

Quick takes

Train collides with truck

You. Can't. Outrun. A train. Ever. Just be patient and let it go by. We should know that, we're farmers.

— Kolleen Chapa

No bar, no lights at a crossing. Driver's responsibility is to come to complete stop, look left, than right, than again left and proceed when the track is clear.

— Ingrid A. Hansen

Responsibility of gun owners

What part of "shall not be infringed" is so hard to understand?

— Bryan N Becky Miltenberger

Well, due to an overwhelming number of idiots and dangerous people, that sentence seems to need amending, or reinterpretation. The authors are right, if there is no common sense give or take, responsible gun owners could very well suffer undue consequences in the long term.

— Presley Pahl

So let's give up just a little more so we don't lose too much? I say hell no. Your poison will be delivered by degrees.

— Jeff Mills

Voters get say on marijuana

Bout time! Hopefully it won't be voted against in November!

— Catherine Johns Devoe

Score one for idiocy.

— Joe Ream

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.

Jump start your emergency food supply

By DAVE ROBINSON

Whenever a person thinks of prepping, the first topic that usually comes to mind is food. What to store, how much to store, how to store, and which store to go to?

There are all kinds of food packages you can purchase. You can get a year's supply of dehydrated or freeze-dried fare for \$4,000 or a 72-hour kit for one person at Wal-Mart for \$64.

I'm going to give you a list of items you can buy at your local grocery store, things that you would probably have on hand anyway.

The dehydrated kits you buy generally tout a 25-year shelf life. So the normal things you purchase should be rotated out every few months or so.

One rule of thumb when it comes to storing up food is to buy food that your body is accustomed to eating. During a disaster your system will be on overload anyway, and there is no benefit to introducing a whole new menu to your gastric system in a time of crisis.

Some people lay in backpacking freeze-dried food to be eaten when the time comes. That is all well and good, unless you have never tried those entrees and you experience a revolt of sorts when you're already stressed out anyway. Store food to which your body is already accustomed.

Here's the beginning of a shopping list:

- 20 lbs of rice. Rice seems pretty boring, but it is filling, nutritious and adaptable to a wide variety of entrees.
- 20 lbs of pinto beans. Beans are also a valuable part of every storage plan. Combined with rice they fulfill a protein need in your menu.
- 20 cans of vegetables. Green beans, peas, corn and canned tomatoes are a good

start. Buy what you already eat and enjoy.

- 20 cans of fruit. Peaches, pears, pineapple, fruit cocktail, all to your taste.
- 20 cans of meat. Chicken, tuna, shrimp, salmon, vienna sausages, beef stew and don't forget Spam. Those square cans fit really well on the shelf and if it's fried, you can make the kids believe it is "camping bacon." It worked for my kids anyway. I even recently found some canned roast beef.
- 4 lbs of oats. A warm bowl of oatmeal can be a welcome meal any time of day. Topped with some canned fruit, it makes a refreshing treat.
- Two (or more) large jars of peanut butter. A good source of protein and surprisingly filling. Tastes good too!
- Pick up a supply of powdered drink mix. Tang, Crystal Light or similar product. Make sure it's loaded with vitamin C.
- 5 lbs of powdered milk. It's great protein and is loaded with other nutrients. It's filling and can be used on that oatmeal as well.
- 5 lbs of salt. Salt is an essential for survival as well as a food enhancer. Our bodies need salt to survive.
- 10 lbs of pancake mix. Buy the "just add water" variety, such as Krusteaz. Simple to make, easy to fix and everybody's familiar with hotcakes. Don't forget a jug of syrup
- 2 lbs of honey and 2 jars of jam. Everybody needs a little sweetness.
- 10 lbs of pasta. Again, easy to fix, familiar to everyone and a great comfort food.
- 10 cans or jars of spaghetti sauce. Goes great with the pasta. Cheap and satisfying. It's not homemade, but it does dress up the pasta.
- 20 cans of soup or broth or soup mixes. The beauty of soup is that they are a budget friendly, all-in-one meal solution and most

require only water for preparation.

