

Quick takes

EOTEC rodeo arena bids high

In my opinion, no boardmember should be able to profit off work that is associated with that specific board, whether they are a sitting member or recently left such board.

— Susan Craig-Conger

You'll never find a better contractor or man than David Bothum. How sad.

— Alison Sullivan Ogden

Oh how terrible, not a failed attempt on a new rodeo arena! Whatever shall we do now?

— Alejandro Mendoza-Guzman

Deposit to climb to a dime

Stores should go back to the hand counting method. Way faster and convenient for the customer. People would be more motivated to take them every time they go to the store.

— Chris Thatcher

Oregon's bottle recycling is the stupidest I have ever encountered. The only way you will get full scale recycling is to recycle by the pound and a voucher ticket or direct cash.

— Michael Lovejoy

I wonder how many will start stockpiling their empties knowing they will be worth double in only eight months.

— Amy Code Madden

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.

A better way for Oregon and America

As I listen to people during meetings throughout our state (I recently held my 51st town hall since the beginning of last year), Oregonians too often voice the same concerns: an overreaching federal government that ignores our pleas, overregulates our lives and depresses job growth in our communities.

That's why I put forward legislation that positively addresses the problems we face. Seven of my proposals have passed the U.S. House so far this term—most with unanimous support—including my bills to help bring commercial air service back to Klamath Falls, provide needed funding for bridges in the Columbia Gorge and to improve rural internet service for consumers.

Within the past year, Congress has given law enforcement and drug prevention advocates new tools to help fight addiction in our communities. We've passed plans to help veterans get better health care in the communities where they live. Seniors no longer face a planned drastic spike in Medicare premiums or a cut for Social Security disability recipients. A long-term transportation funding plan and a major education reform proposal have also become law.

While I'm proud of these successes, there is still much to be done to push back against an overreaching federal government. That's why House Republicans have proposed a new agenda — called "A Better Way" — to offer solutions to some of the biggest challenges we face in Oregon and America.

Some highlights of our plan include:



GREG WALDEN Comment

Growing jobs and the economy: Too many small businesses, farmers, and ranchers in Oregon face overbearing federal regulations that are often written by agencies far away in Washington, D.C. Last year alone, federal regulations cost the national economy about \$1.89 trillion in lost growth and productivity. Our plan makes sure the regulatory regime works for us—not against us. For instance, we'd require that the Congress, accountable to the people, approve all major regulations. Our plan would also help boost affordable, reliable energy and preserve internet innovation so that jobs can flourish.

Combating poverty: Fifty years ago, the U.S. government launched the "War on Poverty." American taxpayers have invested \$22 trillion since then, yet you are just as likely to stay poor if you were born poor today as you were then. And according to a state report last year, Oregon's poverty rate is higher than the national average (and the rate is even higher in many rural counties). The current system too often replaces work, instead of encouraging it. There's a better way to help the over 46 million Americans who are trapped in a cycle of poverty. Our plan offers solutions to expand opportunity and reward work.

Implementing real health reform: The new health care law, known as Obamacare, is driving up insurance costs and reducing choices for too many Oregonians. The state

wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on Cover Oregon and now is mired in costly litigation. Meanwhile, people are left to cope with more insurers leaving the market, and two new health "co-ops" set up by the law have already folded.

There's a better way to give everyone access to quality, affordable health care.

