

OUR VIEW

Meetings should be open to public

Gov. Kate Brown did not achieve one of her top priorities: She didn't land Intel's expansion for Oregon.

It went to Ohio. That's \$20 billion in investment and 3,000 hired to build two new, high-tech factories going to Ohio, not Oregon.

In The Oregonian's reporting, we found this intriguing sentence about what Brown did and didn't do to lure chip manufacturers: "While her office suggested a number of measures to lure chipmakers, though — including a 'need to evaluate the land use grand bargain' — Brown did not make any public proposals her staff suggested for the chip industry."

A newly formed task force of various political and business officials, including the governor, Sen. Ron Wyden and state Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, are going to be looking for ways to ensure Oregon does not miss out any more. It's going to be looking at land issues, workforce development, tax incentives, regulations and more.

Those discussions could be fascinating and intriguing to the public. Doesn't the public deserve to see how they come up with any ideas that might translate into policies?

Will these discussions be open to the public or behind closed doors? We think the meetings should be open.

What should Oregon do with tax windfall?

Legislators already have plans in mind for the predicted tax windfall of some additional \$979 million estimated for this two-year budget cycle.

Democrats are ready to spend it. On year-round schools. Better training and recruitment of police. Creating more housing. Programs to find homes for the homeless, as The Oregonian reported. Gov. Kate Brown wants to see it invested in her priorities of housing, child care, workers and public safety.

Republican ideas are slightly different, as you might expect. Senate Republicans want \$60 million for the Oregon State Police to help local law enforcement with marijuana grows and \$50 million for forest thinning.

We thought a couple of representatives had wise counsel. State Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, suggested setting aside money for the next downturn. And both he and state Rep. Vikki Breese Iverson, R-Prineville, worried about the disparity between the state flush with revenue and the inflation that Oregonians are feeling.

What do you think the state should do? Let your legislator know. You can find how to contact them here: bit.ly/3oW6jXP.

EDITORIALS

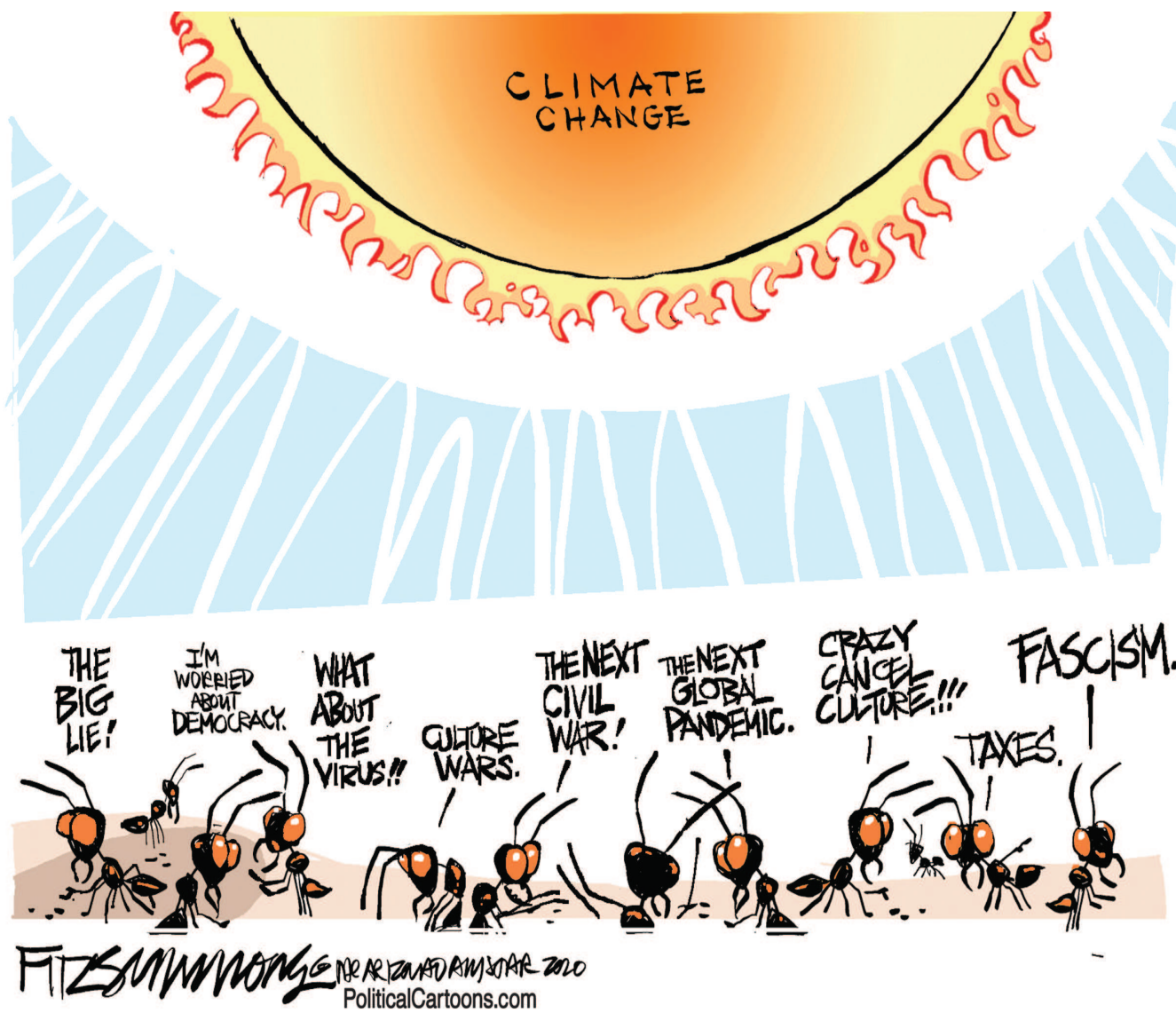
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Why winter matters



MARC AUSTIN
EYE TO THE SKY

Winter weather can be very inconvenient. The intrusion of cold air, coupled with either fog or low clouds, makes for dreary outdoor weather, which isn't optimal for being outside.

