

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Ignoring the divide must not continue

Oregon House Republican Leader Christine Drazan announced recently she plans to run for governor. And she will join a growing list of potential candidates for the state's job, but whoever is elected to the state's top post next year should make bridging the divide between Salem and Eastern Oregon a top priority.

Now there are four Republicans running for the governor's slot, four Democrats and one Independent. Current House Speaker Tina Kotek is probably the front-runner among all the candidates, and she has shown interest in the eastern side of the state in the past.

That's good news if she is elected.

The bad news is the divide between Eastern Oregon — and most rural areas of the state — and the prosperous Willamette Valley continues to grow. That's not good news for the future of the state. The biggest example of the frustration felt by many in the eastern portion of the state is the effort by a grassroots group dubbed Move Oregon's Border to essentially break off from the state and become part of Idaho.

The effort may be a long shot — it faces several hurdles, including approval by both the Idaho and Oregon Legislatures and Congress — but it is indicative of the views of many on the eastern fringes of Oregon.

Most of Oregon's population rests in the Willamette Valley — especially Portland — where the prevalent political views are opposite of most in Eastern Oregon. It is essentially a cultural divide, and over the years it has manifested itself in a growing distrust and frustration in the eastern enclaves of Oregon with Salem.

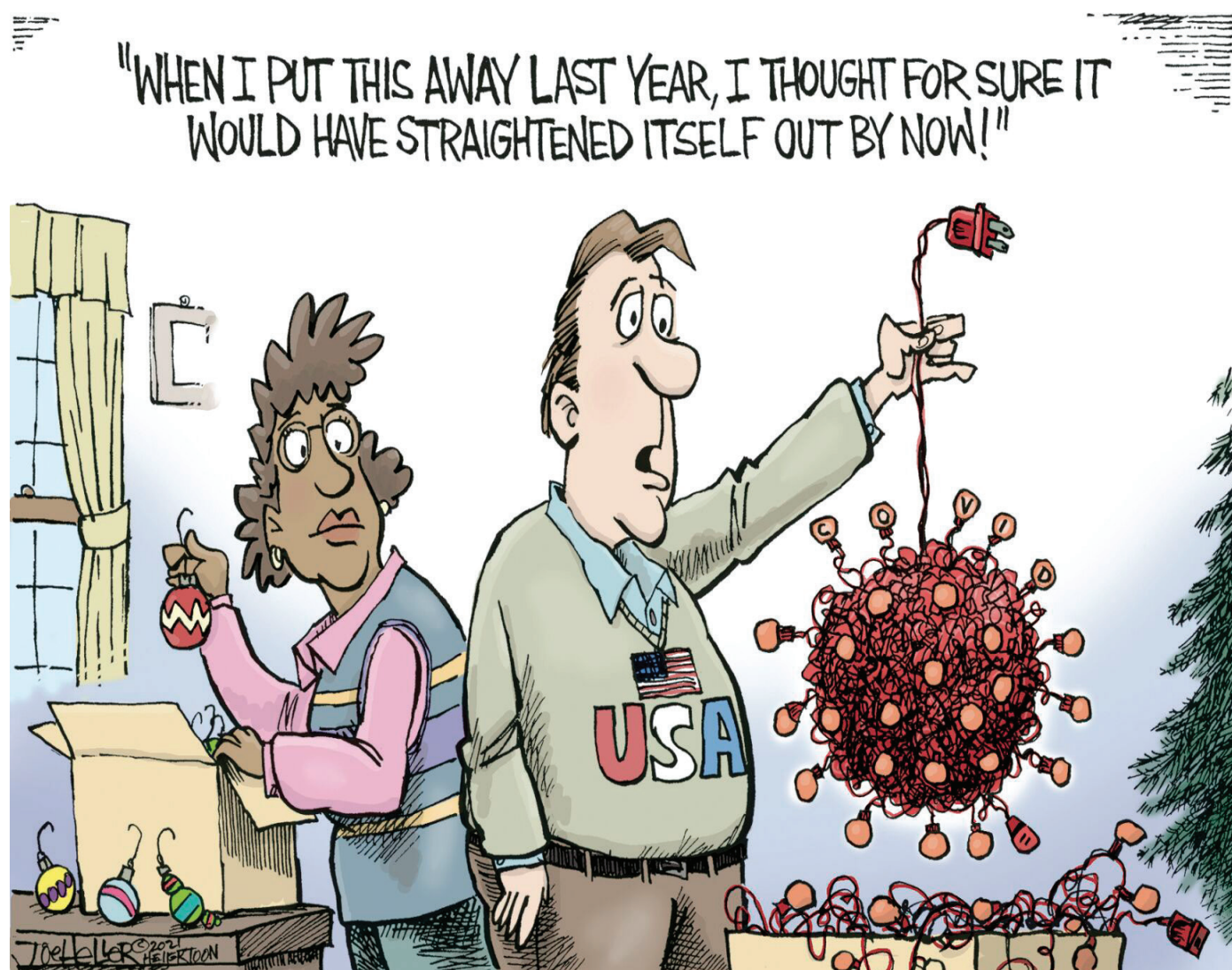
The gap can be fixed. With the right kind of leadership, the divisions between the two sections of the state could be mended. Yet it will not be easy and anyone who takes on that responsibility faces a long, long haul.

