

EAST OREGONIAN OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Round-Up leadership takes all kinds

The Pendleton Round-Up has another record-setting year under its belt. More people attended the 2018 edition of the rodeo than any other in its long history, spending \$1.3 million on tickets over the four days. Trademark income topped \$2.1 million.

The lines for food, beer and liquor were packed, and the increase in spectators certainly rippled through the rest of the town and into greater Eastern Oregon.

An increased online and social media strategy, paired with a popular whisky bearing its name, have certainly introduced the iconic rodeo to a wider and more diverse audience than ever before.

It's been a remarkable triumph in a sport that has been on the decline for decades. By trading on its good name while refusing to betray its core values, the Round-Up has become not just an historic event but a must-see spectacle, and one that draws both dedicated repeat viewers and a growing number of first-time guests.

The formula is no secret, but it's not easy to recreate, either. The ground has been laid year after year over the past century by an army of volunteers, willing to put in a week or more of work (sometimes much more) to make sure the rodeo and all of its auxiliary events and attractions operate smoothly.

It has also put special care into showcasing new and interesting additions, and has been willing to



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

The annual Round-Up stockholders meeting held news of revenue records and awards, but also some disagreement on Nov. 20 at the Let 'er Buck Room.

let the entire event breathe across an afternoon instead of cutting and shortening in an attempt to appeal to a new audience.

And of course to make a great rodeo, you need great stock and competitors. The Round-Up has never scrimped on that front, making sure every ride is a potential thrill and every top-level cowboy and cowgirl has its date circled on the calendar.

To reach the next plateau, however, the Round-Up has been proactive, hiring a general manager to dedicate an

entire 52 weeks a year to the Round-Up and Happy Canyon's development and promotion. It has also selected board members for their specific skill set rather than just their history with the organization.

For instance, Randy Thomas isn't a Round-Up lifer. He joined the board as an ex-officio member when he was the president of the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce and showed a knack for communication and professionalism, so he was brought on as a full member. His last few years on the board have

— not coincidentally, in our view — coincided with the years of the organization's greatest growth. He also showed a willingness to make the rodeo more transparent, an important part of building trust with those of us who live here year-round.

It would have been a lost opportunity to pass over Thomas because he hadn't spent enough time moving fence or taking tickets to meet a volunteerism quota before joining the board.

Paradoxically, the time of the rodeo's greatest growth has led to some contention among stockholders. Not all are willing to give up the old ways, where a few decades of sweat equity was a primary requirement for a seat on the board.

The Round-Up is something to be proud of, and we're seeing that play out. No one involved with the event wants to see it shrivel. It has a long history of innovation, from its collaboration with Indian tribes to the spin-off parades, meals and concert that have always kept it marching on.

In rodeo as in any other business, if you're not moving forward you're moving backward. The Round-Up is fortunate to have a passionately dedicated group of volunteers who sincerely want the best for it. These disputes are a symptom of that passion.

The next few years will see more radical change on the Round-Up campus, but in the history of the event, that's nothing new. We hope they continue to embrace the evolution.

OTHER VIEWS

Why not build a border barrier?

The news is filled with images of migrants massing at the U.S.-Mexico border in California. Why haven't they been able to enter the United States? Because a physical barrier prevents them from doing so.

It is just another example of a barrier — a fence, a wall, whatever — providing real border security.

Of course, building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border was President Trump's premier campaign promise. So far, in nearly two years in office, he has made almost no progress toward making it happen. Trump has had opportunities to

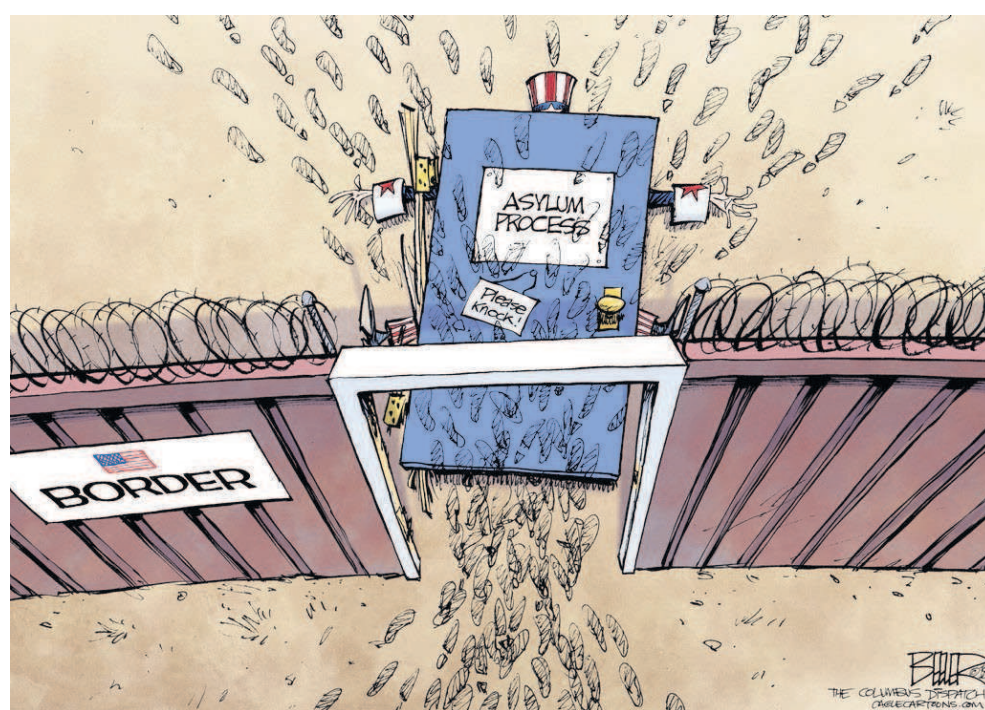
win wall funding in exchange for amnesty for recipients of President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, policy. But the White House loaded its wall proposal with add-on demands, and it never happened.

