

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

# Use common sense this fire season

The warning was dire Tuesday and notified area residents that a potentially dangerous thunderstorm was moving swiftly toward the Pendleton area.

The storm proved to be less than a disaster and more of a harbinger of things to come, and a good reminder that the summer thunderstorm season is here. That means the fire danger will climb as the summer moves into its dog days, and a certain degree of responsibility will fall on us to ensure big blazes don't erupt because of human error.

Range and forest fires caused by humans are on the rise across the region and that should be troubling to everyone.

Now that the Fourth of July weekend is in sight, the danger of an accidental fire igniting is acute. Often a careless maneuver by an area resident as they celebrate the nation's birthday will spark a major blaze, drawing on fire-fighting resources from across the local



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Dark clouds roll over the wheat fields along Highway 334 near Athena late Wednesday afternoon.

area. While the fact such fires are more common than in the past is a worry, the fact that most of the human-caused fires could be avoided is even more disturbing.

The simple truth is all of us need to

use a certain degree of common sense during the July 4 celebration to avoid fires.

The wet spring could contribute to a sense of complacency and that is something we all need to avoid. Just because

our familiar recreation areas do not appear to be parched doesn't mean there is no fire danger.

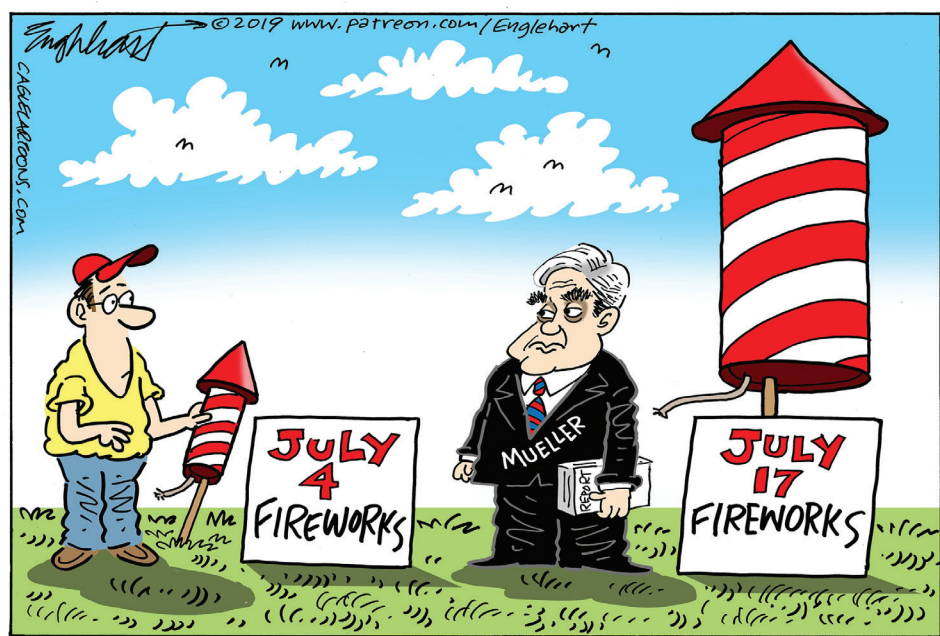
After the Fourth of July celebration fades into the background, the sense of caution while recreating, hiking or traveling throughout great national forests should remain. By August, much of the area we love will be drier than normal.

We all want to enjoy the summer but we all share responsibility to ensure our summer trips don't end in a tragedy that could have been easily avoided.

So before you journey out to the nearest campground, take heed of the fire danger level. Be cautious with campfires and understand that it only takes a single spark to create a fire that can devastate thousands of acres.

A bit of common sense, coupled with some basic safety measures, may mean the difference between a great trip to our national forests or a fire that triggers destruction and costs taxpayers.

So, remember, be safe out there and enjoy the summer.



## YOUR VIEWS

### Climate bill should be based on facts, not theory

In regards to your recent kick in the pants for the state senators who walked to halt HB 2020, the new not a tax bill: You should have given them a tip of the hat for having the guts to try to stop one of the worst taxes invented.