That shouldn't, though, be a reason to ignore the issue. Such division isn't good for their state's future.

There is not doubt that Eastern — and rural — Oregon faces a disadvantage in the Legislature. That's because most rural and Eastern Oregon politics centers on the Republican side of the political fence and the Democrats control the House and the Senate.

Yet a governor who can rise above partisan lines and do what is best for the state would have the opportunity to make lasting change.

The divide cannot continue to be ignored.



YOUR VIEWS

Wolves are a burden to the economy

Mr. Aney, in your recent column ("Making a place for predators, Thursday," Nov. 4) you conveniently fail to mention that with the introduction of wolves, Idaho was to maintain 100 wolves or 10 breeding pairs. Idaho's wolf population now exceeds 1,500 wolves.

When any game population exceeds the carrying capacity of a given range their numbers have to be reduced to achieve balance, and so it is with wolves. Liberalizing hunting seasons is the usual method, but this is not an effective option with wolves and has forced Idaho to take a more aggressive approach.

You state that killing wolves to increase elk numbers is "selfish." This is a cavalier attitude that you can afford having held a government job with good pay and benefits while you have no regard for those whose livelihoods have been adversely impacted by introduction of wolves. Every elk harvested in Idaho generates thousand of dollars for Idaho's economy, while wolves are a burden to the economy.

You state, we should "encourage" wolves "to live as wolves were intended." Get real.

You also state your willing to give wolves their "fair share." Would that be what they actually need to survive or does it include the animals they kill just

for sport and don't eat?

Running computer models for National Environmental Policy Act report does not make you an expert on wolves. I would suggest that your energy would be better served focusing on subjects you actually have some knowledge of and leave Idaho's wolf problems to the experts with actual experience.

Dwight Clift
Pinhurst, Idaho

Pendleton City Hall to stop frivolous spending

This change in direction came to light in a casual conversation with an anonymous source familiar with the inter-workings of city hall one morning during coffee hour at the Rainbow Cafe. It's one of the few places in town, along with Zimmerman's, where you can get the latest news before it's two or three days old.

This new concept being discussed will limit all future discretionary spending to projects deemed beneficial to nearly all residents. As an example, a project that's received no publicity, but is sure to improve the quality of life for all residents including the homeless, is the replacement of those old vintage looking lampposts on Main Street with brand new vintage looking lampposts that appears to be identical except for the light bulbs.

Evidently simply replacing the old bulbs just won't achieve the desired results.

In a thoughtful approach, since those new lampposts run \$6,000 a pop, our public works director has elected to shield taxpayers from any undue financial strain by replacing only four a year, limiting overall costs to \$24,000 annually. Considering the size of current budget, city officials feel the additional cost is of no consequence, just a drop in the bucket.

Hopefully, the current wave of inflation won't upset the schedule.

Another project that's gaining great favor with the Pendleton Development Commission's assistant executive director is construction of some sort of "gate to the city" setup on both east and west entrances to the city, with an additional gate at the intersection of South Main Street and Goodwin Avenue. The PDC feels these proposed gates are essential due to the complexity of navigating our city's streets and are needed to guide both residents and visitors alike though blighted areas to our downtown area.

These two projects in themselves are positive proof that city management and the various committees and commissions appointed by the mayor are truly in tune with the needs of the general public and will finally put to rest, once-and-for-all, that undeserved reputation for frivolous spending.

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