Building a wall would cost an estimated \$25 billion. Trump often says that he has already gotten \$1.6 billion to start work. But Congress has specifically dictated that most of that money not be used for the president's wall. Some of it can be used to build new fencing — not the wall designs that the administration has tested — while other money is restricted to the replacement of existing fencing.

There was talk that Trump might win \$5 billion for wall funding during the lame-duck session as House Republican lawmakers finish their last few weeks in power. The chances of that happening are not good.

So what now? Even as events on the border are showing the value of a wall, politics in Washington are making it impossible to construct one. What to do?

First, understand the problem. In California, the migrants are targeting a part of the border where there is a barrier. But much of the border's 1,954 miles remains uncovered. According to the Border Patrol,



354 of those 1,954 miles are protected by what is called pedestrian primary fence, which is a single-layer fence. Another 37 miles are pedestrian secondary fence, that is, double-layer fencing. And 14 miles are pedestrian tertiary, or triple-layer fence. In addition, 300 miles are covered by vehicle fencing, which will stop a truck but allow anyone to walk through with no problem.

That is a total of 705 miles — 405 miles of some kind of pedestrian fencing and 300 miles of vehicle fencing.

No one, or almost no one, says a fence should cover all 1,954 miles of the border. A significant part of the border is terrain so dangerous and imposing that it would be very difficult for migrants to cross. During the campaign, and during his presidency, Trump called for a wall along about 1,000 miles.

But Democrats oppose even that. And since Republicans could not pass wall funding when they controlled all of Congress and the White House, how could they possibly do it with Nancy Pelosi in

charge of the House?

Unlikely. Still, there is one possible course for Republicans. It is Public Law 109-367, better known as the Secure Fence Act.

The act was passed by big, bipartisan majorities in 2006, receiving 283 votes in the House and 80 in the Senate. It required the federal government to build reinforced fencing, at least two layers deep, along about 700 miles of the border. It specified areas in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas where fencing would be installed.

If the law had been followed, many vulnerable parts of the border would now be secured. But the very next year, 2007, after Democrats won control of the House and Senate, Congress amended the Secure Fence Act. The amendment said that "nothing in (the original legislation) shall require" the installation of fencing if the government determines that a fence is not the "most appropriate" way to secure the border.

That was that. No 700 miles of fence.

The story of the Secure Fence Act is a perfect example of why so many Americans distrust their government. In 2006, an election year, there was a bipartisan consensus to pass a law requiring the construction of a border fence. In 2007, after the election, there was a bipartisan consensus not to enforce it.

Still, Public Law 109-367 remains on the books. And it still calls for a border barrier.

What the president needs is money, and that has to come from Congress. Of course, Democrats won't want to give it to him. But if Trump called for an appropriation to fund the fence, he would at least have a new argument: Democrats have already voted for it. And not just illustrious Democratic former senators like Barack Obama, Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton. Democrats in power now, too.

Sen. Charles Schumer, the minority leader, voted for the Secure Fence Act. Sen. Dianne Feinstein did, too. So did Sen. Ron Wyden and Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Sen. Sherrod Brown. (Brown voted for it when he was in the House.)

In the House, Reps. Bishop, Brown, Cooper, DeFazio, Kind, Lipinski, Lynch, Maloney, Pascarella, Peterson, Ruppberger, Ryan and Smith all voted for the Secure Fence Act.

Obviously, the Democratic Party has moved far to the left on immigration in the last 12 years. Many, if not all, of those Democrats would now oppose what they once supported, especially if Donald Trump wanted it. So any fight on a border barrier would be uphill for the president.

But masses of migrants are pushing toward the border. And even when the caravans are gone, illegal crossing of the border is still common. There is a law on the books that could strengthen border security. Why wouldn't the president try it?

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

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