It's quite obvious that Kate Brown and many of our legislators know nothing about climate change or greenhouse gases and human contribution to it. If we truly want to address a problem, we need to make sure it is truly a problem and we are not trying to fix something that isn't broken. The science used needs to be non-biased, and non-funded for a specific outcome. It should be based on facts and truths, not based on social media, or something found on the internet, or a study privately funded and completed by "save the whatever society."

When a solution is found by unbiased scientists without a vested interest, then and only then should we pass a tax bill that affects all the taxpaying people and helps improve the outcome. This tax should then be used for that purpose only. Until then, the senators had every right to protect the public from those who want to pass a poorly written "landmark bill" as your paper presented it, a bill presently backed by bad science.

We as a people cannot fix something that is a theory only (meaning it hasn't been proven and thereby the solution to the problem hasn't been proven to work). Check the facts.

Mark Yeske  
Pendleton

### Our rogue senator should be applauded for taking stance

When I read the *East Oregonian* Friday, I was so pleased to see that we in Eastern Oregon were being clearly represented by a man of integrity. Bill Hansell knows

the impact of this supermajority socialist agenda against us in this region. He walked out, so as not to allow this Legislature to slam us with another tax. Yes, folks, it is a tax. This will increase the cost of products and services we use daily in our lives.

It's socialism at its best, and Kate (Maduro) Brown will do anything to keep her socialist ideas and cronies in power to push their economically disastrous ideas to fruition. This includes having our only real representative of Eastern Oregon to be forcibly, if found, dragged back and have to sit in and watch the socialist supermajority ram this cap and trade bill down our throats.

Does this sound familiar? These are the actions of Venezuela's socialist president, having opposition party members rounded up. What's next, Kate, jail time for legal publicly represented discourse? This governor is acting like a dictator, not a person of governance.

Since the governor and her cronies consistently, and defiantly, ignore federal law, should the president order U.S. Marshals to find them, round them up and make them sit unwillingly in federal court to be prosecuted in violation of federal law? I would say that would be fair according to their actions.

If you need a place to stay, I have numerous family members out of state. In addition, we should help this man with the fine being imposed by the state, as he showed great resolve too many times in the recent past with this socialist majority continuously shoving their extremely ultra-expensive, less than thought out, and unfairly debated agenda. Kate (Maduro) Brown should think about the precedents she and her comrades have set. You can't go back from that, Kate!

Thank you, Bill! I have your back, as you have had mine, and my neighbors'. We need more representation like you who care about us all, not the ones who, with special interest groups, fatten their pockets.

Perry W. Hawkins  
Hermiston

## OTHER VIEWS

# Pacific Power shutoff plan is prudent

Medford Mail Tribune

Pacific Power is doing the right thing by announcing in advance that it may shut off electricity in fire-prone areas if conditions warrant this summer. The company's plans are reasonable, and it is making every effort to limit inconvenience to customers.

A power line was the cause of the Camp Fire last year that killed more than 80 people and destroyed the town of Paradise, California. PG&E, the utility responsible for that line, now faces bankruptcy and billions of dollars in damages.

After the fact, a newspaper investigation found the company had delayed a safety overhaul of the century-old line. Also, PG&E had planned to shut off the line before the Camp Fire erupted, but customers objected to losing power.

Pacific Power has taken that lesson to heart, and is explaining its plans now in detail, so customers are prepared should it become necessary to interrupt power. That would likely happen during drought conditions if high winds threaten to blow trees and other debris into power lines.

Shutting off power would be a last

resort, and power company officials say data from the past decade showed conditions would have prompted only one shutoff for about one hour. Shut-offs ideally would be announced 72 hours in advance.

If shut-offs do occur, the company will offer air-conditioned tents for residents who must leave their homes during a power outage.

Pacific Power's regional business manager told the *Mail Tribune* the company has a strong maintenance program, and we have no reason to doubt her. Beyond contingency planning, the company is also increasing its efforts to clear vegetation from around power lines and poles and ramping up inspections.

None of these measures will prevent fires igniting for other reasons. Lightning remains the biggest risk factor, along with human causes such as carelessness in dry forests and sparks from vehicles.

But planning to shut off power at the right time will remove one potential ignition source, helping keep residents as safe as possible in high fire risk areas. Rural residents should be prepared, and sign up for the county's emergency citizen notification system on the county's website.

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