

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Pass the 5J measure

Voters in the Baker School District spoke clearly, and with considerable volume, when the district asked them in November 2018 to approve a \$48 million property tax hike to build a new elementary school and make other improvements.

“No” was the answer.

More than twice as many voters — 4,725 — rejected the measure as supported it — 2,185.

The 2018 proposal, though warranted based on the distribution of students and the age of schools, was just too much.

Too expensive, specifically. The measure would have boosted property taxes in the district for 30 years, at a rate of \$1.97 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The measure on the May 18 ballot, which went in the mail on Wednesday, April 28, has in common with the 2018 version that it addresses important needs that have long been neglected due to lack of money.

But this current proposal is also a very different one, and its biggest differences directly reflect that resounding statement by voters two and a half years ago.

This new measure — 1-108 — deserves voters’ support.

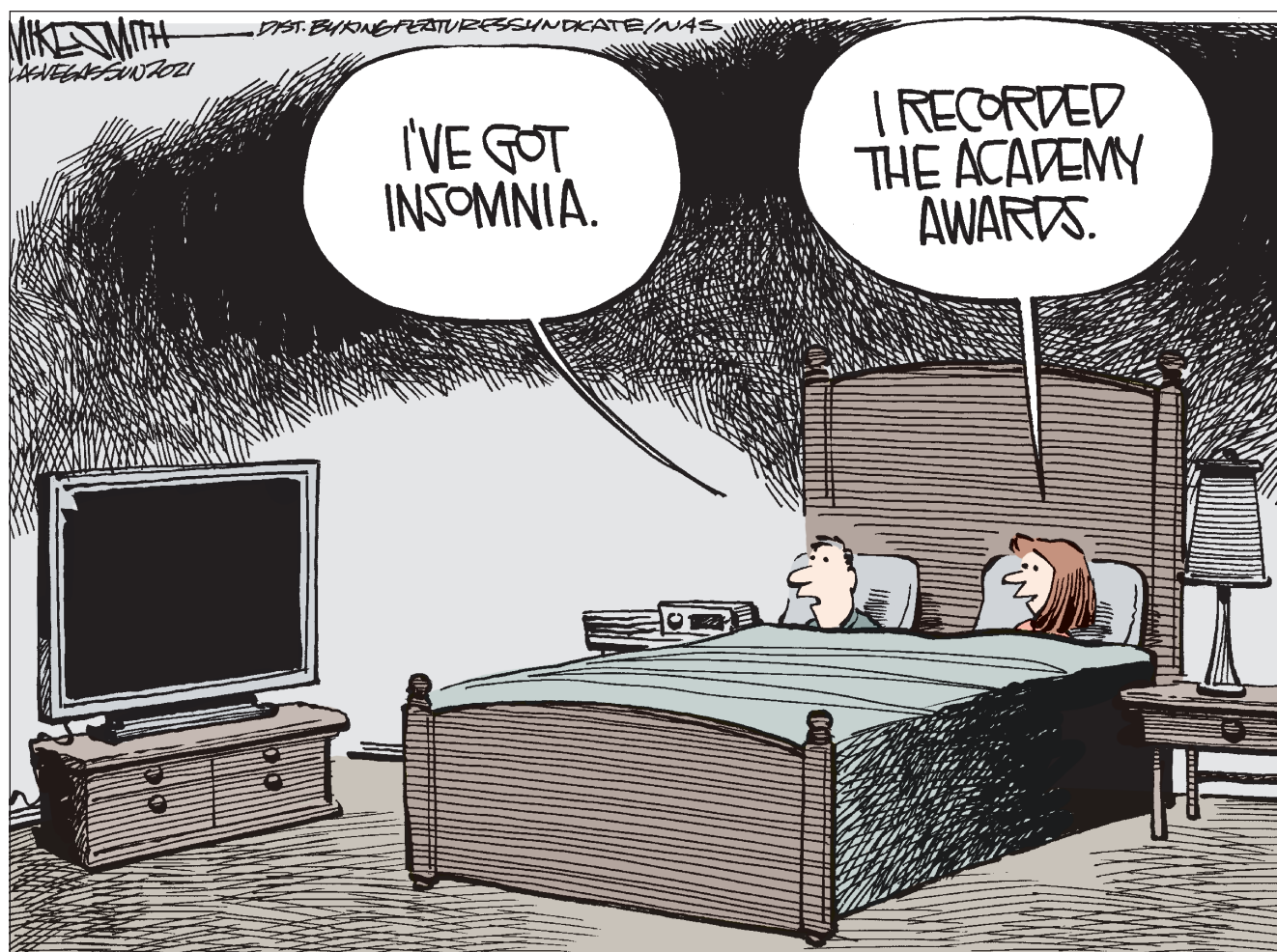
At \$4 million, it is a much more modest request. Property owners would repay the bond in one-sixth of the time — five years rather than 30. The rate is also comparatively small, raising property tax rates during those five years by about 66 cents per \$1,000.

