

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
Florence, OR 97439

Opinion

Just the facts — Siuslaw School District's bond measure

I am writing to provide information about Bond Measure 20-241 to build a new Siuslaw High School. The measure asks voters who live in the Siuslaw School District to approve a 25-year levy in the amount of \$36.9 million.

The bond would initially pay for the construction of a new high school. If funds remain after construction, the district would use funds to do safety and security upgrades in all facilities, provide technology and curriculum upgrades for K-12 and make energy-efficiency improvements at the elementary and middle schools.

Monies from the bond cannot be used for any other purpose, such as salaries.

Through our public listening sessions and through speaking to community groups in our city, I have heard support for the building of a new school. I have also heard from

members of our community who have suggested upgrading our facility to meet current codes for seismic, energy efficiency, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements and safety concerns.

Our Facilities Planning Committee, which is a broad-based community group, held public meetings, evaluated all sides of the issue and reported their findings to the board. The committee determined that building a new facility on our current high school grounds would be the most cost-effective option and would cause the least displacement of students during the process.

That recommendation, coupled with the Oregon Legislature's authorization of the release of \$123 million to stretch local dollars and address urgent facilities needs across

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By **ETHEL ANGAL**
SUPERINTENDENT, SIUSLAW SCHOOL DISTRICT



the state, prompted the Siuslaw School Board to place a bond measure on the May 17 ballot. The district will receive \$4 million in matching funds if we pass a bond measure in May 2016.

Recommending that the district proceed with placing a bond issue on the ballot was not a decision made lightly by our school board.

The design of our current building is typical of many schools built in the 1960s but falls short of the demands for safety and efficiency today. It is difficult to secure and monitor 16 points of entry.

Open walkways and an outdoor snack bar are currently used for

servicing lunches prepared at the middle and elementary schools because there is no on-site kitchen or cafeteria. Several classrooms have no windows or natural

light. Science labs designed for 24 students must now accommodate up to 30 students. Plumbing is failing and the electrical systems are at maximum load.

A remodel of the present high school is not practical. Seismic upgrades, installation of ADA compliant doors and elevator, safety improvements and other needed changes are estimated to cost 70 percent to 100 percent or more of new construction. Classrooms would still be crowded and Career and Technical Education classrooms could not be improved.

If the bond is passed, the district will immediately do a request for proposals from architects. We will stipulate that local businesses will be utilized as much as possible in the building process and will establish a Financial Oversight Committee to work throughout the process.

We will involve community members and staff in working on design and in trying to preserve some of our existing structures, such as the gym, auxiliary gym and auto service/manufacturing building in order to control costs. The cost to taxpayers over the life of the bond will be an estimated \$1.20 per \$1,000 of assessed value, or \$0.31 over the current rate of \$0.89/\$1,000.

I would like to thank our community for their thoughtful engagement in this process. It is part of the fabric of Florence that makes our community strong and helps us to keep moving forward.

LETTERS

Casting a vote that matters

An open letter to the Republican and Democratic parties in Oregon:

As this primary election nears, I am experiencing anger and frustration because I can't vote for the candidates I choose. I am a registered non-partisan voter and do not want to join a party. That doesn't mean that I don't want to participate in this important primary. Only the Oregon Independent Party has opened their primary to accept all voters, regardless of affiliation.

Washington and California have totally open primary elections, which allow every voter the privilege of casting his vote for whomever he feels is best for the job.

I have opinions and I care, but because the two main parties chose to limit voting for their candidates to party members, I can't cast my vote for their candidates. And, about 25 percent of Oregonians are in the same situation. I won't be bullied or cajoled into joining a major party, for my own reasons. But I would appreciate being able to cast a vote that matters.

Democrats and Republicans — don't you want our votes? This is a real loss for all.

Judy Roth
Florence

Elect Woodbury

I am writing to encourage my fellow residents to vote for Lane County Justice of the Peace candidate Woody Woodbury.

