

EAST OREGONIAN

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OUR VIEW

Election roundup

In your mailbox, stuffed in between the bills, you should have noticed your elections ballot.

It arrived this week for most Umatilla County residents, many of whom will have important issues to decide on or before Election Day, May 16.

That's definitely the case if you live in the city of Pendleton, or in the Hermiston School District.

And all residents of Umatilla and Morrow County will vote on a data district election that is relatively surprising for its two contested races and the importance of the outcome of those races.

We certainly don't want to be the only voice you listen to when filling out your ballot, but our editorial board has the opportunity to sit down for long meetings with interested parties on all sides of election questions. We get to the ask the tough questions, hear the responses, and then formulate opinions based on what is best for our communities.

With that in mind, we sum up our election endorsements, and remind you to vote:

Umatilla Morrow Radio & Data District

In Seat 1, we support challenger Loren Dieter to replace incumbent Mike Roxbury.

Roxbury is a Umatilla city councilor and the former chief of the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District, but there are enough questions about his recent actions — a late-night Corvette crash after an early retirement from the fire district — to look elsewhere. Dieter, a lieutenant in the Boardman Police Department, is the safer choice.

We also support challenger Rick Stokoe in his bid to replace incumbent Kathy Lieuallen in Seat 2. Stokoe is chief of police in Boardman, while Lieuallen is the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office communications manager. Lieuallen's questionable leadership is one reason for lingering problems at the recently-expanded emergency dispatch center run by the sheriff's office. Having more voices from outside that office on the data district is an important way to push for change and active problem-solving.

These challengers have taken their campaigns more seriously than the incumbents (who didn't return calls to the *East Oregonian*), and we think they will take the job more seriously, too.

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.

Taxpayers decide the quality of their fire, EMS response

A mere two years of residency in the city of Pendleton has given me sufficient time to observe and understand the core values this community holds dear. Perched at the very top, I believe, is compassion. As a firefighter/paramedic I am blessed to have a much different vantage point from the average citizen; seldom do most people get to witness the compassion that folks in our community exert during difficult times. Everyone steps up to the plate in emergency situations: be it family, friends, neighbors, the young lady who is late for work because she stopped to help someone in distress — your caring and compassionate nature do not go unnoticed. We want the best for our loved ones and every individual in this community, but in order to receive the proper help in an emergency we must make public safety a priority.

Let me pose a question to you: Do your firefighters have the proper equipment to save your life or protect your property from irreversible damages? If passed, the upcoming fire station bond measure will provide more than just a structure that actually meets

Hermiston School District bond
We support the district's \$104-million bond that would be another step toward a restructuring of a high-performing but over-filled school district.

Here's what the bond would do: Build a new elementary school off Theater Lane, replace Rocky Heights Elementary, replace Highland Hills Elementary, renovate Sandstone Middle School and expand Hermiston High School and complete district-wide maintenance projects.

The district's need is so great that if the bond doesn't pass in its current form, look for another to be floated in November or soon after.

There are just too many students in the district and not enough places to educate them. In our mind, it's cheaper, faster and better for the community to get it started now, and have right-sized schools (and the right amount of them) for 21st century Hermiston.

Pendleton Fire bond

Pendleton is dealing with different stresses than in nearby Hermiston.

The city is trying to care for an aging population and aging infrastructure, and one way to protect those resources is with an investment in firefighters and paramedics.

The \$9.93 million bond floated by the city would be used to purchase land at the former St. Anthony Hospital site to build a new fire station, purchase a new fire engine, oxygen tanks, fire gear and more.

No one can argue that the current fire hall is adequate — it's maxed out on space, has a failing roof, has no room for female firefighters, and puts city employees who must work and sleep there at risk.

You can argue about the specifics of this plan (where and how big) and if a city with so many needs should use up their chance to go to cash-strapped taxpayers with this.

We support this measure for a few reasons. The first is that the current fire station is no longer an option for the city — we must build something. The second is that the larger price tag allows the district to purchase new equipment that would be a steady drain on already tight city of Pendleton budget. This bond may be the only chance to outfit those crews for the first time in a long time, and purchase a new engine and have the space to park it. Overall, we think since these crews spend their careers working for us, then we should spend a few bucks to care for them.

building codes and passes a Fire Marshal inspection. An additional result of your "yes" vote is the long overdue critically needed upgrade of heart monitor/defibrillators, jaws of life, and air packs that allow firefighters to breathe while inside a house fire searching for a family member or pet. Sadly, we will never be able to prevent every emergency, however in this May election we have a unique opportunity to provide your local firefighters with crucial life saving equipment — on top of building a fire station that is not constantly off-gassing carcinogens, for your firefighters to breathe clean air while on duty.