That money would leverage twice as many dollars — \$4 million from a state grant, and \$4 million from the district’s capital projects — for a total of \$12 million.

There’s nothing fancy about this proposal. Many of those dollars would pay to ensure that the buildings which previous generations of local residents paid to build will continue to serve our students for decades to come. South Baker Intermediate would get a new roof. All buildings would have new, more efficient heating, cooling and ventilation equipment installed, as well as improved security systems. The district would build a cafeteria and kitchen at Baker Middle School, the only school that lacks such facilities.

These buildings have proved to be among the finest investments Baker citizens have ever made, the places where so many thousands have received the immeasurable gift of an education. But 73 years have gone by since we passed a bond measure. It is time to do so again.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



Your views

Disappointed that more people aren't vaccinated

I am amazed as I visit with people and read about the turnout for COVID-19 vaccinations. I understand some amount of hesitancy but with all of the information available about the vaccines, I do not understand why more people are not getting them. I believe they don't understand how safe the vaccines are. Until enough people are vaccinated, the virus will be here with us. I surely don't like that idea.

Linda Miller
Baker City

Grateful for City Council's support of school measure

I want to thank the Baker City Council for their support of the Baker 5J School District's bond measure. This bond measure does a great job of addressing some urgent maintenance and security issues at our schools as well as finally getting a cafeteria at the middle school. It leverages matching funds from outside the district to get the most bang for each property tax dollar. This has been a long process with many hiccups along the way, but I am glad that Superintendent Witty, our School Board, and volunteers have

continued their work to identify needs and balance that with what we can afford. Our children and students are such an important resource and must have our support as a community to achieve their best results. I hope that you join me and the Baker City Council in voting yes on Baker School Bond Measure 1-108.

Loran Joseph
Baker City

The great disorder over the Idaho-Oregon border

Upon crossing into Idaho on I-84 there used to be a sign reading Idaho is too great to litter. I used to joke the sign should read: Idaho is too illiterate to be great. The joke hit home, however, when a Greater Idaho leaflet landed in my mail, claiming that I'd be better off if I was an Idahoan; it would be effortless, I wouldn't even have to move, they would simply elasticize Idaho's boundary and stretch it around Oregon's more desirable acreage and call it good. That done, I'd supposedly be happy with the lacking infrastructure; why, for example, waste good tax money filling in those unattended potholes that a kid could fall into and never be seen again? What's an unli-

censed 4-wheeler for anyway?

No, I live in Eastern Oregon and hopefully will continue to do so. Besides, I wouldn't be caught dead driving around with license plates that champion Famous Potatoes. It's true Eastern Oregon is often overlooked by Salem or that we have to apologize for Portland's behavior — but that's no reason to surround us by Idaho. Besides, Idaho is moving here and already is taking over.

Fortunately, there are alternatives. If I want the Idaho experience I can always move to Douglas or Josephine counties and watch old episodes of Duck Dynasty. Or, seriously, why not physically move Idaho farther away. Ship it to the Middle East; plunk it down right between the two other "I" countries, Iran and Iraq. There, it wouldn't be such a tempting distraction and, it would at least give a mask-less Ammon Bundy something to really whine about. Meanwhile, I'm happy living here with Eastern Oregon's present borders, values and laws. And should I begin speaking disparaging words about my home on this range, I'll create a new movement. I'll call it Greater Hawaii. That'll fix everything.

Whit Deschner
Baker City

Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the

accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.

- Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be

published.

- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

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Vaccine-hesitant? Let's talk about Krispy Kreme

I ought to have known that the solution to the COVID-19 vaccination challenge would involve doughnuts.

Frankly I'm embarrassed that I didn't think of it myself.

If there exists a problem that can't be fixed, or at least put in its proper perspective, by the consumption of deep-fried dough coated with sugar, I have not had the misfortune of being afflicted with it.

I'm referring here not to an ordinary doughnut.

This is the Krispy Kreme original glazed doughnut, the existence of which proves that God wants us to be happy, and that the deity's beneficence extends to the pastry business.

Krispy Kreme announced recently that if you visit one of the company's stores any time during 2021, and present a card showing you've been vaccinated against COVID-19, you will be rewarded with a free glazed doughnut.

And this is not a one-time deal.

You can obtain one free doughnut each day for the rest of the year so long as you don't lose that precious vaccination card.



JAYSON JACOBY

I can only hope that the pharmaceutical companies are prepared to boost vaccine production posthaste.

I also presume that Krispy Kreme has instituted the most sophisticated system available to detect fraudulent vaccination cards.

I appreciate the company's generosity in service of such a worthwhile cause as inoculating people against the virus that has fouled up so much that is great about America.

But I don't want Krispy Kreme to get into a financial pickle because it underestimated the nation's collective appetite for the company's signature concoction.

(I presume if any outfit would be, well, immune to this miscalculation, it would be Krispy Kreme, which makes about 2 billion doughnuts per year. But still I worry.)

It happens that a couple weeks before Krispy Kreme announced its vaccination incentive, I watched

an episode of the History Channel's excellent "Modern Marvels" documentary series exploring the technology of fast food. Krispy Kreme was one of the purveyors profiled.

It was a fascinating watch.

(Also a vaguely unsatisfying one — the show had the predictable effect on my appetite, but alas the nearest Krispy Kreme outlet is in Meridian, Idaho, rather too far to make a quick jaunt for a hot dozen before bedtime.)

I learned, among much else, that the recipe for Krispy Kreme's dough is classified and that it's stored in a vault (although I suspect the vault was just a prop for TV).

This puts the recipe in the same category as the formulas behind other beloved products such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dr Pepper and Coca-Cola. I suppose I understand the secrecy. But it strikes me as implausible to believe that even if some real-life Slugworth stole the equivalent of Wonka's process for everlasting gobstoppers, it would give the thief a guaranteed windfall in the market.

Even if I knew how to repli-

cate, say, Coke, I'd have to brand the soda something else. And the power of the brand name that Coke has amassed over more than a century is no trifling thing. Perhaps a competitor — WalMart, for instance — by virtue of its ability to sell the same product at a discount could turn its cypoccat cola into a fortune (well, a bigger fortune). But I'm skeptical.

I was surprised that Krispy Kreme protects its recipe so obsessively.

The flavors that comprise a soda, or the mixture of spices applied to fried chicken, seem to me formulas more difficult to mimic than a doughnut, which has just a few simple and bland ingredients, none of them likely to impart a unique flavor to the finished product.

But it's not so much the recipe that distinguishes Krispy Kreme. It's the process.

I learned from the documentary that the real breakthrough happened in 1962. That's when the company, which had for the previous decade or so used an automatic cutter to shape doughnuts (before then they were made by hand), switched to an "extruder" — a ma-

chine that uses compressed air to, in effect, shoot a continuous stream of doughnuts onto trays.

(How this miraculous milestone has escaped the notice of whoever decides on the creation of national holidays, I can't begin to explain.)

The extruder made possible the famous scenes you've probably seen, if not in person then on TV, of battalions of doughnuts bubbling in the hot fat before sliding under the waterfall curtain of glaze.

I have occasionally had a day-dream in which I wonder what it would be like to be there, among the glistening doughnuts, lying on my back with my mouth open, drooling in anticipation.

I also imagine sneaking into the section of the Oreo plant where the cream filling is made, a large spoon in hand.

I worry slightly about this, whether it might be a precursor to a cranial tumor or something similarly unpleasant.

But so far I haven't had any other symptoms.

My teeth are another matter.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.