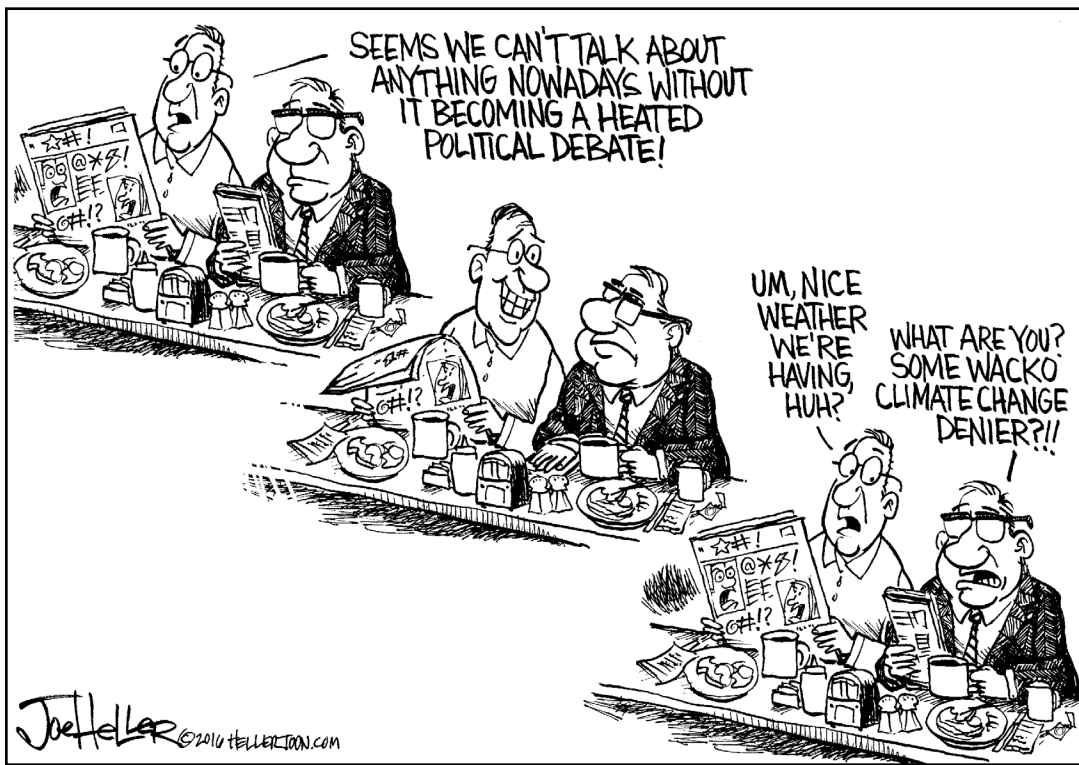
I have personally known Woody for many years and know him to be a community-driven individual who cares for others around him. It's a quality often spoken about, but not always acted on by politicians. He is the owner of Grocery Outlet, a small business that offers food at a substantial discount to citizens on a budget.

Woody currently serves on the boards of the Florence Urban Renewal Agency and for Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, both of which are entities that benefit the community. He is active as a community volunteer, particularly with Florence Food Share.

Having previously served on the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Board as both president and vice president, Woody has been active in business retention as well as helping businesses build foundations for success. He also serves on the board of the Good Deed Project Foundation, a community movement working to promote random acts of kindness.

Are you seeing the pattern? It's not just talk for Woody, he is the real deal: an honest person who at his core is unselfish and treats others with respect.

I encourage everyone to visit his site



www.electwoodywoodbury.org and learn about his intentions on how best to serve Lane County as a Justice for the Peace.

Please join me in voting to elect Woody Woodbury as Justice to the Peace for Lane County on May 17.

Joshua Greene
Florence

Healthy schools

Mapleton School District voters have an opportunity to support our students and schools with a bond to make major repairs and updates to the Mapleton High and Elementary schools. The future of our community depends on our having healthy schools.

