

## EDITORIAL

## Let Postal Service ship booze, wine

FEDEX can do it. UPS can do it. Why not the U.S. Postal Service?

We are talking about shipping booze and wine directly to customers.

The answer to the why not question is: There is a federal prohibition in place banning the Postal Service from being able to do it.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley, a Democrat, introduced legislation to change that. The ban would be over. If a cidery, a brewery or a winery had a license it could ship directly to someone of legal drinking age through the mail.

One important caveat: No pre-teen would be able to check the mailbox and start sipping on the latest from the wine of the month club selection before mom and dad got home. Merkley wanted appropriate protections in place. The bill says the recipient of the delivery “shall be an individual at least 21 years of age, and shall present a valid, Government-issued photo identification at the time of delivery.”

Dr. Reginald Richardson, executive director of the Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, sent a letter this month to Merkley urging him to drop his sponsorship of the bill, as reported by Willamette Week. Richardson wants Merkley to think about the downside of improving people’s access to alcohol. Alcoholism can ruin lives and families. Excessive drinking can lead to a host of problems.

The increased revenue from the ban might mean \$180 million a year in additional revenue for the Postal Service. Richardson says alcohol harm causes Oregon \$4.8 billion a year.

The ban for the Postal Service stretches back to the Prohibition era. If it’s now fair to ship through FEDEX and UPS, it’s fair for the Postal Service.

*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.*

### CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**President Joe Biden:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1111; to send comments, go to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley:** D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Baker City office, 1705 Main St., Suite 504, 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden:** D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

**U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz (2nd District):** D.C. office: 1239 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 N. Central Avenue Suite 112, Medford, OR 97500; Phone: 541-776-4646; fax: 541-779-0204; Ontario office: 2430 S.W. Fourth Ave., No. 2, Ontario, OR 97914; Phone: 541-709-2040. bentz.house.gov.

**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown:** 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; [www.governor.oregon.gov](http://www.governor.oregon.gov).

**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read:** [oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us](mailto:oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us); 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

**Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum:** Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us).

**State Sen. Lynn Findley (R-Ontario):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-403, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. Email: Sen. LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

**State Rep. Mark Owens (R-Crane):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep. MarkOwens@oregonlegislature.gov

**Baker City Hall:** 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Councilors Jason Spriet, Kerry McQuisten, Shane Alderson, Joanna Dixon, Kenyon Damschen, Johnny Waggoner Sr. and Dean Guyer.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Jonathan Cannon, city manager; Ty Duby, police chief; Sean Lee, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

**Baker County Commission:** Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

**Baker County departments:** 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Noodle Perkins, roadmaster; Greg Baxter, district attorney; Alice Durlflinger, county treasurer; Stefanie Kirby, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Silencing train horns would harm safety, Baker heritage

I am a native of Baker City who strongly opposes the city’s efforts to silence the warning horns of the Union Pacific trains.

Baker City embraces its history and the U.P. is part of that. A handful of newcomers are trying to silence these horns from warning the public that a train is approaching, and they have allies on the city council. Please join me in stopping this movement from muzzling a necessary safety policy and piece of Baker City’s rich heritage.

Harvey Haskell  
Baker City

### Thanks, Nancy Staten; and why city should save ambulance service

Congratulations to Nancy Staten on her well deserved retirement from the Baker County Health Dept. You served your community and its citizens very professionally, during a long term complicated by the very difficult period of COVID with all the many difficult discussions, decisions, and everlasting effects. Thank you Nancy!

Secondly, I would like to ask the community members, and especially the city council if they truly remember a loyal Baker City benefactor, of many longstanding years who would be “raising holy Ned” if he were to be reading the current ambulance/fire dept situation today! Who remembers Leo Adler and his love of the fire department years ago, that he alone supported and sponsored an annual dinner for the entire fire department on his own expense as a thank you.

Reading the current controversy in regard to losing the ambulance service, and 50% of the fire department staffing, I truly have asked myself: What would Leo Adler have to say today?

This current situation is not a good thing in any manner. In the same issue (5-7-2022) of the Baker City Herald there was an article addressing the promotion of 21 new Silver Birch home lots in the planning mode for building brand new homes in our community!

Council members, think about what your responsibilities to your position is: fiscal responsibility, public safety and protection, commitment to service for the citizens who truly trusted you at your word to serve the community at large! Question: 50% fire department staff reduction and loss of ambulance services, verses a purposed golf course sprinkler system at the cost of \$250,000 — what is most urgent to your family situation? Get real!

Cheryl Gushman  
Baker City

### Oregon needs a centrist as its next governor

A word about the governors race from someone who’s never belonged to a political party and never will.