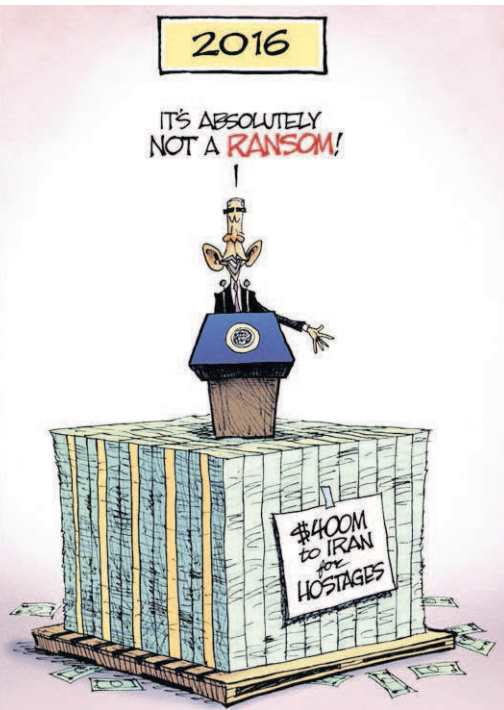
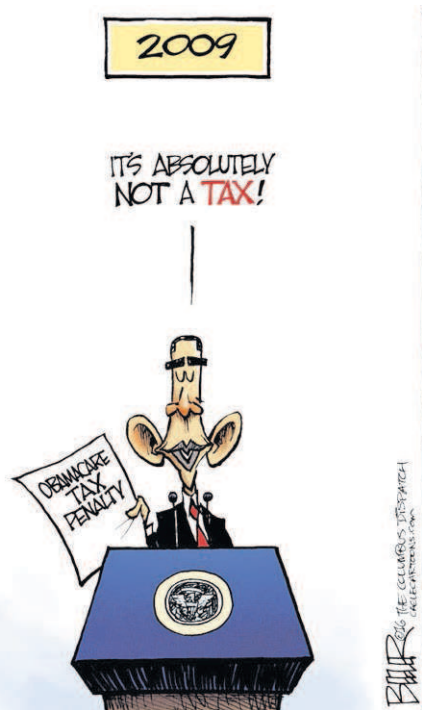
The current system too often replaces work, instead of encouraging it.

Our plan would replace Obamacare with a new one that provides consumers more choices, lowers costs, focuses on curing deadly diseases like cancer, and strengthens and preserves Medicare.

Our "Better Way" plan upholds our Constitution rights and makes government more accountable and transparent to the people. We have ideas to boost our national security, combat terrorism, and ensure our troops and veterans have what they need. And we propose reforming the nation's tax code to make it simpler and fairer for Oregon families and small businesses.

I'd encourage you to go read the entire plan, with hundreds of ideas to solve problems in our communities, on my website at <https://walden.house.gov/abetterway>. There, you can let me know what you think of these ideas or offer some of your own. Together, there's a better way to get Oregon and America back on track.

Greg Walden represents Oregon's Second Congressional District, which covers 20 counties in southern, central and eastern Oregon.



Farmers markets — spoiled by their own success?

By ARI LEVAUX
Writers on the Range

People go to farmers markets for many reasons. The jovial, wholesome atmosphere makes people feel good about their communities and the hard work put in by area farmers. Sometimes, we even want to buy something. But actually purchasing food is becoming an increasingly rare act, according to a recent *Washington Post* article.

As one grower put it, the market has gotten more crowded than ever, but his sales have plummeted. The most likely culprit, I assumed, must be the influx of young, hungry farmers stealing market share from the aging lions who built the locavore movement. Indeed, census data from 2012 suggests that the number of farmers selling directly to consumers — presumably at farmers markets — is on the rise, despite a decline in the overall farmer population. So I was puzzled about the root of the problem.

A farmer friend in my hometown of Missoula, Montana, said he didn't blame the competition for his woes. Instead, he blamed the "hipsters" for sucking the oxygen out of the market. By hipsters, he meant people who come to the market but then don't end up buying much produce.

Sipping on their lattes, deep in conversation, they care more about the scene than the cilantro. They might purchase a breakfast taco, he observed, but no basil. Maybe a pint of strawberries, but no rhubarb. And in their unhurried schmoozing they clog up the aisles like arterial plaque, impeding the flow of serious shoppers looking for actual produce. But that's if the serious shoppers can even get to the market in the first place, because parking stinks.

Missoula provides a laboratory for testing the idea that an invasion of hipsters can hurt vegetable sales at the market. For years, the Missoula farmers market was agonizingly strict about which items could be sold. For instance, only raw plant materials were allowed: No pickles. No hot food. No meat. Not even a hide from a farmer's own sheep. Nonetheless, it was a nice market, everyone loved it, and it got so big that another one opened nearby, also on Saturday, to get in on the action.

From the get-go, the new market was a showcase for the free market. Everything was for sale, including prepared food, face painting, balloons, hot chocolate, baked goods, fresh, frozen and smoked meats, and (of course)

coffee drinks. The feeling was strong that this was what the old market had always "wanted" to become, if only the folks in charge would have let it. The new market was everything that we, the shoppers, desired: a diverse, festive atmosphere rooted in, but not shackled to, farm-fresh produce.

The once-booming original market was suddenly a backwater, and you could almost hear the cheers and laughter drifting over from its rival. The free market had spoken.