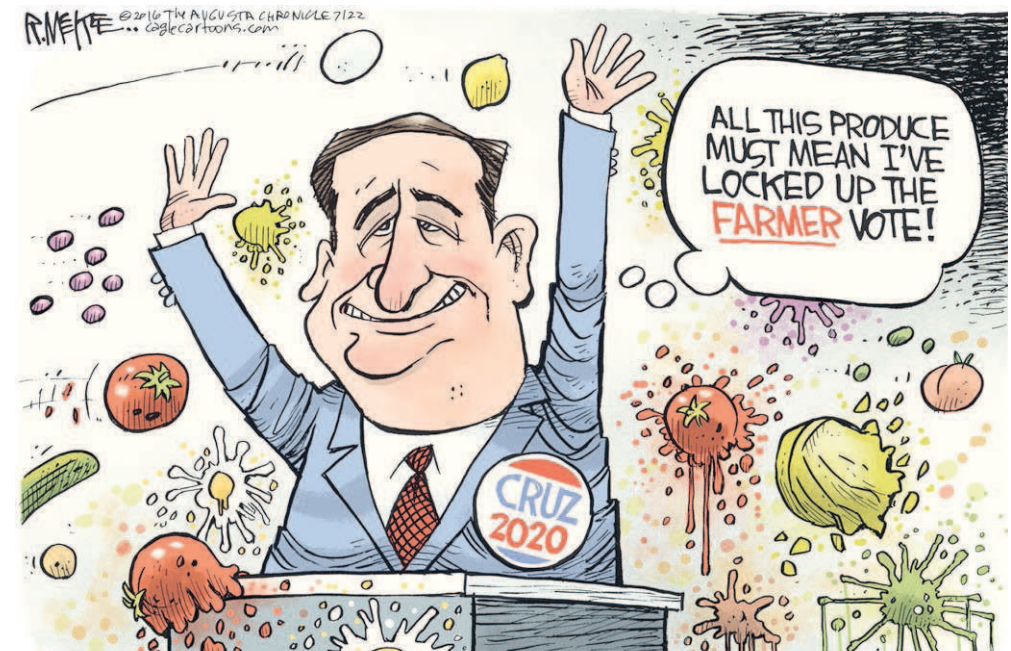
- 1 large jug of cooking oil. Olive oil, vegetable oil, coconut or some other cooking oil, but definitely get some.
- Spices and condiments. "Spice" up your pasta and oatmeal with some of the spices you already have in your cupboard and are accustomed to using, but lay in some extra. Garlic, pepper, Tabasco, all your favorites.
- 5 lbs. of coffee and 100 tea bags. For some of us life just isn't life without our coffee. Tea can be therapeutic and soothing as well.
- 2 large bags of hard candies. Peppermints, butterscotch and lemon drops can go a long way toward making a hard situation bearable.
- Flashlight and extra batteries. Lots of extra batteries. OK, I know, this isn't edible. But you can never have enough flashlights and batteries.

Now I know what you're saying. There are a lot of essentials I forgot. Remember this is a "starter" list. Some might say we need flour, wheat, yeast, and other baking necessities.

Quite frankly a whole lot of folks today don't have a clue what to do with flour, nor do they have an oven that works without electricity. Those things, and others, are important and should be a part of every food plan so don't pass them up for your comprehensive plan.

You don't need to fill this shopping list all at once. Watch for sales. Pay attention to the "buy one, get one" promotions. Use coupons. One reader told me she saved several thousand dollars in just one year by using coupons. At the same time she built a substantial pantry for use in a disaster.

Dave Robinson is the postmaster in Bandon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us."



Federal coal leasing needs a major overhaul

By DAN BUCKS
Writers on the Range

The winds of change are blowing hard across our Western coalfields. Competition from cheaper fuels such as natural gas, wind and solar has dampened domestic demand for coal. This trend — plus a bust in export markets after a brief boom — has driven five major coal companies into bankruptcy court. There, they seek protection from their creditors in order to "reorganize" by cutting costs and shedding debt.

At the same time, the Interior Department has started to face up to the longtime failure of its federal coal program. By law, it is supposed to provide taxpayers with a fair return on the sale of coal that is owned by the public. But over the last four decades or so, the American people have lost tens of billions of dollars because coal leases were undervalued by the federal government, and corporations often underpaid royalties.

And the bad news continues: At below-market prices, the Interior Department has already leased over 20 years of future coal production. The Interior Department now seeks to remedy this failure with tighter royalty rules and a moratorium in any new leases while it re-evaluates the coal program from top to bottom.

Coal industry promoters ask: "Why now? Isn't this the wrong time to fix the coal program when the industry is under so much stress?"

There are a host of good responses to the industry's laments. Reform is rarely easy, but in this case it's long overdue, and there is never a wrong time to start following the law. The enormous hidden subsidies that have been given to the industry have not saved it from the current market-driven pressures. If anything, you can argue that those subsidies only discouraged the industry from responding more quickly to changing markets. There is no better time to pause and evaluate the leasing process than during a slow market.

But the best answers as to why the federal government should fix its coal program come from the industry's current economic struggles. The fact is that the nation is beginning a major energy transition. Coal will be produced for decades but will play a diminishing role in the nation's energy picture. Sooner rather than later, coal production will stabilize at a lower level consistent with supplying the newer coal-fired power plants built in the last 25 years or so.