Remember to vote yes for the fire station bond, your vote will help to provide improved fire and ambulance services to the community for generations to come.

Pete Nichols
Pendleton

Keep our firefighters safe, support fire bond

"These firefighters and EMT's would give their lives saving you." And then Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo paused, and said it again. "These firefighters and EMT's would give their lives to save you." And I know it's true.

And because I know it's true, I

want these firefighters and EMT's SAFE. I want them to have a place where they aren't exposed to carcinogens, where they have a place to safely sleep, where there's room for them to expand with volunteers, where they can train to learn how to save me, and where they can get to me without having to fight traffic just to get out onto the street.

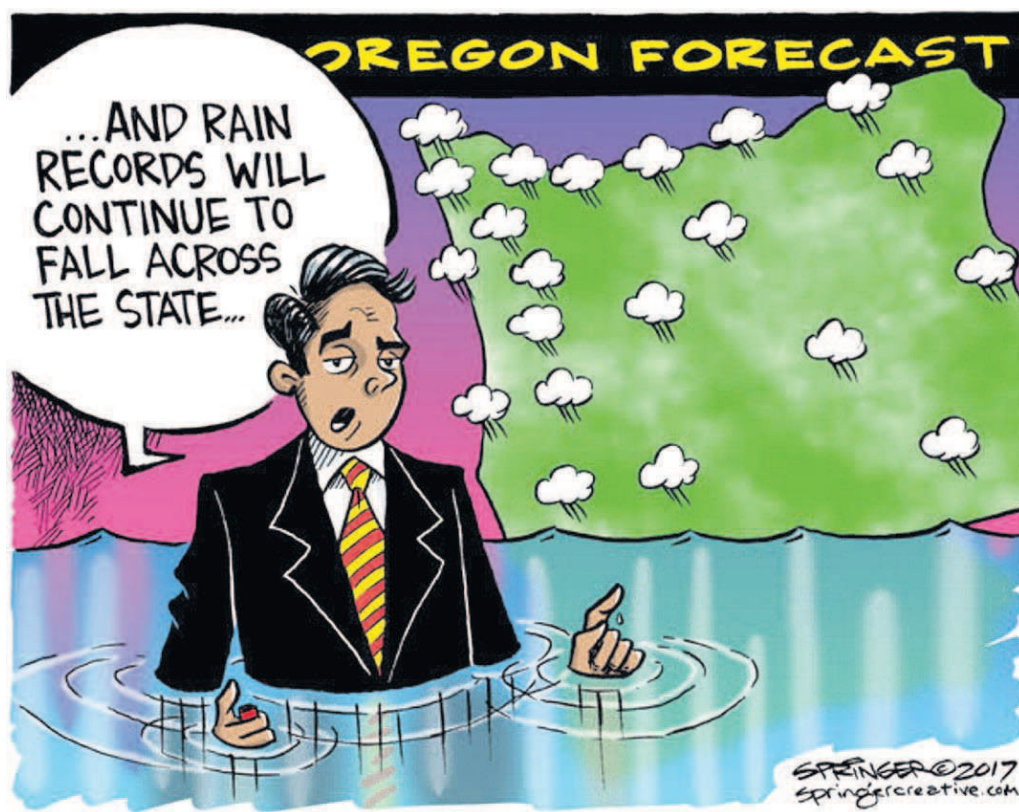
And because I want them to be there for me when I need them (and in good health!), I am supporting the Bond to Pass the New Fire Station, and because they may someday be coming to your door or to the door of someone you love, I urge you to support this bond in the May election as well.

MaryAlice Ridgway
Pendleton

Pendleton doesn't need luxury fire station

Why does Pendleton need a \$10 million firehouse? Short answer, "It don't." When economic times are at their worst our town's leadership fails us every time.

A report done on response time says, if built at old St. Anthony's, we will lose 23 seconds of response time. That very report also indicates them saying old St. Anthony's is a bad choice as a build site because of that very reason.



OTHER VIEWS

White House of grifters

They dress nice and probably smell good, and most of them don't even muss the furniture. Wealth gives them the patina of respectability — the American reflex of deference to the rich. But make no mistake: The Trump family and assorted cronies are using the highest office in the land to stuff their pockets.

The presidential sleaze involves everything from using public money to promote and enrich Trump properties to pay-to-play schemes that allow companies to buy influence at many levels. At its core is a nepotistic operation that puts family interests ahead of country.

Donald Trump's presidency may look like a theater of incompetency: armada going in the wrong direction, forgetting what country he bombed but remembering what he had for dessert, major promises broken with a shrug.

