids moved away from here, their choice was a city that is known for its progressive education systems and facilities. Please vote to support that same environment in Milton-Freewater.

Tom and Kathy Strickler  
Milton-Freewater

We feel the excitement and optimism growing in our community. If Make A Difference Day and the creation of the Gathering Place wasn't enough to renew our faith in the future of Milton-Freewater, the news of a \$15 million private gift to our school district was surely a groundshaking vote of confidence.

Of course, that \$15 million private gift comes with a requirement that our community must step up to the plate and commit \$12.5 million for schools, which makes perfect sense. The Valley Foundation believes in our future, but they want "proof" that we believe in ourselves. The school bond we will be voting on very soon is our opportunity to say yes to the future of our community.

Oh, and let us not forget that

a positive vote also unlocks an additional \$4 million state grant. The math is pretty clear: \$19 million in grants plus a \$12.5 million community commitment equals \$31.5 million available to address much-needed school construction and building improvements. We have never before heard of a small public school district being presented with such a grand opportunity.

The strong attendance at informational meetings, the number of yard signs throughout the area and support signs in local businesses are prime indicators that the local population gets it.

Judy and Ed Chesnut  
Milton-Freewater

## Lieuallen for circuit court judge

I think the public needs to know who the real John Ballard is and not get confused with what he wrote in the voter's pamphlet in his bid for the position of circuit court judge. I have firsthand experience with his dishonesty and manipulation.

Mr. Ballard represented my ex-husband in a divorce. One night while I lay asleep, Mr. Ballard directed his secretary to take my truck and hide it at her home. When I awoke, my only transportation was gone. Despite requests, Mr. Ballard refused to return the truck or disclose where it was hidden.

Without transportation between Stanfield, where I lived, and Hermiston for a large part of the summer, it made my family's life very stressful. It was especially difficult on my daughter who couldn't enjoy all that summer offers a child in a small remote town. I truly believe that it was up to the courts to decide how our material property would be divided. This was not a decision that should have been made by Mr. Ballard. The court did eventually order Mr. Ballard to return the truck.

After the divorce I filed a complaint with the Oregon State Bar. Mr. Ballard was prosecuted and acquitted. The trial panel however said this of Mr. Ballard's conduct:

"It should be made clear the trial panel unanimously disapproves of Ballard's conduct ... An attorney snatching and holding the opposing party's sole means of transportation reflects poorly on all lawyers.

The claim by Ballard of "I owed no duty to the wife" rang hollow with the trial panel. Ballard's actions caused actual harm to the wife, to the couple's daughter, and to the perception of lawyers held by the community at large.

The trial panel found it offensive for Ballard, as an attorney and officer of the court, to be directly involved in surreptitiously taking and holding the vehicle used by wife, no matter the rationale offered

No matter how much the trial panel disapproves of Ballard's actions as rude, sharp, and in bad form, the Bar has not proved that Ballard violated ORS 107.093."

Going through a divorce is difficult enough, Mr. Ballard's conduct made it the hardest thing I've had to deal with in my life.

Marylly Lopez  
Hermiston

## Ballard for circuit court judge

I have been a law enforcement officer in this area for over 40 years. In 1999 I met John Ballard as he started his practice in Hermiston and over the years have seen him grow into one of the foremost attorneys in Eastern Oregon.

John's integrity, honest and knowledge are the reasons we chose him when a member of my family needed legal help. And he prevailed as expected.

I believe John Ballard will be an excellent circuit court judge and he has the vote of the Drago family in the coming election.

Roy Drago  
Retired Morrow County Sheriff

## Hermiston fire district redraw

I have been a volunteer firefighter for 43 years and on the board of directors for 36 years in Stanfield. I can tell you that the forming of the Umatilla County Fire District #1 is not a takeover of the Stanfield Fire District by Hermiston Fire and Emergency Services. The idea to join both departments together was started in conversation by the chiefs of both departments. HFES will not be able to continue to provide the area with the level of service that has come to be expected and Stanfield's number of volunteers is slowly dwindling to all-time lows.

With the reformation the new district would have a new tax base that would allow for the growth of the department to keep up with the growth of the area. This would be done by hiring new personnel that would start Station 2 (Diagonal Road) with a 24/7 response crew. This would make quicker response time on the east, north, and southeast parts (Stanfield area) and relieve the in-town responses to manageable numbers. Without it HFES continues to see record number of calls and in some instances sees a delay in response because of multiple calls at one time.

With a yes vote on the reformation, supplementing the low number of volunteers in Stanfield would be huge for fire response in our areas. The same time we get dispatched for a fire, so would on-duty crews from the Hermiston area. Most of the time when we get a call there might only be one or two of us in district to respond and having all these resources tied together as one would enhance that greatly. The only other option if you don't agree with this is come on down and become a volunteer on your local fire departments — even Hermiston could use more volunteers.

As far as people thinking we are losing "our" fire department, that is simply not true. We will still have a 4th of July celebration and all the other things the fire department does in the public and will have more help doing it. The Stanfield equipment is going to remain in the Stanfield station with a different name (Umatilla County Fire District #1), serving the Stanfield area, or something to that effect.

Please vote yes on all ballot measures associated with this reformation and increase the value of our local emergency services.

Eldon Marcum, assistant chief and board vice chairman  
Stanfield Fire District Board