

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

ANDREW CUTLER
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Editor/Senior Reporter

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2022

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

OUR VIEW

Taking a step to curb poaching

The news the Oregon Department of Justice hired a special prosecutor to crack down on poachers did not roll across social media or the news wires with a snap, but it is a move that most hunters should, and do, applaud.

Jay Hall was hired last month to be the new assistant attorney general dedicated to enforcing anti-poaching laws and providing expertise and resources to local law enforcement for poaching investigations and prosecutions. Previously, he prosecuted major crimes for the Lane County District Attorney's Office and developed expertise in using state racketeering laws against organized poaching rings. In 2010 he received an award from the Oregon State Police for prosecuting a poaching ring that killed more than 300 deer and elk.

The new slot appears to have been created in response to a surge in unsolved illegal killing of deer and elk.

Finding a way to stop poaching also was a priority, in the past, for lawmakers as the Oregon Legislature, which approved money in 2019 for the Stop Poaching Campaign, to increase anti-poaching efforts. The campaign includes working with communities to find poachers, adding four Oregon State Police troopers and a sergeant to increase enforcement, and hiring an anti-poaching prosecutor.

The move to hire a special prosecutor to focus on anti-poaching initiatives is a good idea. The more that can be done in this regard, the better.

Poaching is a terrible crime that damages one of the region's great attributes. For most law abiding and sensible hunters, poaching is a crime that wouldn't even enter into their thinking. Those who cherish our region's attributes — including the ability to go out each season and hunt game — know that poaching hurts many while helping very few.

Our ability to hunt each year is one of those sacrosanct features many of us enjoy yearly and when someone poaches an animal — whether its deer or elk — it impacts every one of us who hand over cash to get a tag.

Legal hunting is one of those intangible elements to our area that make it such a great place to live, work and play. When someone breaks the law and kills game out of season illegally, the entire community suffers.

There is no doubt that poaching will be a part of our Western landscape, regardless of how senseless it is. However, a move like the Department of Justice to create a position that will put a spotlight on the crime is good news. The more emphasis we can put on stopping the crime of poaching, the better off our unique way of life will be.



Oregonians don't want a party hack in governor's office



LES
ZAITZ

OTHER VIEWS

For some Oregonians, the race for governor isn't about who can raise the most money.

And these voters aren't interested in who can parrot party platforms without flaw.

Instead, they seek a new governor who is somewhat blind to party affiliation.

Such a governor, they think, can unite the state. That governor would energize more Oregonians.

Beneath those feelings is a sense that Oregon can do better.

In recent weeks, I gathered by Zoom with voters from around the state. Our partners were Rural Development Initiatives and the Agora Journalism Center.

I was eager for voters — they were from all parts of the state — to share two points. One was to share what they wanted to learn about those running for governor. The other was to learn how the Oregon press can more effectively serve up information about the candidates.

This wasn't a scientific poll. I'm not going to suggest the views of three dozen people perfectly mirror Oregon attitudes.

But the messages they delivered are well worth considering. That's especially true for the 30 or so people running to succeed Gov. Kate Brown. She is in her final year and by law can't run again.

Let's take what they want in the next governor. An earlier column described

the hope for a governor who blurs the urban-rural line in Oregon.

But equally important to the people I talked with was the idea that party politics must be tamed.

These citizens are worn out by the focus on party over performance. They recognize the impact — in Oregon and across the U.S. — of Republicans and Democrats treating each other like the enemy. For these voters, those party affiliations seem to be more about who has power, not who is doing best for Oregon.

There's no getting away from party dominance, at least in the primary election. Candidates with a "D" or an "R" as part of their credentials campaign through the spring to their political tribes.

But the two main political parties are watching a deep erosion in voter ranks. That's influenced in part by automatic voter registration and the "non-affiliated voter" who doesn't pick a party.

But the declining party representation may reflect what these voters had to say. They are hungry for a governor who can lead all of Oregon. They don't want someone who comes into office waving their party banner.

