

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Timber pact has potential

It was going to be the battle of the forest ballot initiatives.

Oregon Wild, the conservation group, had three. They would expand protected areas around streams, crack down on the spraying of herbicides, and ban logging on especially steep ground.

The Oregon Forest & Industries Council counter-punched with its own. Landowners would have to be compensated when the state made land use changes and the forest industry would get more control over the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Who would have won at the ballot box? Maybe nobody, really. But instead what has happened — at least temporarily — is that those ballot measures are on hold. Conservation and industry groups met together to come to an agreement. Gov. Kate Brown deserves credit for helping to create a deal.

The deal has new rules for timber management, including harvests on some 10 million acres of private forest land in the state. Conservation groups get new environmental protections. Industry groups get more certainty about the law, going forward. They reached the deal on Oct. 30, as *The Oregonian* detailed. There's more protections for streams and wildlife, and for forestland owners, they get to at least be able to do minimum harvests.

It still could all fall apart. Legislative action is needed in the short session. Brown will try to make that happen. And there are also federal approvals involved. But with all the talk of impenetrable partisan divisions and that the chasm between environmental and industry goals can't be bridged, this deal could prove that wrong.

We hope so.

*Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the Baker City Herald. Columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Baker City Herald.*



## OTHER VIEWS

# COVID vaccine for kids an important step

### Editorial from The Dallas Morning News:

Children have been mostly spared from the pandemic's ravages, but they're not immune. Pediatric intensive care units filled up this summer with delta variant cases, and across the country, nearly 800 children have died from COVID-19. That's a minuscule percentage of the total underage population, but every death is a tragedy for a family.

This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved a smaller dose of the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11, essentially covering the remainder of the school-age population that was still waiting on access to the shots. We expect that millions of families and teachers are sighing with relief after almost two tumultuous years of remote learning, special campus protocols and, in some cases, social exile.

The CDC approval means that the series of two shots, at lower doses, will be rolling out in the next few days. The question now is whether enough

parents will get their kids vaccinated and move their communities closer to herd immunity.

We urge them to do so. While we understand parents' instinct to be extra cautious when making decisions about their children's health care, the science overwhelmingly shows that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective at protecting kids. And as advertising around town from Children's Medical Center reminds us, the vaccine technology is older than the kids who will receive it.

The clinical trial showed that the Pfizer vaccine was 91% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 among more than 2,000 children ages 5-11. Vaccine experts say the benefits of getting the shots outweigh the risks for kids in this age group.

Moreover, millions of children ages 12-17 have been safely vaccinated against COVID-19 since May.

Families also have to contend with the risk that a child with COVID-19 might spread the illness to a vulnerable

relative, even if the child is asymptomatic or ailing from a mild version of the disease.

Unfortunately, there is still a lot of vaccine skepticism among families. A recent Gallup poll showed that only 55% of parents in the U.S. with kids under age 12 say they would get their children vaccinated if the shots became available.

Pediatricians will do a lot of the heavy lifting in informing and convincing parents, but our public health authorities should once again turn to other trusted community voices to amplify the importance of vaccinating children.

As in previous campaigns, civic leaders will have to think creatively. For example, Dallas ISD Superintendent Michael Hinojosa told us that a \$50 incentive to families whose children got the shots proved successful in driving parents to school vaccine clinics.

The more kids who get vaccinated, the closer we are to normalcy and the closer we are to leaving those bitter battles about mask mandates behind. What a comfort that would be.

## Your views

### Yes on the quiet zone

I want to go on record as supporting the quiet zone for Baker City. My husband and I have pledged to help cover the costs of the safety enhancement project that will allow the train horns to be largely silenced. Others have done so and I'm sure that more will as the project progresses.

I was born in 1950 and lived the first 12 years of my life at 3005 10th

St., which at the time was part of the national highway system. It was only two lanes and was changed to four sometime during my early years at North Baker School. Imagine how little cross-country traffic there must have been for that size of street to accommodate it all. Now imagine all the traffic on I-84 passing through town today!

I suspect that the increase in train traffic mirrors that of the

highway system. Our national population has increased a great deal and many more consumer goods are being transported across the country. Much of that cargo is being carried by trains, trains whose horn blasts are much louder than they were even 20 years ago.