When storm systems sweep in, whether it's cold enough for snow to fall in the low elevations or not, there are frequently major travel impacts through the mountain passes, and if snow happens to impact any of the airports in the region, these travel impacts can have a domino effect. No matter how you slice it, winter weather can be downright annoying at times.

It can also present some great recreation opportunities if you happen to enjoy winter sports like skiing, snowboarding, or snowmobiling, but that's for another article. We often hear the statement "keep the snow up in the mountains where it belongs" for that very reason.

As frustrating as it may be trying to plan outdoor events or slipping and sliding as you make your way through town, winter is critical for the stability of our climate in the Inland Northwest.

Unlike areas west of the Cascades that regularly receive precipitation into the spring and summer months, areas east of the Cascades struggle to get much beneficial rainfall after mid-June, leaving multiple consecutive months of hot dry weather.

While this is a normal seasonal cycle, if we don't get enough precipitation (rain, snow, ice, etc.) during the winter, we find ourselves experiencing unusually hot dry summers and worsening drought conditions. This can also lead to longer, more active wildfire seasons.

The western U.S. has been in the midst of a multi-year drought. Drought is no stranger to the region, largely due to the dry continental nature of our climate and the rain shadow (area that receives little rain due to blocking by mountains) east of the Cascades. Despite these influences, extreme to exceptional drought year after year is rare, and it has a number of negative effects on the region.

For one, drought is profoundly impactful on agriculture, including crops, livestock and farmers and their families. These directly impact the regional and national economy, especially items the Inland Northwest is known for, such as wheat, peas, apples and potatoes. Another more short-term aspect of lacking precipitation in the winter months deals with wildfires and their frequency during the summer and

autumn months. With little soil moisture, the vegetation that fuels wildfires, such as grasses, shrubs and even trees, dry out and cure much more rapidly.

This leads to an earlier onset of conditions favoring the spread and maintenance of wildfires, meaning the fire season is longer than it otherwise might be given a wetter winter. Those that live in fire-prone areas are at a greater risk of experiencing fire near their homes. Even those who may not be directly impacted by fire are likely to see indirect impacts to air quality due to expansive smoke, as many in the Pacific Northwest have experienced over the last few years.

So the next time you're itching to head outside and catch some sun, but instead find yourself facing fog and low clouds, or snowy icy conditions, take a minute to appreciate the winter weather. It really is our water-supply lifeline, aiding our agricultural interests, alleviating or regulating drought and preventing our fire and smoke seasons from becoming so severe.

Marc Austin is a warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Pendleton. Austin leads outreach and weather preparedness programs, and engages the media, emergency management and public safety communities in building a weather ready nation.

YOUR VIEWS

Leave Marcus Whitman statue alone

I read the article about the consideration of removing the Marcus Whitman statue. This is very upsetting.

Marcus Whitman and his wife left a footprint in the history of the then-known Oregon Territory. He was not the first settler in the region. The Hudson Bay Company was the first, and was still there when Whitman had his mission. This leads me to ask: Why is Whitman being blamed for the outbreak of measles? He may have had nothing to do with its outbreak. Look at us now, and the flu that began in China and transported here.

Then there is the comment on how he is dressed on the statue. Let's face it, clothes wear out, and material for clothing was something that was not available. So what do you wear? You make your clothes out of what you can find: animal skins. I respect the Native Americans, but this issue reeks of "cancel culture" and, worse, "critical race theory" (which many say is not a theory). I was taught this in college and rejected it, not based on my race, but because it's

a flawed theory.

I have gotten off my subject, but we can't keep removing statues because someone does not agree with its subject matter. All the issues stated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation for the uprising of the Cayuse (property encroachment, immigration of settlers and illnesses) would have happened anyway, so why blame it on just Marcus Whitman? I say keep the statue as is, where it is, and don't touch it.

Gail Baker
La Grande

Funny, how some things never change

I read a recent editorial concerning the urban/rural divide in Oregon. This divide dates back to more than 100 years ago.

I was reading "On this date in History" section that in the early 1900s, residents of Eastern Oregon were discussing joining Idaho. Funny, how some things never change. I think if we ever want to have a truly represented

form of government in Oregon, we need to challenge the 1964 Supreme Court ruling of Reynolds vs. Sims.

The court ruled that voting districts should be based on population. The one dissenting justice felt it was an overreach of the federal court verse states rights to dictate state elections. I feel the same principle that applies to states should apply to counties within a state. The founders wanted to ensure no matter how small or populated a state may be they had an equal say in the governance. That is why each state regardless of size only has two senators. It was their feeling that each state played a role the makeup of the Union and should have an equal say in the administration of laws and governance.

Oregon's own constitution says state senators can be selected by county or districts. I contend the 36 counties that make up the state of Oregon should have an equal say in the governance. The only way to finally put to rest the urban/rural divide is to allow each county to be represented in Salem by one senator. Just my opinion.

Joe Mesteth
Hermiston