Fast-forward a few years, though, and the original market, amazingly, is still around. I still go to buy certain items from vendors I've long patronized, and I'm not alone. That market, which many of us had left for dead 10 years ago, now offers a surprisingly valuable commodity: a peaceful, pleasant shopping experience.

The new market is bigger, with more vendors, and offers a lot more choices of produce and other stuff. But it's always jammed. If you have kids in tow, it also feels like more work to visit.

"It's more of a social event than a shopping event," says Stephen Paferi, a grower at the new market who jumped ship from the other one. Like many who had done the same, he's begun questioning his choice.

Another farmer, Mike Duda, observes, "They are here for the scene, for the coffee and breakfast sandwich or whatever." His loyal customers, he says, have to arrive early to avoid the craziness. "They hate the crowds. I can't believe how many people bitch about the crowds. The regulars show up early."

There is no doubt in Duda's mind that the people there for the scene are suffocating the market. "People with strollers; four people having a conversation, which is fine, but it's frustrating. And if you're a customer that wants to go to the farmers market and get some food, you're like, 'Nah.'"

Josh Slotnick sells produce at both markets. He told me that he does twice the business at the original market that he does at the new one.

If farmers can earn more at the relatively dead original market than at the bustling new version, something must be amiss. Surely the fierce competition plays a role, but the case against the hipsters is compelling as well. In Missoula, we're just lucky we have both.

Ari LeVaux is a contributor to *Writers on the Range*, the opinion service of *High Country News*. He writes about food from his home in Montana.

Making Hastert pay: Sex abuse victim sues for \$1.8 million

Chicago Tribune

Dennis Hastert, serial child molester, is paying for his misconduct by serving 15 months in prison. He got off easy.

Hastert pleaded guilty to a white-collar banking crime in October.

The statute of limitations had expired long before federal prosecutors uncovered the former U.S. House speaker's dark secret — that he had sexually abused several high school wrestlers he'd coached in the 1970s. Eight years ago, Hastert agreed to pay one of them \$3.5 million.

To the victim, known in court as "Individual A," it was a private out-of-court settlement — compensation for the lifelong damage caused by Hastert's abuse — that included a confidentiality agreement.

To Hastert, it was hush money, pure and simple. He'd paid \$1.7 million by the time federal agents starting asking about the curious bank withdrawals he'd been making for four years. That investigation eventually cost Hastert his freedom and his reputation — but it saved him \$1.8 million, according to his lawyers.

That's the balance that Individual A says he is owed (plus interest). In April, he filed a lawsuit.

Hastert has acknowledged that he molested Individual A and several other boys that he coached at Yorkville High School. Hastert went on to become a state lawmaker, congressman and eventually the longest-serving Republican House speaker in history.

Individual A, meanwhile, struggled with depression, suffered panic attacks and had trouble keeping a job. In 2008, he put a price tag on that lasting harm: \$3.5 million.

Hastert agreed to pay it. He stopped when the feds found out what he was

doing, and why.

And now the predator and his victim are trading legal arguments in a breach-of-contract dispute.

Hastert's lawyers say Individual A broke his end of the bargain when the FBI came knocking and he opted not

to lie about what was going on. (Unlike their client, who first said he was being extorted by a former student making false accusations.)

They also say Individual A didn't really trade his right to file a personal injury lawsuit for that \$3.5 million. By the time he struck the agreement with Hastert, the statute of

limitations had expired on that too. So he had nothing to trade.

They say the contract isn't enforceable anyway because it's not in writing.

And they say that enforcing the agreement — supporting Individual A's attempt to "sell his silence" to conceal alleged wrongdoing — would be contrary to public policy.

That's a high-minded argument, coming from the guy who once was so eager to buy that silence.

The guy who was able to run out the statute of limitations because his misconduct, by its very nature, was excruciatingly painful for his victims to report. It took decades for Individual A to confront his abuser. The victim still hasn't told his story publicly.

Hastert likely would have spent decades in state prison if his actions had come to light in time to charge him with sexual abuse of minors, U.S. District Judge Thomas Durkin observed at sentencing. Instead, the serial child molester — Durkin's words — got 15 months for evading federal banking regulations.

He'll pay his debt to society at a deep, deep discount. And his debt to his victim? As far as Hastert is concerned, that's paid in full.

Former U.S. Speaker Dennis Hastert, a serial child molester, got off easy with a 15 month prison sentence.

Be heard!

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