

EDITORIALS

How companies deal with a fear of change

Last year, the world's largest public relations firm, Edelman, added a new question to its annual survey on trust in institutions. People around the globe were asked if they believe change and innovation are happening too quickly. Much to Edelman's surprise, more than half of respondents said "yes." People's ability to cope with ever-more-complex gadgets, data, machines and documents may be reaching a neo-Luddite threshold of resistance.

"Innovation should be a trust accelerator, but today it is not," said company chief executive officer Richard Edelman, based on the survey. "To invent is no longer enough. There must be a new compact between company and individual."

That compact requires greater empathy, clarity and simplicity from all institutions to keep up with the rapid pace of change in products and services. One sign of this shift: The technology industry, once a beacon of trust compared with other industries or with government, saw a decline in trust in most countries for the first time last year.

"Changes in technology are happening at a scale which was unimaginable before and will cause disruption in industry after industry," writes Vivek Wadhwa, a blogger on innovation for *The Washington Post* and a Stanford University researcher.

A group set up to promote new technologies, the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, is worried about this trend: "While many people believe they support progress, when it comes right down to it, many individuals are ambiguous, if not downright negative, about their views toward progress." To measure people's friendliness toward innovation, it offers a test at www.doyoulikeprogress.org.

Another global survey, done for the American consulting firm siegel+gale, shows what consumers now demand from technological advances: 70 percent of people are more likely to recommend a product or service if it provides a simple experience and communication. More than a third are willing to pay extra for that experience.

The firm ranks companies on a "simplicity index," based on consumer feedback. The top global brands in simplicity include Aldi, Google, Lidl, McDonald's, Netflix, IKEA and Amazon. Such firms try to remove the fear and uncertainty in their services and products, making sure their wares are transparent and organized, saving time and empowering consumers.

"(Let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand," wrote Henry David Thoreau in his book "Walden," which extolled the merits of simplicity. Institutions, too, are being forced to learn what many individuals have long sought in an era of constant change. And eternal values, such as caring for others — including customers — haven't changed. There's no app for those.

—*Christian Science Monitor*

PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* via fax (503-623-2395) or email (kholland@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 28

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

MONDAY, FEB. 2

• **Central School District Board of Directors** — 6:30 p.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence. 503-838-0030.

• **Dallas City Council** — 7 p.m., City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

• **Independence Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

TUESDAY, FEB. 3

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

• **Dallas Urban Renewal District Advisory Committee** — 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

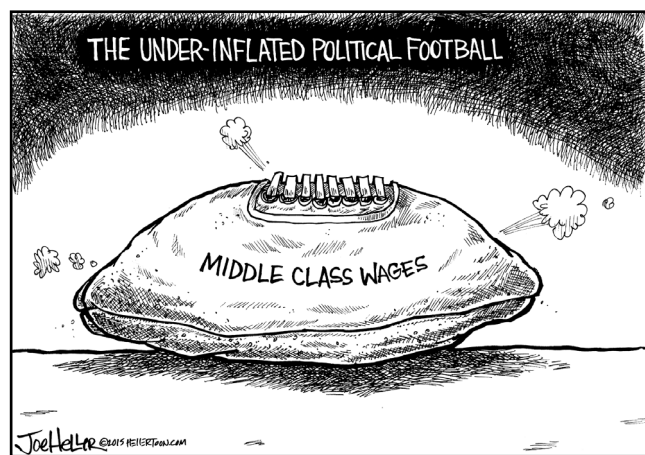
• **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

• **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.

• **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety levy would create hardships

Polk County ranked sixth highest in Oregon out of 36 counties for effective tax rates in fiscal year 2013-2014, according to the Oregon Department of Revenue. According to the Oregon Employment Department, Polk County is in the lowest of four categories for per capita personal income.

Now, the proposed Polk County public safety levy could add 45 cents (per \$1,000) to the effective tax rate, moving Polk County up to the second highest in the state. The 45 cents per \$1,000 is a whopping 35 percent increase.

Our current total tax rate when you include the county road bond is \$2.26 per \$1,000 of assessed value, not the \$1.72 quoted at public hearings (quoted as the permanent tax rate). And if this levy were to pass, the next time they want a levy, the same \$1.72 figure can be quoted by this logic as it is being presented as a five-year levy (temporary, not permanent).

The tax burden is especially onerous to low income homeowners as it takes a greater percentage of their income. The economic stress on families may indeed contribute to the need for more government social and public safety services to solve problems caused by government in the first place.

Public safety takes a whopping 63.72 percent of the general fund, according to the 2014-2015 published Polk County budget. While we appreciate the fine work of the district attorney, juvenile department and sheriff's office, we need to keep in mind that while their

• Looking for a Letter to the Editor from a previous issue? You can find a large number of subjects by searching the *Itemizer-ObsERVER's* online archives at www.polkio.com. Archives go back to 2000.

salaries and retirement benefits are growing, it is growing on the backs of the taxpayer, many of whom are still suffering from the effects of the recession.

If they need more money, perhaps they can find a less critical place in the pie to get it.

Rose Bajorins
Falls City

Humans greatest threat to planet

The "teapublicon" party and perhaps too many Democrats seem oblivious to the facts that viable life on our possibly unique and wonderful planet will cease to exist in the foreseeable future due to the multiple abuses by our species.

During the last 500 million years, Earth has had five major extinctions, and now we are quickly advancing into the worst and perhaps final one.

The many causes include mainly the unstoppable world population explosion, the reality of global warming and our exposure to uncountable new and older chemicals, most of which have not been proven safe for humans and other species.

Now, genetically engineered food crops utilizing systemic insecticides threaten our pollinating and most-needed bee populations and is also killing birds, butter-

flies, fish, etc. Two of the neonicotinoid insecticides now used are banned in the European Union.

Fortunately, many world seed banks exist, so that when and if GMOs destroy our food supplies they can be restored naturally.

Walden Joura
Dallas

Area senior center extends invitation

I would like to send out a special invitation to all Dallas residents 60 years and older to join the Dallas Area Senior Center.

The fee is only \$15 per year. We have wellness classes to improve your health. We have games, play cards and dancing. We have craft day, which is lots of fun. We have movie day once a month with free popcorn, and homemade soup and bread after the movie for only \$2. We go to Spirit Mountain Casino once a month. We go on the bus once a month to a fun place and have lunch.

We have received a grant to build a new senior center, and will be starting to build it soon. Join the senior center and be the first to be in the new building to enjoy all the fun we will be having.

We have a monthly newsletter that we mail out to all members so you can be part of all the fun we have.

Stop by the Dallas Senior Center at 955 SE Jefferson St. (we are next to the library) and have a friendly cup of coffee with the volunteers here at the center or call 503-623-8554. We would love to hear from you.

Judy Reid, president
Dallas Senior Center

WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Election-related letters of all types are limited to 100 words. Writers are limited to one election-related letter per election season. Election letters from writers outside of Polk County are not accepted.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period. Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the *I-O's* website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals, not organizations, and must be original submissions to the *I-O*, not copies of letters sent to other media.

Letters of thanks to businesses, individuals and organizations are limited to 10 names. The deadline for letters to the editor is Monday at 10 a.m. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

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