

Grateful for newspapers and the important work they do



DEAN
RIDINGS

OTHER VIEWS

Thanksgiving is a great time for counting our blessings and expressing gratitude. In challenging times, an attitude of gratitude is all the more important, and this year has been one of the most difficult for so many.

Nevertheless, we've seen many people in communities across our country who have risen to the occasion and gone above and beyond to serve their fellow citizens in the face of all of the difficulties and heartbreak that COVID-19 has wrought.

I'm grateful to the first responders and health care workers for their tireless efforts to protect and care for our communities in the face of uncertain and often dangerous circumstances.

I'm grateful to teachers and educators for their dedication to education and their ability to adapt to unusual learning environments. And I'm grateful to parents who, all of a sudden, have found themselves in home school situations, needing to remember the basics of math, English and science.

I'm grateful to local businesses for their dedication and perseverance and creativity to continue to serve their customers through curbside, delivery and online options.

I'm grateful to restaurants and grocery stores for continuing to safely serve and provide for their customers day in and day out.

I'm grateful to our houses of worship where we can lift our hearts and find renewed strength.

And as the CEO of an association representing the newspaper industry, I'm also very

about their communities and the work their staffs do.

The importance of local newspapers has never been more evident than in the past year. Even though the major stories of the year were national — COVID, the elections, the economy, racial injustice and more — the impact has always been local.

The reporters at your local newspaper are your neighbors. They are part of your community, and I know that they care about what happens there. They provide vital information

protecting democracy and informing readers during the often-contentious election process. In a season filled with misinformation fueled by one-sided digital sites and cable news channels, local newspapers were relied on to provide fair coverage of the issues that mattered the most to readers.

This Thanksgiving, newspapers are also giving us a fun, new way to share our gratitude with those around us. They invite you to look into your heart and share the things for which you're most grateful — health, family, faith, friends, pets or anything else — on a new, national Share Gratitude platform: ShareGratitude2020.com. You can even include a video message or post a photo to the site.

Local newspapers have supported all of us through this difficult year and now they need our support as well. Consider subscribing to your local newspaper, in print or online, to show your thanks for the job they do each and every day and to ensure that they can continue to keep your community fully informed in the days ahead. Thank you for reading the newspaper.

Dean Ridings is CEO of America's Newspapers, an association committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life.

I'M GRATEFUL TO OUR HOUSES OF WORSHIP WHERE WE CAN LIFT OUR HEARTS AND FIND RENEWED STRENGTH.

grateful to the daily and weekly newspapers across this country who put it all on the line every day of the year, and to the readers who support their vital work.

I'm proud of the work these newspapers do, and I hope you will join me in expressing your appreciation to them. It's not easy hearing people challenge your motives with repeated taunts of "fake news." From personal connections, I know how much the publishers and editors of these newspapers care

to protect the health and safety of the public, with news about crime, local schools, local government, steps being taken to address the spread of COVID, local trends and more.

They've kept us informed with detailed information about businesses that are open, creative ideas for things to do at home, outdoor entertainment options and tips for addressing the challenges of working remotely.

And, they have performed a vital role in

A path forward for salmon, energy and agriculture



WENDY
MCDERMOTT

OTHER VIEWS

Up and down the Columbia and Snake rivers, salmon-dependent businesses are hurting. Tribes are suffering as many of the salmon runs they depend on for sustenance and culture are on the brink of extinction. Climate change is threatening our Northwest way of life, heating up our rivers and harming the health of our environment.

Given this reality, it is critical that we consider all options for salmon recovery, including the option scientists say would be most effective for Snake River salmon and steelhead: breaching the four federal dams on the lower Snake River in Washington.

American Rivers recognizes that salmon recovery is one of several interconnected goals. We also must ensure our

region can enjoy clean, affordable energy. We must create jobs and strengthen our economy. And, we must address longstanding injustices. Instead of closing doors on our best options, we should be asking the questions: What kind of investment would be necessary to replace the energy the four lower Snake dams currently provide? What would we need to do to ensure irrigators can continue drawing water from the river? How would we replace barge transportation on the lower Snake and get goods to market?

We recognize there will continue to be a role for hydropower dams in the Pacific Northwest. American Rivers is working with representatives of the national hydropower industry and Stanford University to find common ground on the role of hydropower in addressing climate change while also protecting and restoring free-flowing rivers.

While we believe there is a continued role for hydropower, we know that some dams' costs outweigh their benefits. That is the case with Lower Granite, Little Goose,

Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor dams on the lower Snake River. Based on their costs — financial, ecological and cultural — we support their removal.

The Columbia and Snake rivers have provided an incredible array of benefits to the region, including economically and culturally important salmon runs, electricity, water for agriculture, and a transportation system. Unfortunately, salmon populations are in freefall that is disproportionately harming tribes across the region. Uncertainty for Snake River-dependent agricultural producers and shippers hampers long-term planning and growth. A dramatically shifting energy landscape is putting the future of low-cost, reliable energy supplies at risk without strategic investment and modernizing Northwest energy policy.

A 2018 study by Energy Strategies LLC found that replacing the energy provided by the four lower Snake River dams with new clean sources would increase electric system reliability at a low cost while providing the best chance for fish restoration.

"The region can remove the four lower

Snake River Dams and replace the power they provide with a portfolio of conservation and renewable energy resources while maintaining grid and transmission reliability at levels equal to or better than the current system and with little or no increase in greenhouse gas emissions," the study states.

More investigation is needed into how we can best replace the benefits of the lower Snake dams. We applaud the region's governors and tribes for spearheading this important dialogue. Now, we need our Northwest congressional delegation to listen to our region's diverse voices, including tribes, fishermen, farmers and energy interests, and help forge a collaborative, comprehensive solution. We believe we can recover salmon, meet federal treaty and trust responsibilities to Native American tribes, ensure clean, affordable energy and strengthen our economy.