Meanwhile, natural gas, wind and solar will continue to displace coal. The federal coal program and a host of other public policies

need to be retooled to accommodate a reduced coal future.

The second thing to keep in mind is that federal and state governments need to help coal communities and workers remain productive and prosperous as this energy transition occurs. Bankruptcies take a serious toll on worker and retiree benefits and wages. That toll is an early warning sign to governments that they need to do more to prevent even greater economic distress for these workers and their communities.

New jobs and businesses need to be developed for displaced coal workers, most likely in wind and solar energy production, but also in other fields. Health care, job training, family education and other services should be a priority to help communities and workers adjust to the nation's new energy realities.

The third consideration is that as the industry restructures, the Interior Department has the duty and responsibility to reclaim its rightful control of the federal leasing process, making sure that the system functions correctly under the law. In 1990, Interior ceded to industry the ability to determine what coal tracts would be leased and on what terms. Interior must replace that failed process with policies guaranteeing a fair return to taxpayers, balancing coal leases with future needs, and protecting the environment. Time is short. The companies that rise out of bankruptcy — leaner, tougher and perhaps fewer in number than before — could start a land rush for acquiring new coal leases at bargain-basement prices.

That's why it is so urgent for the Interior Department to control coal leasing on public land. If Interior fails to act decisively, the public interest will be betrayed yet again, and opportunities for a better energy future will be lost.

Interior is deciding now the issues it will analyze during its review of the coal program over the next three years. The public can weigh in with their views on future coal policies by sending comments by July 28 to BLM_WO_Coal_Program_PEIS_Comments@blm.gov. Ask Interior to ensure that the American people get paid the right amount for federal coal, the environment is protected, mines get reclaimed, and revenues are generated to help coal communities and workers transition to a changing energy landscape.

Dan Bucks is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News. He was the director of the Montana Department of Revenue from 2005-2013.

Anti-Trump delegates had tough time at GOP convention

The (Boulder, Colo.) Daily Camera

There was something rich about the Colorado delegation leading an uprising and walking out of the Republican National Convention during its first day Monday.

Complaints from Colorado delegates and others about being steamrolled certainly appeared to be well-founded. In apparent panic, convention managers pushed through the report of the Rules Committee on a voice vote without debate Monday afternoon. When dissidents petitioned for a roll-call vote, they were first ignored and then rebuffed.

"This is a meeting of brownshirts," former U.S. Sen. Gordon Humphrey of New Hampshire told NBC.

"What do you mean?" asked a reporter.

"People who act like fascists," Humphrey replied.

The root of the dispute was the Hail Mary attempt by anti-Donald Trump forces to change the convention rules to make it easier for delegates to vote for someone other than Trump on the first ballot. It was not entirely clear whether convention managers decided not to permit a roll-call vote because they were worried about the outcome or because they didn't want to give Trump's critics the satisfaction of winning a procedural fight.

"It's the real fireworks of this convention," said Vin Weber, a former Republican congressman from Minnesota. "Sometimes you're better off if you're in a position of strength to allow a vote to occur."

Of course, it doesn't help the credibility of the complainers from Colorado that they managed to create a delegation composed entirely of Ted

Cruz supporters through an arcane selection process of their own. Colorado Republicans intentionally ditched a presidential preference poll at party caucuses in March, preferring a series of congressional district meetings they orchestrated into a unanimous Cruz delegation.

So make no mistake, this is not a dispute over principle. This is a dispute between anti-Trump delegates who avoided an open process in their own state and pro-Trump delegates trying to avoid an open process at the convention. If you're keeping score, the dissidents submitted petitions with signatures from enough states to force a roll-call vote on the rules. Convention managers got some of those delegates to sign

new petitions withdrawing their names from the first petitions, leaving the roll-call vote petitions without the support of enough states, according to convention managers.

"They cheated," said Ken Cuccinelli, a former Virginia attorney general and anti-Trump activist. "They just violated their own rules."

Procedural details aside, the takeaway from the GOP convention was that Republicans have a long way to go to put the acrimony of their selection process behind them.

"This action on the floor does not bode well for wanting to have unity in the party," said Kendal Unruh, a Colorado delegate leading the anti-Trump movement.

The day began with Trump's campaign manager, Paul Manafort, attacking John Kasich, governor of the host state of Ohio, for not attending the Cleveland convention. Kasich looks to have made a good call.

It doesn't help the credibility of the complainers that they managed to create a delegation composed entirely of Ted Cruz supporters.

Be heard!
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