

SETZER: Climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro at 58

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from dispensing vaccines to designing information systems. He said Namibia, which is about twice the size of California, experiences health issues different from Eastern Oregon, but similar ones, too. HIV/AIDS, cholera, malaria and other infectious diseases are waning as first world diseases become more of a problem.

"We're beginning to see more chronic disease," Setzer said. "We're seeing obesity, hypertension, diabetes and cancer. People are adopting different lifestyles, but also various health problems that we bring upon ourselves."

Setzer comes to Umatilla County where obesity and smoking top the list of health challenges. The new director has already begun working with a group of community partners use a couple of community health assessments (one for adults and one for children) to design a plan for health improvement.

It's been a long journey to Pendleton. The Philadelphia native started out with a stint in the Peace Corps after college graduation. He began as a science teacher, but got interested in public health while serving on a mobile vaccination team.

"I didn't start out to be a public health guy," he said.

He quickly got hooked. The work was rewarding and valuable, though often tiring and unglamorous. He remembers, for example, crawling around in chicken

coops in Hanoi looking for sick chickens during a bird flu outbreak in the early 2000s. And there were some crushing moments. He recalled working on a vaccination team in the Congo and learning that the host family with whom he lived had lost a child from an easily preventable disease.

"I came home one day and everyone had their heads shaved and they were all crying," Setzer said. "The three-year-old had died of the measles."

The good moments, however, outweighed the bad. While working in the Congo, he fell in love with a Peace Corps volunteer named Kathy Parker. They married in 1985 and had two daughters. Jim had earlier earned his master's in public health and tropical medicine at Tulane University. In 1992, the family moved to Atlanta where Jim taught public health classes at Emory University, located across the street from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

It was at the CDC where Setzer met Dikembe Mutombo. The seven-foot-two NBA star from the Congo wanted to do something to improve Congolese health care. Setzer, who had worked in the Congo, was invited to the discussion. Mutombo's mother had died because of lack of proper care and he wanted to spend \$22 million of his own money to build a hospital. Setzer attended the meeting. "I greeted him in Tshi-

luba," Setzer said. "He totally flipped out. We talked for a while. He kept looking at me."

The two struck up a relationship. Setzer serves on the board of the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation, which seeks to improve the health, education and quality of life for those in the Congo. Setzer said he hopes to lure Mutombo to Umatilla County sometime to conduct a basketball clinic.

The Setzers left the 95-degree weather of Namibia in mid-December and arrived in Pendleton during a snowstorm. They are still acclimating. Jim, who climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro at 58 and trekked to the base of Mt. Everest at 60, said he was drawn to the Pacific Northwest for its recreational opportunities. When he saw the job opening in Umatilla County, he applied.

Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock said he was attracted to Setzer's epidemiology training and broad experience.

"With the expansion of health care coverage to many more of our residents," said Murdock, "we are moving away from direct services and more into areas such as prevention, healthy communities and population health."

"George Murdock is thinking outside the box," Setzer said. "I wasn't the average applicant."

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JOBS: 100 percent of Oregon counties now gaining jobs rather than losing them

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more jobs in the Willamette Valley.

Jobs in Southern Oregon contracted by roughly 12 percent during the recession but the region now has 0.3 percent more jobs than before the crisis.

Northeast Oregon and the North Coast haven't yet fully recovered, but the number of jobs is less than a half-percent lower than before the recession.

Southeast Oregon still has 4.7 percent fewer jobs from the pre-recession peak, while the South Coast has 6.1 percent fewer jobs. These regions have seen worse times, though — both have recovered roughly half the jobs they lost during the recession.

Some counties are still seriously reeling from the downturn. Gilliam County has recovered only 10

percent of the jobs it lost during the recession, while Crook and Grant counties have recovered fewer than 30 percent.

The good news is that nearly 100 percent of Oregon counties are now gaining jobs rather than losing them, McMullen said.

The lone exception — Morrow County — is actually an economic success story, but has recently lost some jobs due to the completion of major construction projects, he said.

Oregon now has about 2 unemployed people per job opening, down from 11 people per open position in late 2009.

In terms of income, the top 20 percent of Oregon households are now making 6.7 percent more money than they were a decade ago, adjusted for inflation, he said. Inflation-adjusted incomes are about 1 percent

lower among the middle 20 percent of households and 7 percent lower among the bottom 20 percent.

