

# The effort to reduce waste takes all of us

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Peter Ferré



Although 75% of America's waste is recyclable, as a country we only recycle 34.5% of it.

If/when we get to the 75% rate the effect would be like removing 50 million passenger cars from the U.S. roads. Wow! To get to that 75% rate is going to take a concerted effort by each one of us, (we each need to reduce, reuse, recycle more), but the most meaningful shift rests on the shoulders of our government, and the businesses/industries, that make, package and sell the things we buy. (We will talk further about this in a future column).

In Wallowa County, we currently recycle 27% of the waste we generate, according to a 2016 report from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. To give our planet a chance, (recycling just two aluminum cans saves the same amount of energy

it takes to power a PC for a single workday), we all need to do more. To give the Wallowa County Recycling Program a fighting chance to survive we also need to do more.

You see, there is a lot of pressure being put on the county's recycling program to cover its costs when recycling programs around the country are being faced with very low prices for recyclable materials, (which is something we need to take up with our governments and the companies who make and sell the things we purchase). As with any business, there are two primary things that can be done to achieve and/or increase profitability. One is to lower costs, and another is to increase revenue. The Friends of Wallowa County Recycling have worked hard over the past nine months to help lower costs by changing how our recyclables are hauled to processors, (saving 30% on shipping), by creating a volunteer-led transportation initiative helping further lower costs on moving certain recyclables, by coordinating more than 500 volunteer hours to help sort, cover, clean and manage the Recycling Center, by installing more comprehensive signage funded by donated funds and by spearheading grant applications, legislative enquiries and cre-

ative solutions to help do more.

We also need to increase the revenue of the recycling program, and the simplest way to do so is for all of Wallowa County to bring more clean, acceptable, recyclables to the Recycling Center at 301 Fish Hatchery Lane in Enterprise. You see, the clean, acceptable recyclables generate revenue for the county, and we need more of that revenue to ensure that our Recycling Center is not limited or overlooked because of a few dollars. That's right, we need more of your clean aluminum and metal cans. We need more of your newspapers, magazines, mixed paper and junk mail. We need more of your cardboard boxes, (with no packaging in them), your toilet paper rolls, your cereal, cracker, pasta and cookie boxes made from paperboard. We need more of your clean, lids removed, No. 1 PETE plastic, (excluding clamshells, cookie/cake containers, plastic to-go boxes, fruit containers and similar), and we need more of your No. 2 HDPE plastic without the lids. You see, the more clean, acceptable recyclables you, your family, your friends and everyone in the county brings to the Recycling Center, the more likely we are to continue to have a recycling program to help us get to that 75% recycling rate. Thank you for your part

in helping make this happen.

To help with continuing to improve the recycling opportunities we have, the Friends of Wallowa County Recycling are sponsoring an Earth Day Open House at the Recycling Center on Friday, April 23 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join us to help with some "spring cleaning" of the Recycling Center (bring your gloves) and/or to enjoy some fun recycling games, to learn more about the opportunities and challenges we have before us and to view the results of the Recycling Art Contest. The results from the Recycling Art Contest will be displayed at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture after the Earth Day Open House. Do not hesitate to email us at [wallowacountyrecycling@gmail.com](mailto:wallowacountyrecycling@gmail.com) or message us on Facebook at Wallowa County Recycles with questions, thoughts, ideas.

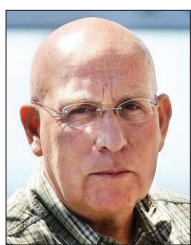
Finally, if you have questions on what can be done with other waste products such as paint, hazardous waste, batteries, tires, etc., that are not accepted at the Recycling Center please go to <https://co.wallowa.or.us/public-works/solid-waste/recycle-center> for details.

*Peter Ferré is a member of the Wallowa County Recycling Task Force.*

# To save community college, consider a K-14 structure

## OTHER VIEWS

Kim Puzey



A few days ago, I wrote about what I believe is the foreseeable and inevitable insolvency of Blue Mountain Community College under the present model of operations and funding.

In my opinion, the greatest impediment to the community college system in Oregon is financial dependence on the discretionary portion of the state budget. As mentioned in the earlier piece, that is not the case with K-12 and higher education.

In the private sector, when an enterprise is struggling with cash flow to the point of probable insolvency or bankruptcy, there are often conversations about merg-

ers, acquisitions, dissolution or divestiture of assets. I have been mulling these options over in my mind for quite some time.

In order for Blue Mountain Community College to come under the mandatory state budget umbrella, I have wondered about K-12 expanding to K-14, which is something that we are currently doing through dual-credit enrollment and advanced-placement courses. Under this model, motivated high school students could continue to earn enough credit for an associate's degree upon graduation from high school.

The Baker City Center could be acquired by the Baker School District and the center could be converted into the Baker Technical Institute, which has been discussed in the past.

Again, the funding would be under the mandatory umbrella of K-12 or K-14.

Similar discussions could take place with respect to facilities and services in Hermiston, Boardman and Milton-Freewater.

The Hermiston School District could

acquire all of the BMCC facilities associated with the Hermiston Higher Education Center and function as K-14.

A possible merger or acquisition of assets could be that Oregon State University takes over the facilities and instructional responsibility of the Precision Agriculture building located at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center outside of Hermiston.

The Pendleton campus and facilities could be acquired by Eastern Oregon University.

State funding would become mandatory instead of discretionary, bachelor's and master's degrees could be awarded from the local university satellite, and Pendleton would become a "university" town instead of a "college" town overnight.

Sports teams and associated scholarships would become four-year instead of two-year, and each of these proposals might better fit contemporary needs based on what falling enrollment has demonstrated over the past decade.

