

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Travel safely during the holidays

With visions of Thanksgiving turkey dancing in their heads, thousands of Oregonians will get behind the wheel before celebrating the holiday with friends and family this weekend. Others will jump on a plane or take public transport, sweet potato casserole resting on their knees.

Oregon State Police Capt. Bill Fugate said law enforcement expects, starting today and lasting through Sunday, "one of the highest volumes of traffic in over a decade," on freeways and highways and mountain passes across the state and region. Expect traffic to be terrible through much of urban Oregon, and on Black Friday expect backups in retail areas even in our region.

There is major precipitation in the forecast, too, with heavy rain predicted for low elevations and snowfall on mountain passes. There's also that Civil War football game on Saturday, and an Apple Cup in Pullman on Friday, so readers traveling to the Willamette Valley or Palouse should be aware. And for those hardy and blessed souls traveling through downtown Ukiah this Thanksgiving, plan to leave 2-3 seconds earlier than normal to account for a rare car in front of you.

In all seriousness, traffic isn't something we worry about in Eastern Oregon. But travel is. We're spread out in open country,

which means that drive to grandma and grandpa's house is often a trip of more than 50 miles, over dark and empty roads in our area's notoriously fickle winter weather.

Fugate said in a press release that 10 people died on Oregon highways in the past week, and that number could spike again this week if drivers don't take additional precautions. OSP is urging motorists to travel safely, chiefly by planning ahead, expecting heavy traffic and poor driving conditions.

We'll take the opportunity to pass along the reminder. In short: slow down. Give the car in front of you additional room and show humility to the elements and the roadway, whether it be a driving rainstorm, a swirling snowstorm or a strong and sustained gust of winter wind. Keep an eye on tripcheck.com, and news sources like the *East Oregonian* website, to be aware of slowdowns and closures. Eastern Oregon drivers should always be prepared for an emergency, and should use the change in the weather as a prod to add water, food and blankets to your trunk.

Because what good is Thanksgiving if you don't arrive where you're expected? You wouldn't rush your family's secret turkey-roasting technique, and you shouldn't rush the drive either. Arrive safe and enjoy every bite.

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

# When state gun laws run afoul of federal law

The Hutchinson (Kan.) News

When members of the Kansas Legislature enthusiastically supported in 2013 the politically popular "Second Amendment Protection Act," some people raised concern that the law — which said federal law had no bearing on guns and ammunition produced and sold only within Kansas — might run afoul of federal gun laws.

One of those people was U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who issued a letter to Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback warning that federal officials would continue to enforce laws in Kansas and that any efforts to thwart them would be met with litigation. Secretary of State Kris Kobach — an uber supporter of the bill and an investor in a Kansas gun company that stood to benefit from the state law — replied that we'd be happy to meet the feds in court. But now, it's not Kobach or Brownback who have to stand in court facing federal prosecution; it is two poor guys from Chanute who mistakenly thought the sale and purchase of firearms and gear would be protected under Kansas' much-ballyhooped, arm-flexing, Second Amendment gun law.

Shane Cox, owner of Tough Guys guns, and Jeremy Kettler, a disabled veteran who purchased a silencer from Cox, were convicted this week of federal firearms violations, including illegally making and marketing firearms and purchasing an unregistered silencer. Both men believed Kansas law protected them.

"For believing and following the laws of the state of Kansas, I now find myself wrongfully accused in federal court," said Kettler, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan before being honorably

discharged. "The whole thing is ridiculous."

It is ridiculous, because the law was little more than a charade designed to bolster the conservative bonafides of a few Kansas lawmakers — and put other lawmakers in a tough spot by forcing them to vote "no" on a bill that essentially said, "You love the Second Amendment, don't you?"

To his credit, Kobach at least offered to assist the men in drafting a defense, and he asked Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt to join in the defense of the case. Schmidt, however, said he could only intervene if the constitutionality of state law was in question.

