

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the Hat, kick in the pants

It would be difficult to find a better example of the wise use of taxpayer dollars than the nearly complete new Pendleton Fire Station project.

About two years ago local voters approved \$9 million in funding for the new fire station and it looks like the project will be completed on time and — most importantly — under budget.

That's says a lot for the project contractors, officials and elected leaders who steered the venture. It shows that the proper use of taxpayer dollars was a high priority.

The project is one of those necessary items every community eventually must address. Emergency service projects are never cheap but they are essential.

This time voters can be assured that their decision to fork over \$9

million was the right choice, and more importantly, that their money was used in a wise fashion.

The contentious Oregon Legislative session may be over but a **kick in the pants to those who are ensuring the the fallout from its end isn't over.** Senate leaders are preparing to fine Republicans for their eight-day walkout. The fines — up to \$3,500 — could be sent out soon. There is nothing illegal about the move but it smacks of retaliation. Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. Sending fines to Republicans lawmakers who walked out will create even more strife and leave a sour taste for voters from a session that is already rife with instability.

A tip of the hat to the Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition for sponsoring its first economic summit July 26 at Hermiston High School.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

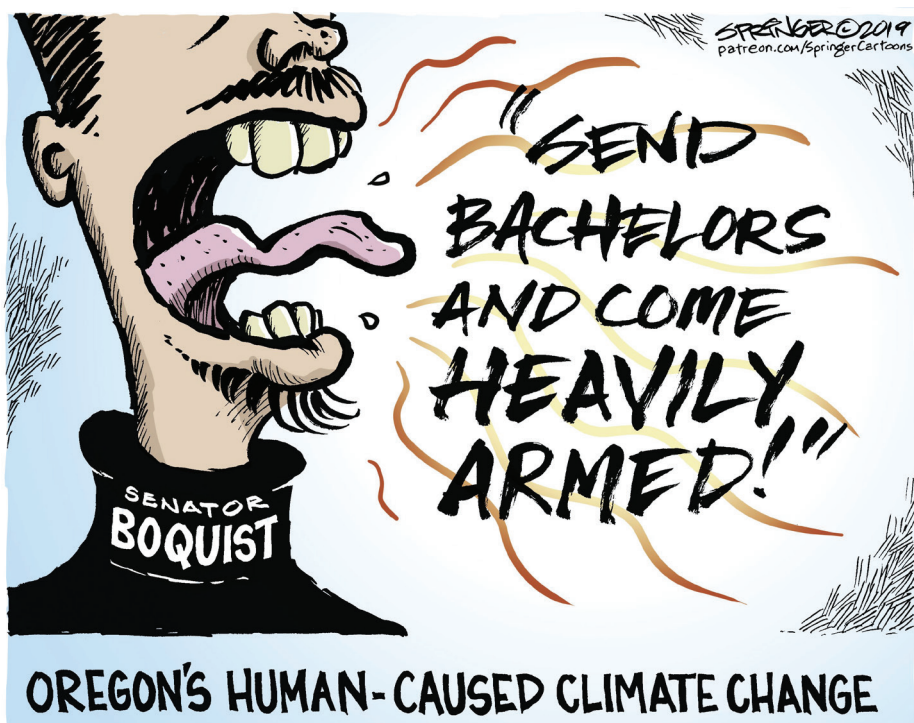
Apparatus bays near completion as the work on Pendleton's new Fire Station One wraps up.

The effort is designed to spark discussion about challenges rural Oregon faces — especially regarding its economy — and will attract some big names such as U.S. Rep. Greg Walden. Efforts like the economic summit are crucial for our region and provide a viable platform for building a strong future.

A tip of the hat to those who are doing their part to make sure this summer is fire free. There haven't been many forest fires — yet — this summer but one statistic should give

all of us pause. Too many range and forest fires are still ignited through human error and negligence. All of us, as we recreate this summer, need to remember to use caution — especially when the fire danger is high — and be aware that our actions could lead to serious damage to the places we love.

Following guidelines on fire and camp safety and paying attention will go a long way toward slashing fires that can cost millions and put lives at risk.