South Baker School was built in the early 1950s to replace the original school that had been built adjacent to it in 1901. With fewer

trains, and horns that blew at a lower decibel level, it probably felt like a more suitable location than it does today. Why deny current and future students a quieter and safer learning environment, and the community a good night's rest, now that we know more about the impact on health of high decibel train horn blasts?

I urge City Council to revisit the quiet zone and give it its full sup-

port. We live in a world full of noise that we can't control. We can control the noise of the train horns. Let's embrace this opportunity to contribute to the health and safety of our beloved community! I am thankful to the "newcomers" and the "old-timers" alike who have taken on this project and dedicated untold hours to explaining and promoting it.

Carolyn Kulog  
Baker City

# Balmy autumn night, and missing the light show

I stepped onto my back porch on a recent evening, long after the dark had come, and I winced slightly as you do when you expect to encounter a draft of chilly air that slinks down your neck.

But the light breeze on my cheeks was as soft as a mother's caress.

It was the third day of October. October is a milestone month by my reckoning.

Once September has gone, I no longer trust Baker County's climate, at least not after the Elkhorns have done away with the sun for the day. If I'm going outdoors in the gloaming I don a jacket, even if I doubt I'll need the garment to ward off hypothermia.

The air in our mountain valley, once deprived of sunlight, tends to shed degrees with a speed shocking to those accustomed to more moderate climes.

But this year, as sometimes happens, a vestige of summer persisted for the first few days of October.

Later that evening the weather station next to my bed showed 68 degrees at 8 p.m. On many a July evening it's not that warm so far into the day.

I don't much mind such unseasonable intervals, to be sure.

Winters hereabouts are sufficiently cruel, and long, that I don't feel bereft because of a balmy night in fall, when it might well be frosty instead.

Still and all it was a slightly queer sensation to stand there on the stoop, with a pumpkin perched on the top step, and willow leaves thick on the lawn, and the stars already sharply defined against the black backdrop not long past 7 o'clock.

The body adjusts to the seasons, and though the transition is not so precise as on the calendar or the thermostat, it is no less tangible.

Well before Halloween, I come to instinctively associate darkness with at least a palpable chill, and quite possibly with outright frigidty.

I brace for the shock every time I step outside, and when it goes missing I notice its absence, though I don't mourn it.

Soon enough, I know, the crispness of a fall day will seem nostalgic as I struggle to scrape the layer of hoarfrost the car windows have accumulated after another arctic night.

A 40-degree evening that in October provokes a minor chill, tinged with pleasant pine smoke that wafts from nearby chimneys rather than from distant wildfires, will, in the depths of January, seem positively springlike.

On the night before Halloween we drove out to the dark lands east of town, hoping to see the northern lights.

We did not. At least we did not see the shifting swathes of green and red, dancing across the sky, that define the popular image of the phenomenon.



JAYSON JACOBY

Living as far as I do from the arctic circle I have no reason, of course, to expect that sort of light show.

Only rarely does the sun get feisty enough to paint the night sky here, halfway between the equator and the north pole, with even a pale version of the spectacular scenes common in Alaska or Canada.

But the mere possibility is enough to compel me to stand in the dark, blinking away the tears provoked by the bracing breeze of late October and trying to discern any hint of brightness on the northern horizon.

We met my daughter, Rheann Weitz, and her husband, Jesse, where the Keating Road branches off Highway 86. It's plenty dark out

there, and with a sprawling view to the north.

I stood beside their pickup truck and tried to entertain my grandsons, Brysen, 4, and Caden, 2. Caden was belted into his car seat and not terribly interested in the proceedings. Brysen was not so confined. And although he didn't seem to care much about the northern lights, he was awfully insistent about being able to get out of the pickup.

My wife, Lisa, and I thought we detected a slight greenish glow in a narrow band on the horizon.

Probably this was the product of wishful thinking rather than of a coronal mass ejection.

But it was nice enough to stand there, listening to the ever-interesting chatter of a 4-year-old, until the wind, which is far more reliable than celestial spectacles, overcame our optimism and drove us into the shelter of the car.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.