But the law was faulty from the beginning, and the federal government warned Kansas it would not stand against federal authority. Some lawmakers saw through the rhetoric and immediately recognized the supremacy of federal law in the matter. Yet, it was primarily a politically motivated bill, and when the careers of lawmakers are concerned, who cares whether a couple of Kansans get caught in the crossfire?

The Kansas Legislature, with its overwhelming support for the Second Amendment Protection Act, completely failed the people of Kansas. Despite concerns and warnings from lawmakers and the federal government, nothing was done to test the bill's validity or to explain to the state's residents what did or did not fall under the law's scope.

And now, two men stand alone without the support of the Kansas officials who so brazenly told Kansans that federal law had no authority here. Their lives have been irreversibly altered, while some of the failed law's champions are busy eying the next rung on their career ladders.

## YOUR VIEWS

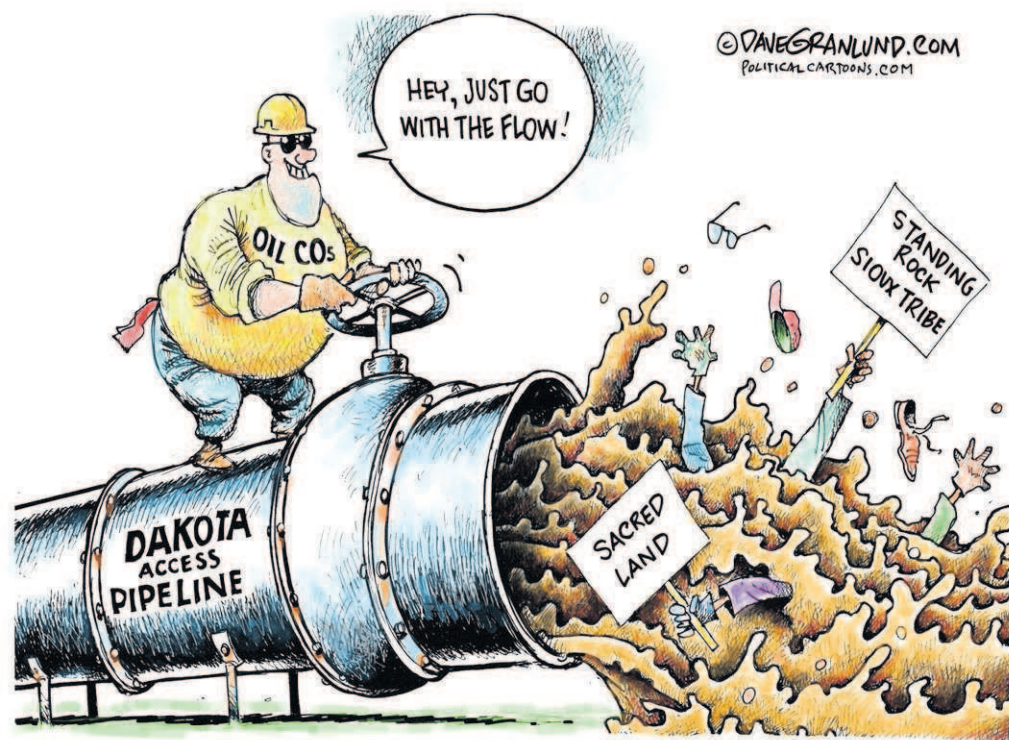
### FBI should prosecute police at Standing Rock

The FBI is responsible under law to protect the natives on federal treaty lands, just like in the case of a murder on a reservation.

They are present now at Standing Rock and looking for the perpetrators. They will prosecute the bad cops, and the mercenaries and thugs when convicted will do hard time in a federal prison.

Mike Yeager  
Pendleton

Any police caught in lies protecting the perpetrators will be prosecuted as accessories to criminal acts committed on natives. The FBI should take statements from injured water protectors — each injured person needs to and has to make a statement to the FBI — so they can prosecute. The bad cops, mercenaries and thugs hurting people at Standing Rock, North Dakota, must stop.



## OTHER VIEWS

# A jolt of blue-collar hope

NEW CASTLE, Del. — The nearby factory that made Dodge Durangos closed eight years ago. The General Motors Boxwood Road Plant — open since 1947 — closed the next year. So did the oil refinery in Delaware City.