I'm not an expert in the matters I have suggested herein, but as a private citizen, I would like to see conversations take place around these proposals by those who are closer to the delivery instruction and the management of these public services and assets.

I think it's conceivable that a collaborative approach to rectifying what I have described as a flawed system might generate sufficient interest to lobby for funds to conduct a thorough, comprehensive and detailed feasibility study of these suggestions and myriad other matters that may or may not be viable under closer scrutiny.

I openly call upon officials in K-12, higher education, BMCC, governing boards, and elected officials to consider a more viable educational future for the region.

*Kim Puzey lives in Hermiston and is the general manager of the Port of Umatilla. He is a member of the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education.*

# White House ignores border chaos

## OTHER VIEWS

Joe Guzzardi



The daily Southwest border updates are generating nationwide concern, except in Washington, D.C., where indifference reigns.

The latest Department of Homeland Security report showed that in February, more than 100,000 people were either apprehended by or surrendered to federal immigration officials on the U.S.-Mexico border. Those totals, a 14-year high, include about 9,460 unaccompanied minors and more than 19,240 family units, which reflect 62% and 38% increases, respectively, when compared to January's statistics.

Nonetheless, President Joe Biden, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Press Secretary Jen Psaki refuse to even hint that the administration's lax border policies need immediate reining in. For his part, Biden has not spoken officially about what his administration calls a border challenge. But Psaki refused to call the border rush a crisis, instead labeling it "an enormous challenge." Mayorkas, when asked a similar question about whether the border events represented a crisis, answered with a flat out "no."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott didn't hesitate to call the growing border chaos a crisis. Abbott has a better perspective on the border influx than White House operatives, and the governor formed Operation Lone Star to deploy personnel from the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas National Guard to the border to secure the area. Abbott said Operation Lone Star's goal is to "deny Mexican cartels and other smugglers the ability to move drugs and people into Texas."

While the White House border rhetoric has focused almost exclusively on what it describes as the need for a humanitarian response to migration, it's ignored the undeniable connection between open borders and human smuggling. Ohio Sen. Rob Portman is the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee's top Republican who has overseen three separate committee investigations that date back over several administrations.

Portman's 2016 investigation, "Protecting Unaccompanied Alien Children

from Trafficking and Other Abuses," uncovered that the Department of Health and Human Services failed to adequately vet or to conduct in-depth background checks on the Ohio adults to whom it released minor children. The adults turned out to be human smugglers. The 2018 report, "Oversight of the Care of Unaccompanied Minor Children," came to similarly shocking and dangerous conclusions. HHS and DHS didn't make the recommended post-2016 changes to trafficking crimes and to tracking whether released aliens report for their designated immigration court dates.

Biden appears either under-informed or indifferent to the growing human trafficking trade that his administration encourages. After ending the Remain in Mexico policy, the latest federal government's inducement for more unaccompanied children to rush the border is that HHS will pay for minors in its custody to be flown to their sponsor or family member's home, often illegal immigrants, when, as is invariably the case, the receiving adult cannot pay. Furthermore, Biden's DHS submitted a notice to the Federal Register to withdraw an existing proposed rule that would require the receiving immigrant to sponsor and care for an arriving migrant once the migrant becomes a lawful permanent resident.

While Biden and those close to him debate semantics, last week DHS reached its breaking point, and begged ICE deportation officers to travel to the border ASAP to help with what the agency called "security operations" for the illegal immigrant children and families that have overwhelmed a swamped Border Patrol. Michael Meade, Immigration and Customs Enforcement acting director, pleaded for "immediate action." Volunteers would include civilians with medical or legal experience as well as drivers and food servers.

Officials on the scene won't speculate on when the emergency request for increased border assistance might be called off. The Biden administration is in full denial, and the president refuses to travel to the border to evaluate conditions.

As the surge with its associated criminal and COVID-19 risks intensifies daily, an educated guess is that the existing calamitous circumstances will remain unchanged well into the peak summer months.

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# Give Oregonians a bright future

## OTHER VIEWS

Kevin Frazier



Urban Oregonians are nearly twice as likely than rural residents to say Oregon is headed in the right direction (41% vs. 22%), according to a recent survey by the Oregon Values and Belief Center. That's a difference that should grab headlines, seize our attention and steer our policy.

We need a statewide vision that inspires urban and rural Oregonians alike to see a better future for themselves, their community and the state as a whole.

How you see your future is how you act in the present. When you're optimistic, you make long-term investments, you make long-term plans and you try to improve on the efforts and initiatives that are in place. These are all the sorts of activities that make a strong community even stronger. They result in folks going back to school, launching small businesses and getting involved in their community.

When you're pessimistic, you're not looking forward to tomorrow. In fact, you're likely to be more anxious and stressed, tired and sick. Pessimism is

unhealthy. I think we can all agree that we would rather avoid the sort of gloom associated with thinking that the best days have come and gone.

It's not surprising that rural Oregonians feel less than cheery about the future of Oregon. On the economy, 51% of rural Oregonians think economic conditions in the state are getting worse, compared to just 43% of their urban counterparts. What's more, 25% of rural Oregonians are very worried about their personal finances, whereas just 20% of urban residents feel the same.

A simple goal for all statewide leaders, then, should be to give Oregonians a future to look forward to.

What investments from Salem are going to lead to better tomorrows in Adel and Astoria? What new programs are going to lift up families in Baker City and Bandon? What regulations will be removed or restored to uplift small businesses in Condon and Coos Bay?

A detailed vision that specificity calls out how Oregonians across the state will realize a better tomorrow is what our state deserves and needs. It's no secret that "moonshots" can compel people into action and spark innovation. If Oregonians see a tomorrow worth fighting for, then they'll sacrifice today.

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