YOUR VIEWS

Street paving projects long overdue

This letter is directed at those who think the choice of street paving projects is wrong. Larry Platek, I can't speak to Northwest Seventh or Eighth, but I can sure speak about Southeast Byers. If you have driven down that street lately you will no longer be able to play dodge the potholes because there are far too many to be able to dodge them.

I live between 11th and 12th off Southeast Byers and I drive that street at least twice a day and frankly I'll walk to town before I'll drive if I'm just going to the post office or to get a haircut, etc., because of the street conditions. Southeast Byers is a main avenue of travel for parents taking their children to school and for the school buses, and it is now so full of potholes that it is not safe. I am so glad that after 10 years of bitching it will finally get paved;

that you don't know. As for Bob's and Rob's streets, I would surmise that they are in similar conditions or they wouldn't be scheduled to be paved.

**Barbara Ann Wright
Pendleton**

Trump should walk the talk about disrespecting the country

The latest dust-up over Megan Rapinoe and the lingering flap over the Colin Kaepernick issue of disrespecting the flag beg the question: How can the false patriots in this country totally absolve Trump for his past incidents of same? Hiding behind mommy's skirt and daddy's money and a phony medical reason to avoid military service during the Vietnam War is leaps and bounds more shameful and disrespectful than the actions of the two people he seeks to demean.

Let's not forget his endless disrespect of the late

Sen. John McCain and all service members that happened to be captured during hostilities while in the uniform Trump was too scared to wear. Our president is a shameless coward. Bone spurs don't go away on their own; let's see X-rays and/or scars of this no doubt phony medical condition.

He continuously badgered Obama for his birth certificate — let's have an in-depth investigation into his past medical records concerning this rich kid's excuse for not serving. A stable genius? He's threatened to sue any school that he attended if they released his grades. A brilliant businessman? He won't release his grades. The king of debt he called himself.

If he has any good qualities, he should finally display them — although I'm sure he's not capable of the humility required for that small task.

**David Gracia
Hermiston**

OTHER VIEWS

Another state green program flounders

Bend Bulletin

State government is once again supplying just what residents have come to expect from state programs devised to make Oregon green: failure.

The Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program was set up to subsidize the purchase of electric cars for Oregonians. Low and moderate income Oregonians can get the most — up to \$2,500 toward a purchase. If you are curious if you could qualify, low and moderate income is defined as less than 120% of area median income for the household size. For the Bend-Redmond area that is \$91,800 for a family of four.

Guess how many applications the state has processed for people of low and moderate income.

Zero. That's since the program launched about two years ago.

"The state has received 4,004 applications for electric vehicle rebates," according to the Willamette Week. "It has processed little over half of them. It has received 581 applications from low-income car buyers. It has processed none."

It's unfair to put all the blame on the state. AAA sued, arguing that under Oregon law the money raised from a 0.5% tax on new cars had to be used toward road repairs. The program was put on hold until that case was resolved. But the state also doesn't have enough resources to even run the program.

You know who is particularly

frustrated about this? *Willamette Week* quoted Jeff Allen, executive director of Forth, an electric vehicle advocacy group. One thing *Willamette Week's* excellent article did not mention is that Forth is actually, in part, a front for electrical utilities, chargers for electric cars and electric car manufacturers. Small wonder they are so passionate about grabbing those tax dollars.

The Legislature has shown a real thirst to create programs to encourage Oregonians to get more green.

It was one of the big promises built into the proposed carbon tax, House Bill 2020, that died this past session. But the problem-plagued Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program isn't the first time such programs have floundered. The most spectacular example is the BETC, the Business Energy Tax Credit. It was just

as well-intentioned — aimed at giving tax breaks for green energy projects. It was abused and exploded into a mess. A New Mexico trucking company used it to try to collect millions in Oregon tax credits by registering trucks in Oregon, without really driving much in Oregon. A second example has been Oregon's Clean Fuels Program. Fuel producers blocked public disclosure of important information about how the program really works.

So when legislators come back next year bursting with promises about how it will work, there are plenty of reasons not to believe them.

"THE STATE HAS RECEIVED 4,004 APPLICATIONS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE REBATES"