But one thing Trump has accomplished in his first 100 days is ensuring that his family can use the vast reach of the federal government for private gain. By God, they seem their opportunities and they took 'em.

So, Ivanka Trump gets lucrative Chinese trademarks for her clothing line on the same day she dines with the Chinese president. Would this deal have happened if her father wasn't in the midst of breaking a promise to hold China as a currency manipulator? Why did Trump's travel ban not include Muslim-majority countries where the family has extensive business ties? And why did Trump congratulate a Turkish tyrant for consolidating his dictatorial powers?

The last question, at least, Trump has answered. "I have a little conflict of interest because I have a major, major building in Istanbul," he said in 2015. Conflict of interest is the quaint term for this kind of thing. Call it what it is: corruption. And some of it may involve impeachable offenses.

Because the Trump White House is a business with the shades closed — the visitor logs no longer available to the public, the tax returns a dark secret — we cannot know how extensively the Trump clan is making foreign policy to help its holdings. The family has extensive entanglements in China, the Philippines and Turkey, to name just a few "conflicts."

And Jared Kushner, who has a far-reaching diplomatic portfolio, is also a beneficiary of many businesses backed by unnamed foreign partners, as my colleague Jesse Drucker reported this week.

It's clear now that the reason Trump — in defiance of all ethical standards for the office — has refused to divest his business interests is that the levers of executive power directly help Trump Inc.

Turning management over to his sons is a farce, one you would expect from a man who ran a casino into bankruptcy, stiffed plumbers

and carpenters, and defrauded thousands of people at a phony "university."

Trump makes money every time a foreign diplomat or favor-seeking industrialist stays at one of his hotels or becomes a tenant in one of his buildings. On top of that, influence peddlers pay him through his campaign. In the first three months of the Trump presidency, his 2020 campaign spent almost \$500,000 on hotels, golf clubs and restaurants owned by the Trump family.

Trump, certainly, knows where it's all going. After promising not to talk business with his father, Eric Trump admitted that he will discuss "the bottom line, profitability reports and stuff like that" with Dad.

He also said, "Nepotism is kind of a factor of life." Well, yes — in kleptocracies, dictatorships and monarchies. For years, the United States has worked to eliminate nepotism in backwater regimes. Now it's the role model for inbred charlatans.

It's bad enough that taxpayers funnel money to the Trumps when the president brings his entourage to his for-profit club in Florida, Mar-a-Lago. But what about that Mar-a-Lago marketing piece that you and I paid for on an official government website?

The same administration that wants to zero-out public money for the arts used public money to inform people of Trump's exquisite taste in private property. The post has since been taken down.

This week Trump proposed a huge tax cut for himself and the businesses he and his family own. He would have saved \$31 million, in the one year for which we have his tax return, under his plan. At the same time, he wants to take away college scholarships for the poor and gut funding for cancer research.

His associates take their cue from the top. Michael Flynn, the man who led the locker-up chants against Hillary Clinton, possibly broke the law by failing to disclose the big sums he got from foreign governments. And Kellyanne Conway violated the rule against public officials' promoting private businesses when she plugged Ivanka's product line.

A lot of this will be resolved in lawsuits, and perhaps impeachment. Meanwhile, Trump continues to debase the office. He spent four hours at the White House with Sarah Palin and Ted Nugent, the no-talent musician who called President Barack Obama a "subhuman mongrel." The guests posed, in thug mode, before a portrait of Hillary Clinton — a fitting image for a host who has turned the home of Lincoln and Roosevelt into a House of Grifters.

Timothy Egan, a New York Times Contributing Op-Ed Writer, covers the environment, the American West and politics.

YOUR VIEWS

site was picked for luxury and not for the city's best interest. As a matter of fact, it is highly plausibly a dangerous place to build. Twenty-three seconds of burn time has serious implications and is a reckless decision.

Vote no this May on this absurd fire station plan and let our leaders learn a little self-discipline with our money and pick a more modest and comprehensive designed fire station at a location that better fits Pendleton's needs.

Chris Hallos
Pendleton

Oregon shouldn't be a sanctuary state

My hat is off to David Burns, who wrote the article on sanctuary cities (April 27, *EO*). For all the problems Oregon has, it doesn't need to be protecting illegals that sneak across our borders.

We have a governor who sticks up her nose at the federal government, which in my opinion is un-American. Oh, but she thinks the feds should send grant money, etc., to her, which is pretty much a double-edged sword.

Hopefully we can elect politicians who have more respect for the job (but I'm not holding my breath).

Jim Tiede
Hermiston