

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Summer fun shouldn't mean summer crashes

Summer promises long days and great weather and often means vacations for area residents.

That means taking to the highways and roads across the region and, almost inevitably, the summer fun is marred by a deadly vehicle crash.

Focusing on safety while on the road seems so fundamental that the concept can be overlooked or dismissed by motorists. But they shouldn't ignore road safety.

The importance of safety while driving hit home just this week when U.S. Highway 20 — a major east-west link in Oregon — was closed in Malheur County because of a fatal accident. That crash left one man dead and sealed off the highway for more than three hours as emergency crews responded to the scene and then fought the fires that erupted in the wake of the accident.

Last summer proved to be exceptionally deadly for motorists. Over a span of five days in August last year, 11 people died in traffic accidents across Eastern Oregon, a deadly nexus that created mayhem and impacted dozens of families.



Photo contributed by Oregon State Police
The drivers of two commercial trucks were killed Sunday after a fiery crash on Highway 20 in Malheur County.

In one of the crashes, eight people died, including children.

It is no secret that speed kills on the highways but sheer carelessness also plays a role.

Two years ago, for example, more than 37,000 people lost their lives on

the nation's roadways. Twenty-six percent of those crashes involved at least one speeding driver.

At first glance a common misconception is big city traffic furnishes most of the fatal accidents, but that isn't exactly true. Rural areas —

including highways that slice through remote portions of the nation — tend to have a higher fatality rate than vehicle accidents in urban areas.

The other tragic aspect of vehicle accidents on rural roads and highways is that most can be avoided. The single best way to avoid a deadly crash is simple: slow down. It seems so simple, so basic, but we are a society that is now constantly in a hurry to get somewhere or do something. As such, we often become complacent and shed common sense and caution for speed.

Summer should be about fun, should be about getting the family together and visiting interesting areas across our great region. That means our goal on our roads and highways should be to reach out destination safely.

The responsibility for safety on our roadways resets with each of us. Once we climb behind the wheel we all have an obligation to be safe and to obey traffic laws.

No one wants to end a summer with a tragedy. So be alert while driving and be careful out there.

OTHER VIEWS

Sign up for a better green deal for Oregonians

Bend Bulletin

The cost of Oregon's green goodness will come at the pump. To get Oregonians to use less fuel, House Bill 2020 raises its price. The carbon reduction bill — seemingly destined to become law — is expected to raise the price of gas in the state by about 21 cents in 2021. That won't be the end of it. The bill will keep driving prices up, which in turn will increase the cost of living for Oregon families.

Do the Democratic legislators behind HB 2020 believe average Oregonians have too much money? Of course not. But people on a mission to save the planet sometimes stop at nothing. Even logic.

Given that this bill is going to pass, shouldn't more of the clear benefit go directly to Oregonians? Oregonians may be all for the idea behind HB 2020 — clean energy and a cleaner Oregon. But when the price of fuel ratchets up and up, that's going to be a harder and harder choice.

HB 2020 could have been written to return those hundreds of millions of carbon tax revenue directly to Oregonians. But Democratic leaders wrote the bill so they would control the money themselves.

If the Legislature isn't going to do the right thing, Oregonians should. There may be no perfect mechanism, but state Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, has a way to send a message on the November 2020 ballot. His New Green Deal Tax Cut ballot initiative would reduce the state's gas tax from 34 cents to 18 cents. Boquist's initiative would, of course, undercut the green goals of HB 2020. But if the state isn't going to return carbon taxes to Oregonians, Oregonians should take back some of the taxes themselves.

75th ANNIVERSARY



YOUR VIEWS

America must stay ahead of the curve with China

Three cheers for Harriet Isom's column on "Standing up to China's Belt and Road Initiative."

China's Belt & Road Initiative is an enormously ambitious plan with major implication for the global economy the geopolitical future. With \$3 trillion of hard currency reserves, China has a vision of a future led by China and inspired by China's growth model.

Isom provides a welcome call for America and American companies to

stay involved. Estimates suggest that Asia alone will need many trillions of dollars in infrastructure over the next decades. In the Build Act of 2018, the United States took a small step to compete by combining existing elements of the government to support infrastructure spending in developing countries.

Isom ends her essay with a reminder of how the United States responded when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite. Sputnik mobilized the country. America created NASA, the Defense Advanced Research Proj-

ects Agency (parent of the Internet), invested heavily in scientific research, provided grants for post-graduate study in science, sparked the study of science and math in the nation's high schools and created university level programs to study key languages.

We need to embrace Isom's call to maintain our global engagement. We also need to duplicate the kind of focus and commitment that we developed in the wake of Sputnik.

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