Oregon is the 12th most trade-dependent state in the U.S., he said. Computer and electronic equipment lead in the way in exports, followed by heavy manufactured products such as metal and machinery, then agricultural goods and forestry products.

China is the major destination for Oregon exports, followed by Canada, Malaysia, Japan and South Korea.

Exports from Oregon are now facing a headwind due to the high value of the U.S. dollar compared to other currencies, which makes our products more expensive in foreign markets.

"It hasn't been this strong since 2000," McMullen said. "It's putting downward pressure on the demand for our exports."



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A semitrailer remains on its side Monday morning after sliding off of icy Interstate 84 this weekend near exit 209, Pendleton.

ICE: Hazmat team cleared diesel spill at rollover

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according to call logs from multiple emergency services. Oregon State Police reported the semi slid onto the south shoulder and rammed head on into the earth slope and spun left. The trailer broke free from the tractor, which rolled onto its left side.

The driver was the lone occupant and was not injured, according to reports, but the semi spilled about 70 gallons of diesel. Hazmat team staff reported cloth and cat litter absorbed the diesel, and the crew cleared the scene after about an hour-and-a-half.

Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney out of Hermiston said the second hazmat call came a crash at

8:24 a.m. Saturday on I-84 near Boardman at about milepost 170.

The Volvo semi was eastbound and hauling two trailers when the driver slowed due to another crash, according to Cooney's report. The semi slid on the ice, rotated counterclockwise, and moved onto the median "where the passenger side wheels furrowed into the soft shoulder," causing the semi to roll and block the westbound fast lane. The second trailer split open at the top and back and spilled cargo on the ground and the westbound lane.

This time about 75 gallons of fuel spilled, Cooney said, and the hazmat team again handled the clean-up.

Again, no one was injured. The wreck partially blocked traffic in the westbound lanes, but tow trucks were so busy they could not remove it for about four hours.

Freezing rain covered the region Friday night, and the icy roads kept police and fire services busy. Cooney said there were crashes from milepost 168 to the 199 through Saturday morning.

The Oregon Department of Transportation shut down sections of I-84 from Pendleton to Ontario due to hazardous weather conditions and crashes between La Grande and Baker City. ODOT reported a few crashes Saturday morning and afternoon between Pendleton and Stanfield, but none were delaying traffic.

WALDEN: 'I'm not an open borders guy'

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repealing other significant parts of the law, specifically the individual mandate to hold health insurance.

Walden said rising premiums means that young people opt to pay the IRS penalties rather than sign up for insurance, shifting the cost to older insurance holders.

With premiums continuing to become more expensive and some insurance companies leaving the government insurance exchanges, Walden said Congress needs to take action and change the law.

"I don't look at this through a partisan lens," he said. "I look at it through a public policy lens."

Despite promises that Republicans' plan would offer more choice and lower premiums, Walden wouldn't commit to details about a new health care law or when it would be put in place.

A caller pressed Walden to say whether Republicans would have health care legislation in place once they repealed the Affordable Care Act, but Walden didn't provide a straight answer, instead

referring the woman to the website for "A Better Way," House Speaker Paul Ryan's conservative policy platform.

Walden also touched on other hot button topics, like Trump's executive order temporarily banning refugees and immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries.

In response to a caller citing a Cato Institute article that called the threat of refugees committing terrorist acts a "phantom menace," Walden said there was a benefit to the executive order while admitting that its roll-out wasn't handled well.

"I think a temporary pause is not a bad thing if handled properly," he said.

A federal judge recently put the executive order on hold while the courts review its legality.

Bend city councilor Barb Campbell asked whether Walden would support using taxpayer money to build a wall on the Mexican border. A border wall was central to Trump's campaign promises.



Walden

Walden said he supported a border wall along some parts of the border while saying other sections would be better aided by "enhanced" security.

"I'm not an open borders guy," he said.

Walden also said he briefly spoke with the president about timber and federal land management issues and expects further discussion with the Trump administration once Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke is confirmed as the secretary of the interior.

Before ending the call, Walden promised more town halls, both in-person and over the phone. According to the *Bend Bulletin*, 4,000 people listened in on the call.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

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Twelve \$2,500 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four-year college. Apply online at: www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

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A \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply at www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

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Deadline is March 1, 2017