

EDITORIALS

County vet services are long overdue

The Polk County Budget Committee has approved \$40,000 to hire a veterans service officer to exclusively focus on helping local veterans.

The county has not had its own VSO, while the number of veterans has continued to grow. That will change in January, should the budget be approved.

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs is backlogged, with vets waiting to hear back about claims, appeals, or even to see a doctor. The VSOs are often slow to respond to a veteran's request, sometimes taking weeks to reply to an email.

We hope by having a local representative, it will help ease some of those issues, bringing much-needed relief to those who have given their lives to protect and serve our country and way of life.

A local representative means easier access for veterans. If he or she doesn't respond, the vet can go to the office and meet him or her face to face.

We are glad to hear the idea is supported by the board of commissioners and the ODVA leaders.

Polk County Administrator Greg Hansen said the program won't start until Jan. 1, 2017, in part because he isn't sure where the office will be located or who will staff it at this point.

We can think of a few places to get started, such as the Central Community Resource Center, where people already go to get help with the Department of Human Services, the Salvation Army, and other public services.

We hope Polk County veterans will make good use of a local VSO, and know that part of that will depend on who is hired for the job. He or she should have a positive attitude and be determined to help the veteran rather than push him or her aside and back in the never-ending VA line.

The VA and ODVA aren't perfect and need many more improvements than we can list here, but Polk County is taking a step toward helping local vets.

That, we applaud.

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 (ionews@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

Independence Heritage Museum Commission — 4 p.m., Independence Heritage Museum, 112 S. Third St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

Monmouth Library Advisory Board — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

Monmouth Parks and Recreation Board — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

Polk County Board of Commissioners — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

Polk Soil and Water Conservation District board — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Dallas, Suite A 503-623-9680, ext. 5.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14

Polk County Fire District No. 1 Board — 6 p.m., Central Station 90, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1510.

Western Days Commission — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

Falls City City Council — 6 p.m., Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3631.

MONDAY, APRIL 18

Independence Tourism and Events Commission — 6:30 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

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

TUESDAY, APRIL 19

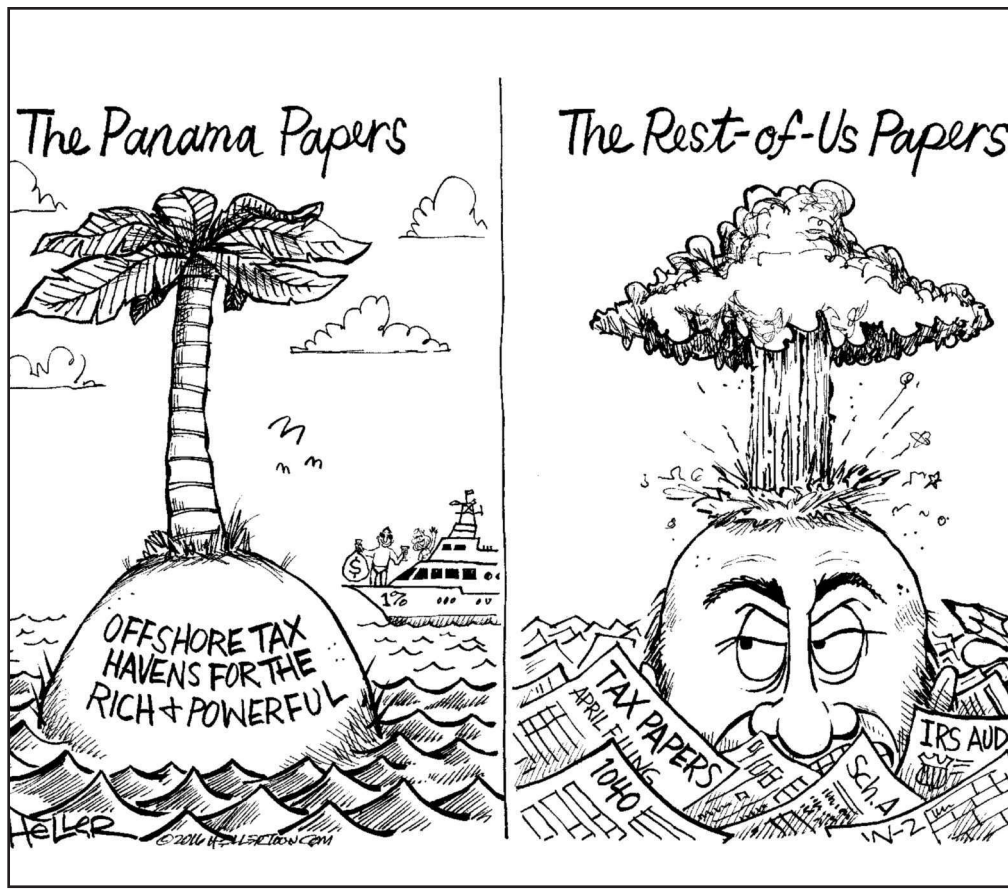
Independence Historic Preservation Commission — 4 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