In the span of a year during the financial crisis, once-prosperous northern Delaware had to confront post-industrial devastation.

It's sort of the devastation that now has the country's attention. Donald Trump won the presidency with huge margins in places left behind. He lost the popular vote but won 26 of the 30 lowest-income states, including the old powerhouses of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan.

These places are stuck in what I call the Great American Stagnation. Tens of millions of people have experienced scant progress for decades. Median net worth is lower than in the 1980s, and middle-aged whites, shockingly, aren't living as long as they used to. Ending this stagnation is the central political problem of our age: It fuels Trumpian anger and makes every other societal problem harder to solve.

I came here to New Castle looking for a jolt of hope after the terribly dispiriting presidential campaign. I came to see one of the more promising attacks on the Great American Stagnation.

In the wake of the financial crisis, Delaware's new governor, Jack Markell, and other officials did obvious things, like using stimulus money to stem the damage and even managing to reopen the refinery. But Markell, who'd run as an insurgent Democrat, understood that nostalgia alone wouldn't help families pay their bills. So he began looking for ways both to save old jobs and to create new ones. His answer wasn't original — but that's OK, because it was right.

In his almost eight years in office, he has made his No. 1 priority lifting the skills of Delaware's citizens. He worked on traditional education, expanding high-quality pre-K and helping low-income teenagers go to college. And he worked on what academic researchers like Robert Schwartz call "the forgotten half": the many students who won't graduate from college but who also need strong skills to find decent jobs. Their struggles are a major reason that America's workforce is no longer considered the world's most highly skilled.

It's too early for a final verdict in the state, but the signs are encouraging. High school graduation rates have jumped. Educational attainment is above average — as are incomes. The jobless rate is 4.3 percent.

New Castle, on the Delaware River, is telling, because it has focused on skills while staying true to its blue-collar roots.



DAVID  
LEONHARDT  
Comment

It's home to the state's largest high school, William Penn, which has long educated the children of workers from General Motors and the refinery. By 2011, enrollment had fallen by nearly 20 percent as students fled for other options.

"People came out and said, 'The high school is not serving the community,'" the former principal, Jeffrey Menzer, told me. "They wanted more career opportunities, more hands-on stuff."

Markell makes a similar point: "A lot of kids who drop out of high school — they don't drop out because they're not intelligent. They drop out because they think what they're learning is not relevant to the rest of their lives."

**"A lot of kids who drop out of high school ... drop out because they think what they're learning is not relevant to the rest of their lives."**

— Jack Markell,  
Governor of Delaware

William Penn reorganized itself into 20 "majors," and every student must pick one, be it manufacturing, computer science or agriculture. (The state has a broader version of the program, called Pathways to Prosperity.) One goal, of course, is to prepare students for a career. When William Penn tried to start a nursing major, the state pushed back, pointing to a glut of such programs — and the school started a medical-diagnostics major instead.

But having a major can also help students who don't know what they want to be when they grow up. It connects book learning to real life. It can help launch them into college or a certificate program and avoid the epidemic of academic drift. No wonder enrollment at William Penn has improved.

Kiara Roach, a senior, told me that she didn't care about her grades, or do very well, until she became passionate about cooking. (As she told me this, I was enjoying a moist pork sandwich in a teacher cafe she helps run.) Mike Rodriguez, who one day hopes to start a heating-and-cooling business, said: "I get bored in class. I like standing up and working on something." Jacob Sobolesky, a junior, told me: "There's only so much you can learn from word of mouth."

Many people in New Castle, not to mention the industrial Midwest, feel a deep cultural connection to craftsmanship — to making things and working with their hands. They're not inspired by working in cubicles or comfortable offices.

At the same time, they can't simply do as previous generations did and graduate from high school into a good job. They can't bring back yesterday's economy. They need blue-collar skill-building to thrive.

The country has failed to provide nearly enough of that skill-building, and we're all living with the consequences.

David Leonhardt is an op-ed columnist for The New York Times.



## 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.