Here are six reasons to vote for the Mapleton bond:

1. Need: Our buildings are more than 65 years old. Planned improvements include new roofing and flooring, drainage control, new septic systems, new siding, classroom updates and improvements in heating and air conditioning, sidewalks, accessibility and energy efficiency.

2. Safety: Sadly, recent national events have reinforced the need for more safety measures. Safety improvements would include secure entry points and additional exit doors in classrooms.

3. Value: The average assessment will be \$15 per month, or 50 cents a day. This figure is based on the bond rate of \$1.59/\$1,000 of assessed value.

4. Bang for your buck: If the \$4 million bond measure passes, the state will match it with

another \$4 million. The entire \$8 million will be under the control of the Mapleton School District. If it fails to pass, the \$4 million will go to another district.

5. No quick fix by closing Mapleton: It's a common misconception that we will save bond money if Mapleton closes and is consolidated with another district. However, in that case Mapleton residents would be subject to any school bonds of that district and would lose local control over their schools.

6. Quality: Last year Mapleton High School's graduation rate was the second best in Lane County. Small class sizes allow for individual student attention and a focus on learning and individual goals. Mapleton offers middle and high school athletics without "pay to play" fees.

Please join me in voting "Yes" for the Mapleton School Bond.

Kaki Burruss
Deadwood

Please vote no

The Siuslaw school bond is a beautiful pipedream. I'd love to vote yes for all the reasons that have been enumerated by proponents, but the reality is I'm in my 70s, living in a 1960s money pit that requires attention on a daily basis and I do not have this scale of resources to devote to this one element of our community.

There, that's it, the story of my life. I'd like to have done a lot of things, but many were not in my financial reach, and this bond isn't either. Since this was proposed, I have been haunted by

the very real possibility that my husband and I will be forced out of our home because we will no longer be able to afford it.

In what I consider a real slap in the face, the proponents have specifically excluded this bond from "compression." That is the state legislation that protects property owners by placing a limiting cap on the amount of education taxes we have to pay. Et tu, Brute?

Many other taxing entities have wish lists that will be coming every May, ad finitum. The county's latest is 20-239, OSU Extensions funding, which is a great program too, and will also receive a no vote from me.

Sorry, the ambulance, the sheriff, the schools and many others have beaten you to the punch.

We may have to take a cue from California if we want to stay in our homes. Proposition 13, anyone?

Mary Jo Leach
Dunes City

Is it worth it?

I have read the concerns regarding the new bond measure request to build a new Siuslaw High School and find that possibly the reasons for needing a new high school don't sit well with most. I understand how educators would like to work in new digs and how students' graduation rates may improve if they were to attain that diploma from a new high school, but is it worth the asking price?

Let's take a look at that for a minute. Is there any proof that building a new school will help protect our students from active shooters? From that some day quake? Or that the educators will work to graduate more than 30 percent of our high school students?

Active shooters do not choose a school based on its age. A quake that hits an area doesn't plan to hit on a school day while students just happen to be in a classroom. And, having paid off many bond measures in the Bend-Lapine school district, I'm pretty sure that the graduation rate did not increase with each of those new "golden seats."

If the bond measure passes, what will come of the old school? Will it be sold? Will it become admin offices? If it's the latter, then I'm pretty sure it will work for the education of our youth rather than the administrators. If it will be sold, then the funds could go to reduce the bond cost to the landowners.

Has anyone looked into changing the school model? The school model could be changed to a K-8 and a 9-12.

Catherine Caudle
Florence

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John Bartlett
Jenna Bartlett
Ryan Cronk
Susan Gutierrez
Cathy Dietz
Ron Annis
Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 327
General Manager, ext. 318
Editor, ext. 313
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Office Supervisor, ext. 312
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Press Manager

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The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County. Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed.

All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity.

Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received. Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published. All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

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