It's time to move forward together.

Wendy McDermott is the Pacific Northwest director of American Rivers.

A shift toward batteries, renewables



SCOTT
CHRISTIENSEN

OTHER VIEWS

Most of the world's policy makers agreed in the Paris Agreement, under the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change, that society should seek to avert the threat of climate change by holding the increase in the global average temperature to 3.6°F (2.0°C) above pre-industrial temperatures. Up to now, 189 out of 197 parties to the convention have ratified the agreement. (The U.S. withdrew on Nov. 4, 2020, but President-elect Joe Biden said the U.S. will rejoin when he takes office.)

The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contained in currently owned and exploitable global fossil fuel reserves are around three times higher than the amount of GHG required to raise the atmospheric temperature in 2050 to the proposed 3.6°F limit. To make it simple, a third of oil reserves, half of gas reserves and over 80% of current coal reserves globally should stay in the ground to prevent the Earth's average temperature from rising 3.6°F.

What are stranded assets?

This means we can stop exploring for oil, gas and coal, which will save money for investors; but it also means that the fossil fuel industry is sitting on trillions of dollars in stranded assets, which are investments worth less on the market than they are on a balance sheet, due to the fact that they have become obsolete before the end of their life. For example, new coal plants built today, scheduled to run for 30 years to recoup their costs, do not anticipate a world where renewable energy will be cheaper than coal.

According to The Guardian, the world's rising reliance on fossil fuels may come to an end far earlier than predicted. Individual investors, banks, pension funds, insurance companies and universities are rethinking their investments in coal, gas and oil because of worries about the inevitable depreciation of stranded assets.

Companies that fail to plan for low-carbon economic scenarios risk decline or even bankruptcy. Therefore, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures has developed financial risk disclosure tools for company managers and their boards to let investors, lenders, insurers, and other stakeholders anticipate if or when they are or will be holding stranded assets. Consider a breakthrough in battery stor-

age technologies within the next 20 years, which could greatly depress use of oil and gas in the transport sector and accelerate demand for electric vehicles (EVs). Current growth of EVs supports this likely proposition. Passenger EV sales jumped from 450,000 in 2015 to 2.1 million in 2019. Sales will continue to rise as battery prices fall, energy density improves, more charging infrastructure is built, and sales spread to new markets. By 2022, there will be over 500 different EV models available globally.

Falling price of renewable energy

The primary reason for the transition out of a fossil fuel economy is because of the falling price of renewable energy sources. According to Bloomberg's 2019 New Energy Outlook, cheap renewable energy and batteries will fundamentally reshape the electricity system:

- We move from two-thirds fossil fuels in 2018 to two-thirds zero-carbon energy by 2050.
- Solar sees the most growth, rising from 2% of the world electricity generation today to 22% in 2050.
- Wind generates 26% of the world's electricity in 2050, compared with 5% today.
- Today, wind and solar are the cheapest sources of energy across more than two-thirds of the world. By 2030, they undercut coal and gas almost everywhere.
- Hydro sees very modest growth, and nuclear stays flat.
- Batteries help shift excess generation to times when the wind is not blowing, and the sun is not shining. Demand-side flexibility also helps better integrate variable renewable energy

China leads the way

President Xi Jinping of China recently announced to the UN General Assembly that his country would become carbon neutral by 2060. Responsible for 28% of the globe's greenhouse gas emissions (double those of the U.S.), China is already a leader in the deployment of clean-energy technologies. Its commitment to reach net-zero emissions in four decades will spur growth in development and manufacturing of technologies needed in the transition. Those efforts will make technologies cheaper for other countries to use and make it more likely they buy from China.

Scott Christiansen is an international agronomist with 35 years of experience. He worked for USDA's Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Agency for International Development.



As the internet evolves, so does the news business



ANDREW
CUTLER

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

When I began my newspaper career — further back sometimes than I like to admit — the internet was still a fairly new phenomenon. The web platforms we all see and use today were simply dreams back then. When I crafted my first story, so long ago, I couldn't imagine how much of an impact the World Wide Web would have, not only on the internet, but also our industry.

The internet has evolved over the years, and with it the way we structure and present news. For more than 200 years, the print product was the unquestioned king. The newspaper — held in our hands or carried under our arms — was the primary tool to deliver news. The internet, of course, changed all of that. Not all at once, but slowly over time.

Now, a newspaper's website is just as critical a piece to the overall news product as the actual newspaper. Most in our industry realized — some early on, some later — the power of the internet in terms of making us more versatile and flexible. There are no space restrictions on the web. Stories can be as long or as short as needed.

That isn't always the case with a newspaper. There are only so many pages — or so much space — per edition.

The internet has also changed the newspaper business. In some ways the change has been good, in others not so good. Overall, though, the changes delivered by the advent of the internet have enhanced, rather than detracted, from our news product.

Our website at the *East Oregonian* is always a work in progress in terms of finding the right way to deliver news, but it is one of the most powerful elements to our daily task to deliver our product. While we are no longer a daily newspaper, we post stories on our website every day, sometimes hourly. That means a subscriber isn't confined to waiting on the print product to arrive to find out what is going on locally.

Our webpage and our print product compliment each other. Both are essential pillars to our overall news operation, but both fulfill different roles for different people.

Internally, we see both as key pieces to our long-term goals. However, the internet is only going to continue to evolve and we must evolve with it.

Now, we provide a solid print product and a growing web presence. Readers can find updated stories on our website every day.

Things have changed greatly since I first became a journalist, and one of the most exciting things back then was the potential of the internet.

It's still just as exciting nearly 20 years later.

Andrew Cutler is the publisher/editor of the East Oregonian.