Monmouth City Council — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

Dallas Parks Advisory Board — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

Falls City School Board — 6:30 p.m., Falls City High School, 111 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3521.

Polk County Board of Commission work session — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

When will cities get rid of Minet?

Regarding Emily Mentzer's article on Minet debt, she just restated what all of us in Monmouth have known for years, Minet (Monmouth-Independence Networks) will never be able to repay debt, and, regardless of how much they seem to pay on the principle, interest is still accumulating, and the total debt increases yearly.

(Mark) Dunmire seemed to be a fan of creative accounting until I read further and note his statement "whatever Minet doesn't pay, we will transfer from Power and Light."

\$13,749,646. That is in American dollars, a debt just labeled "non-collectible" by the Monmouth City Council but payable by the residents of Monmouth through the Monmouth Power and Light utility department.

So sad. When are we going to rid ourselves of this millstone around our collective necks?

*Harold E. Pippin
Monmouth*

RFL survivor night a wonderful event

We would like to thank the Relay for Life committee and all their sponsors for the wonderful Survivors Dinner they hosted at Eola Hills Winery last Saturday night.

It was such a relaxing evening with delicious food (catered by Washington

Street) and wonderful entertainment.

The company was great, too.

We appreciate all the hard work that it took to plan for this dinner, which resulted in a lovely affair, full of gracious encouragement.

Thanks, again.

*Hollis and Elaine Ferguson
Dallas*

I-O special sections help area visitors

Spring and summer are always good months for us to share our communities with friends and family from out of town or out of state.

Everyone enjoys the local sights and events very much.

We especially appreciate the bonus publications that are included in the *Itemizer-ObsERVER*: the Business Directory, Explore Polk County, and the latest Medical Directory.

Thank you for providing us — and our visitors — such good information that is welcomed and used over and over again.

*Patty Taylor Dutcher
Monmouth*

Street repair will get more expensive

Time is of the essence to support the Dallas street bond.

"Band-Aid" or "stopgap" repairs are no longer street repair options.

Based on criteria developed by an outside third party, The National Engi-

neers Organization, the city streets have a grade D on our infrastructure report card.

Due to increased energy-related material and equipment costs, waiting any further is asking citizens to pay more later.

We must reduce further deterioration of our streets and the increased taxpayer expense down the road. We cannot continue to delay critical street repairs.

Please join with me and vote yes on the street bond.

*Rich Wolcott
Dallas*

Wheeler friend of workers, business

I'd like to publically acknowledge and support Polk County Commissioner Jennifer Wheeler in this year's Polk County election.

I worked with Commissioner Wheeler for several years as an elected representative for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Commissioner Wheeler works hard to partner with local governments, as well as local businesses, to assure that Polk County is thriving and a great place to raise families.

Please vote for Jennifer Wheeler, as she is the best choice for the upcoming Polk County Commissioners election.

*Toby McClary
Former Tribal Council member
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
West Salem*

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 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

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