And these voters generally recognized that the governor is not just a political animal. They want a governor who has some record of managing large enterprises. They don't want a greenhorn attempting to manage multibillion-dollar budgets and a work force in the thousands. Too much is at stake in Oregon, they believe, to turn the keys over to a management rookie.

Along that line, a couple of the voters said it'd be helpful to know what kind of team the next governor will take to

Salem. Governors set the tone for state government in large measure by the people named to direct state agencies, from the massive Department of Human Services to the Corrections Department to the Oregon Health Authority. That's an interesting idea, for most governors wait until they are elected to start naming names.

And one voter had another idea to make the next governor more effective — remote office hours. This rural resident thought the next governor could learn a great deal by setting up shop and working for two weeks at a stretch from someplace other than Salem. Imagine a governor working from Pendleton or Klamath Falls or Astoria. That could provide a useful and real world perspective that a factory tour just can't provide.

No matter the details, the voters I listened to are hoping the next governor will moderate the political tensions in the state. They hope the next governor will be — and be perceived as — a generalist interested in helping the entire state.

No doubt, Kate Brown or John Kitzhaber or Ted Kulongoski would push back on some aspects. They did travel the state. They didn't remain creatures of Portland. Yet they also know better than most that how the governor is perceived is as essential as how they work.

These voters are giving candidates valuable clues about how to weld a coalition of Oregonians. They should heed the message — and demonstrate they are listening.

Les Zaitz is a veteran editor and investigative reporter, serving Oregon for more than 45 years.

YOUR VIEWS

Be nice to the person behind the counter

I know we've all had enough of COVID-19, lack of supplies and rising prices. But I am concerned about what I hear from our check-out people at every store I go to, saying they can't believe how rude and angry people are getting.

Some have even retired early because they have had enough — and you wonder why there aren't more aisles open for checking out?

Granted, there are a lot of people sitting at home and letting us pay for their living, but it is not the people who serve us who have raised prices, slowed the supply chain or made us wait a little longer to get our errands done.

Let's start being much nicer to the person behind the counter who is just trying to make a living and doing their

job — let's make their day by being nice. Because if it was you behind that counter instead, how would you feel?

Judi Richter
Elgin

What's that smell

At a recent Pendleton City Council meeting, a local resident approached the mayor questioning what he felt were the city's outrageous water rates. Once again, the standard response given was that a study indicated our rates were comparable to other cities surveyed. The actual cost of water to the city remains a guarded secret. To be fair, when residents began to complain about the incredibly poor condition of our city streets, it was Bob Patterson, our public works director, who stepped up to the plate and suggested that additional fees could be added to water bills to cover street repairs and vehicle replacement. So,

what's that smell?

City officials responsible for setting water rates don't seem to comprehend the large disparity between their salaries and those of the low income workers fixing fast food, making beds and cleaning those motel rooms that the emphasis on tourism has created or retirees on a fixed income. Many residents have been forced to stop watering their lawns. Those brown lawns, though considered a fire hazard, don't seem to concern city management.

A new approach gaining popularity is the elimination of hot baths and showers. That smell? It's 100% all natural human body odor. Not to worry, like the odor of marijuana smoke drifting through our city parks, or that urine-soaked homeless guy sleeping in the post office or on your doorstep, you'll get used to it. There's even a rumor afloat that city hall's next urban renewal grant

program will include funding for free deodorant and a bath at the Vert Auditorium fountain. A tip jar at the fountain is expected to fund the much needed repairs at that facility. An early morning shower-hour at the swimming pool, sponsored by city parks and recreation, may be an alternate solution to consider.

Incidentally, if you've noticed your water bill now exceeds your heating bill during the time period when you're not watering your lawn, you're not alone. There's hope. Patterson, after pushing so hard for a formula that would keep the rates at the pace of inflation, is recommending that the latest rate increase be limited to about half of what the city manager would have expected, explaining the city could eat the inflationary increases. If that's now the case, have we been overcharged?

Rick Rohde
Pendleton

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SEND LETTERS TO:

editor@eastoregonian.com,
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801