

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

LETTERS

Invest in our region's future

Along with other members of our region, I have spent the last 18 months working to craft a vision for the Siuslaw Region. In nearly every community meeting, focus group and gathering we heard about the importance of education and good schools as a necessary anchor as we move forward together.

Both Siuslaw and Mapleton school districts are asking for community support to pass bonds to improve the school facilities. The much needed and necessary improvements will bring both facilities into the 21st century and create safe, functional schools where students can be challenged and where they feel a sense of pride.

We also heard, from virtually all age groups, about the need for community centers, where indoor play space is available, where groups can hold meetings or functions. Perhaps there is a win-win in this scenario as school facilities could serve more effectively as a gathering place for such activities, after school or during the summer months.

When I talked with youth about a vision for the future, many felt that there was not a place for them here. Yes, some of that is youthful perception, but there is a reality in their opinions. Youth are the future. They want to live where they grew up, to raise their children here, to create the backbone of our communities and be the hope for our future.

Does it cost us, as homeowners and as tenants, money? Yes. But it is money that is being spent here, at home, in our communities. I am willing to invest in the future of our region. This step — creating safe, 21st century schools that raise the standards, improve the technology and offer the foundation for innovative learning — is necessary as we move forward together.

Please join me in voting "Yes" for the future of our region by supporting the school bonds for the Mapleton and Siuslaw schools.

Becky Goehring
 Florence

Understanding the school bond rate

Last week in a letter headlined as "Unanswered Questions" (May 7), a writer objected to the Siuslaw School District's ballot proposition for a new high school. Among other questions he raised was: "If my property's assessed value continues to go up each year, as it has for the last six, what happens to that additional money the school board receives?"

Apparently the writer is under the impression that the estimated tax rate of \$0.29 per \$1,000 of assessed property value is fixed and will apply for the life of the 25-year bond issue. That is incorrect, and the taxes he pays for the life of this bond issue are not destined to go up.

The answer requires an understanding of the authority for a school district to issue a general obligation bond measure of, in this case, \$36.9 million. School districts and other local governments are restricted by the Constitution and state law to not incur indebtedness without voter approval. Given approval, the district may offer on the financial market a general obligation bond in an amount to not exceed that approved by the voters.

General obligation bonds are sold in a principal amount, to be repaid over a specified period, 25 years in this case. Repayment is determined at a rate of principal and interest paid each year, sufficient to retire the bond in the stipulated time period.

The bond debt payment on principal and interest is uniform, 25 years in this case.

The tax rate necessary to raise the principal and interest amount is dependent upon the assessed value of the district. As the district grows with new development, so does the total assessed value, which permits a lower tax levy to be made each year for that particular purpose.

Back to the writer's view that his property will be assessed at a higher rate each year, may or may not be true — as the assessed value is



adjusted by the County Assessor in accordance with other state laws.

The bottom line is that the tax payment he makes in future years for paying off the school bond is likely to go down, rather than go up as he presumed.

Craig McMicken
 Florence

Getting priorities straight

How can these people in charge of the Siuslaw School District say that we are in need of all major things associated with our building when the state of Oregon rated us at being No. 175 on a list prepared by the state for school districts needing help with their buildings?

This town is a retirement community of mostly fixed income people. The school district should be spending their time on finding out why the graduation rate is so poor. Maybe the people in charge should be looking at the teachers and who guides them.

Shame on you people for thinking about buildings instead of all these young people who won't go far in life's job markets without getting a high school diploma.

Ted Gallagher
 Florence

When will Florence wise up?

I am writing in regard to the school bond election on May 17. I have read many letters pro and con. I am voting "No" for the following reasons:

I believe the present high school (Siuslaw High School) could be remodeled at a much lower cost than building a new school. We can't live in a bubble or fear of a school shooter or an earthquake.

I am a 78-year-old widow living on a fixed income in my own home since 1958. I have more expenses than income most of the time.

I moved to Florence on April 1, 1946. I went to second grade in Cushman. The small schools — Cushman, North Fork, Glenada and Ada — were consolidated and the new grade school (now Old School Furniture) opened the first of September 1946.

The then Siuslaw High School (now torn down) opened in the spring of 1954. It was used as a high school for only 16 years. Then it was a middle school; then, the perfectly good building was torn down and burned. It makes me sad, mad and sick to my stomach every time I drive past it and the old football field.

Mapleton, Triangle Lake, Reedsport and

many others are smart enough to "save their old buildings." When are we in Florence going to wise up? Please join me in voting no.

Irene Wittwer
 Florence

Vote yes on levy

The League of Women Voters of Lane County urges voters to approve Measure 20-239 to help support Oregon State University extension programs in Lane County.

For a very small cost to property owners (\$3 per year for a house assessed at \$200,000) the measure will provide funding for programs that teach valuable skills to youth and adults. More kids will be able to participate in 4-H programs in their schools and the \$100 participation fee for 4-H project/community clubs will be reduced.

Technical assistance can be increased to local farmers, nursery growers and woodlot owners. There will be more access to educational courses in gardening, food safety and preservation, nutrition and wellness.

This five-year levy will restore many of the programs that were lost due to budget cuts in 2010. It will enhance and expand the extension programs that Oregon State University now provides locally using federal and state funds. A yes vote for Measure 20-239 will promote self-sufficiency, healthy eating and the local economy.

Linda Lynch
 Eugene

Bashing Britain

When President Obama was in Britain visiting the Royals, did he chat with Prince Harry and thank him and his fellow Brits for their unprecedented support in Helmund province in Afghanistan? Or did he threaten him with "being in the back of the queue for trade agreements" if Britain exits the EU?

Was there any mention of the RAF's Camp Bastion, which operated 600 flights per day in Helmand province, providing support to the United States and other troops when he told Angela Merkel she was the greatest ally of the United States? Some ally!

Germany in the last century tried twice to eliminate civilization in Europe. Brits weren't worrying about trade agreements then, when they fought back. I doubt they will, now.

Barbara Prisbe-Sutton
 Oceanside, Calif., formerly of Florence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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.

Write to: Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com

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