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OUR VIEW



Hermiston Farm Fair fires up

Today is the opening day of the Hermiston Farm Fair, an early Christmas present of sorts for area farmers.

The four-day ag-stravaganza features cutting edge technology and research, presented by experts from across the country and the world. The sheer volume of expertise and information is sure to get area farmers thinking, and ultimately — hopefully — improve local yields and economies.

This year, for the first time, the venerable farm fair will take place at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. The center was built for this type of event, and while the campus is not yet totally finished, it already offers more space and flexibility than the fair is used to. It should make for a better event with more options for fair enthusiasts, and that is supported by the enlarged schedule of events.

A special 8-page section is included in today's paper, which gives readers a guide to the event. Give it a look to understand what the area's cutting-edge farmers will be

up to this year. Or get an idea on just what presentations you'd like to sit in on. Sure, lectures about root-knot nematodes, brown leaf spot, Russian thistle biology and the properties of soil fumigants might not be

Both insiders and outsiders can find something interesting at the annual event.

everyone's cup of tea. But understanding those issues are integral to the income of area farmers and their ability to grow crops, raise a family, run a business and be good stewards of the land. Dozens attend each session, looking to find a nugget of knowledge they can take home to make a difference in their soil

or bottom line. But it's not just for insiders, landowners or farm workers. Laypeople might appreciate learning about what drones can do for farmers, the latest breakthrough in honeybee breeding or what's happening to farm land values.

Whether you are an insider or an outsider, there is plenty to enjoy at the farm fair. Running through Dec. 2, it is an important support system for Eastern Oregon agriculture — the industry that makes the region tick.

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

The value of civil discourse is in serious decline

The Norman (Oklahoma) Transcript

As a society appear to be hurtling toward a place where civil discourse simply doesn't exist. One of the most powerful, and dangerous, consequences of our continued reliance on social media as a form of communication is that we're far too concerned with being right and not concerned enough with actually listening to, or reading, what others are saying and writing.

As a country, we used to place more value on the importance of hearing someone out — no matter how much we disagreed with them — and learning about other points of view and on hearing ideas and opinions that were contrary to our own. Those in our community known for their wisdom got to that point because they listened to other people, truly heard what they had to say and learned from it.

We don't appear to care about that anymore as a society. The split second we hear or read something that offends us, we're keyboard warriors dressing someone down because of how much they offended us. There is no time to think, to process what we've heard, to place it in context, to examine multiple sides of an issue, and then engage in an actual dialogue for the betterment

of ourselves and the person we're conversing with.

The emphasis we place on winning an argument, on being correct, is juvenile. It's not a mature way to think.

And, as a result, we're increasingly becoming a country that is afraid of dissension, afraid of new ideas and afraid of people who think differently than we do. The political gap that exists in our country thrives and is ever widened because we as a people don't think the other side has anything valuable to say.

There are some words and conversations that we as a community don't need to tolerate, that we can make a stand against and say "that has no place here." And that is important. There are some ideas that are so damaging we are far better denouncing them that listening to them. But those are few, and far between.

We moved forward as a country because men and women with brave, bold, big ideas communicated them, and people listened and were moved to action. We've never advanced as a nation because we decided to drown out opposing viewpoints with a cacophony of politically-correct catchphrases.

We obviously don't have to agree with everything we hear. But we shouldn't be as close-minded, either.

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 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



"WE NEED A DEEPER BENCH!"

OTHER VIEWS

Trump: Be 'Big Marco' or set his own path?

Republican economic policy doesn't have a good recent track record. The last two Republican presidents left office deeply unpopular, thanks to recessions. Ronald Reagan's record was much better but still not as good as Bill Clinton's.

All told, economic growth under Democratic presidents over the last half-century has been 25 percent faster than under Republicans. Private-sector job growth has been more than twice as fast. Republicans even have a worse record running up the deficit. (These comparisons hold no matter when precisely you start the clock on a president's legacy.)

Of course, presidents don't deserve full credit or blame for the economy's performance. But they do bear some responsibility. The notion that Republican presidents have been better economic stewards than Democrats but fallen victim to a terribly unfair mix of luck and timing is about as sensible as it sounds.

There are reasons that the modern version of Republican economics hasn't worked so well. It takes the powerful ideas behind market-based capitalism to an extreme, where they often stop working.

Cutting taxes for the affluent — who have received both the largest pretax raises in recent decades and the largest tax cuts — doesn't stimulate growth much anymore. Allowing corporate America to write its own regulations creates more problems than it solves. You may recall that the recent housing crisis wasn't so great for GDP growth.

This reality creates a fascinating choice for Donald Trump. He won the presidency by trashing both political parties. He defied Republican orthodoxy and praised government programs. He memorably dismissed his primary opponents as "low-energy" Jeb, Lyin' Ted and Little Marco.

Doing so allowed him to win a landslide of white working-class voters frustrated with their own lives, the country's direction and both parties. These voters, by no means libertarians, saw Trump as flawed yet willing to fight for them.

Now that he's won, he has to decide whether his differences with the Republican establishment are more stylistic than substantive. On the issues with the biggest impact on working-class lives, he will need to choose between pursuing the policies of a traditional Republican president and creating something new. In effect, he'll have to decide whether he is going to be his own president or a bigger version of Little Marco.

So far, some kind of standard Republicanism looks more likely. Trump doesn't seem to enjoy policy detail and may defer to Congress. His tax plan is classic trickle-down economics, with a modest middle-class tax cut that would probably lift growth temporarily. His early appointments



DAVID LEONHARDT
Comment

are mixed, variously nodding to the party establishment, wealthy businesspeople and white nationalists. They offer little indication of a conservative, working-class agenda to match his rhetoric.

Yet there are still two reasons to wonder if he will take steps away from traditional Republican economics.

First, not only has he suggested he would, but some of his advisers, like Stephen Moore, have said so explicitly. Moore recently told congressional

Republicans that, as *The Hill* phrased it, they "should no longer think of themselves as belonging to the conservative party of Ronald Reagan," but instead "to Trump's populist working-class party." That party, Moore explained, would need new positions on trade, immigration and infrastructure.

The second reason is that the outlines of a conservative, working-class agenda do exist, scattered among think tanks and publications. I'm skeptical that these ideas would do more good than, say, the Obama economic proposals that Congress has refused to pass. But the reformist conservative agenda is a vastly more serious attempt to address working-class stagnation than another trickle-down tax cut.

Reihan Salam of National Review has called for sharply reducing low-skilled legal immigration (and increasing high-skilled immigration) to reduce the competition for working-class jobs. Avik Roy, president of the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity, advocates an overhaul of Obamacare that doesn't require throwing millions of people off health insurance. Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute is full of ideas to encourage work: less occupational licensing, a

Trump has to decide whether his differences with the Republican establishment are more stylistic than substantive.

lower payroll tax, more apprenticeships, a disability system that no longer incentivizes idleness.

These proposals try to use a market-based philosophy to help working-class families — which is quite different from the recent Republican emphasis on comforting the comfortable. Presidents may not be able to directly control the economy's growth rate, but they do have enormous influence on which groups benefit most from government policy.

For now, these issues remain obscured by Trump's fondness for sideshows and his sordid promotion of the family business. Those distractions won't disappear when he becomes president. No doubt, he'll often describe his policies however he feels like describing them.

But something will change soon: He will need to begin making real decisions, with clear consequences for the people whose votes elected him. Lyin' tweets won't pay their bills.

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