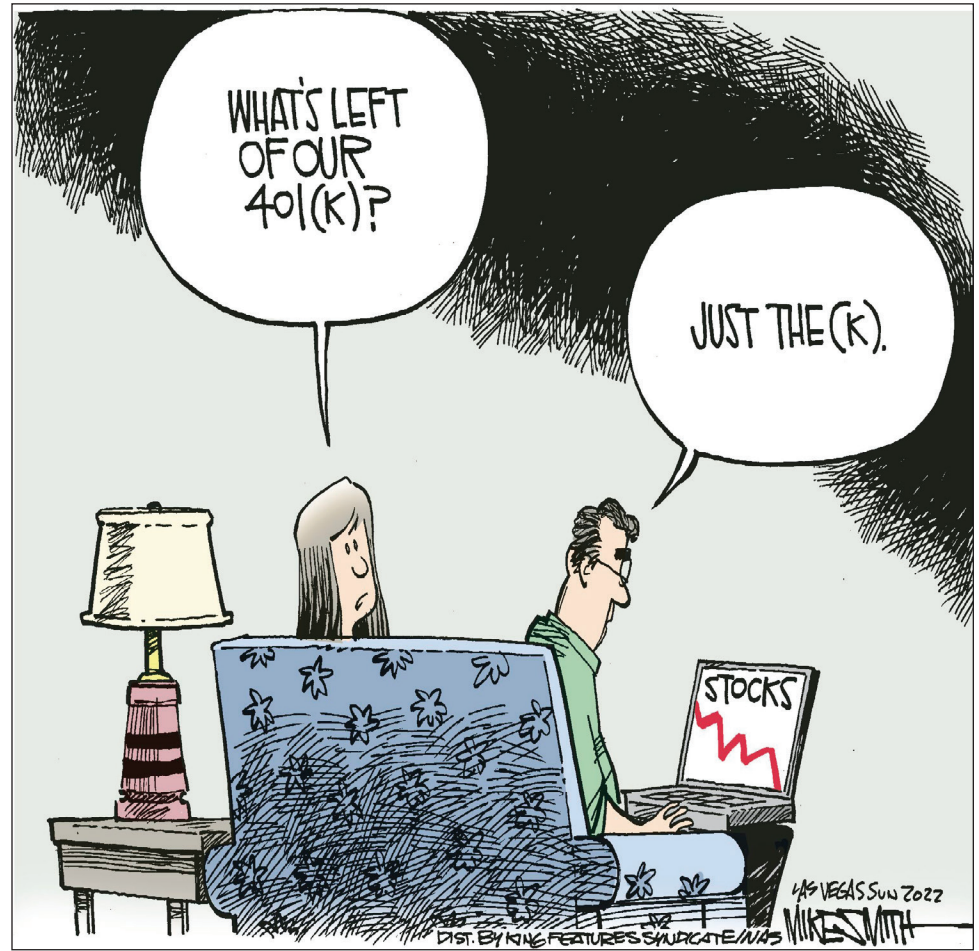
The thing I hate about politics the most? It’s always for party A or party B, or “other.” It’s never about the state as a whole or the people as a whole. It’s about this side or that side.

Why can’t we all meet in the middle for a change? Why do you have to drag your political parties around like some Linus blanket? Make an individual decision. But educate yourself first. Educate yourself outside the influence of your chosen party. Try to see both sides. Leave your emotions at the door as you do this. Because party A and party B are designed to stir your emotions so you can’t think straight. Or independently. ...

Democracy is a wonderful system. But it has some notable exploits.

The first is you’re supposed to be a well-informed citizen before you vote. The problem here is many of you are programmed rather than informed. And then you vote. This is by design of course. Which brings up the second exploit. When you control the flow of information that people are using to make their voting decisions with, you can get any result you want. Hence the scramble for mass media.

The current political climate in this country is nationalistic and toxic. The US has quite a few enemies around the world. Many



of them earned from what we did to them in years past. They watch us with glee as we are divided as a nation. Know what comes after dividing? ...

The next Oregon governor needs to be a centrist. Someone who walks down the middle of the road. You’re not going to find that very easy with the current crop of candidates.

So just stop for a minute. Think for yourself. Especially when you walk into that voting booth. ...

Dan Collins  
Baker City

### Celebrate, don’t discourage, those running for GOP spots

Over the past years, the Baker County GOP organization has experienced a decline as duly elected Precinct Committee Persons (PCP’s) have become disenchanting with the style exhibited by the chairperson. Many individuals have indicated they were forced out or just had enough of the internal pressures placed on those with opinions other than those of the County Chair. As of last year of the 50-plus positions, 25 to 30 of the PCP district positions were vacant.

This year, several individuals (who are not under the auspices of Baker County United) decided to determine if there was interest to rejuvenate the Baker County GOP with free minded individuals who could work with others without throwing sand at one another. As one of those asking for input, I had the pleasure of meeting many wonderful individuals who decided changes should be made and that they would make the effort to serve as PCP’s representing the districts where they lived including in many where no one had represented the district for many years. Within a short period of time, these discussions led to over 25 ranchers, business men and women, and others who were inclined to serve in Baker County. A great outpouring of selflessness was the basis of their intentions.

The election rules allow for PCP’s to represent districts other than where they reside. All newly elected PCP’s will receive proper training to support them through the initial stages of their responsibilities. This is common procedure before and after being elected. A great resource is “Precinct Strategy.com” by Dan Shultz if you are interested in learning more about the importance of the local PCP’s.

A question for our citizens: Over the years, how many times has a PCP stopped by to discuss the activities of the Baker County GOP? I for one have never had such a discussion until getting involved with this project. It is time for transparency so the people of Baker County can become aware of this important organization and have input.

In some districts it was noted that they had

been represented by current PCP’s for years while in some elections they had received very little support from the voters of the district. In an effort to have a healthy competition in those districts, some well intentioned individuals decided to compete for those positions.

This is a time for accusations to cease from the Baker County Chair. Also, all GOP candidates need to be welcomed into our County during the primary election season and whoever wins the primary races, those individuals need to be uniformly supported through the general election by the county GOP organizations throughout Oregon.

This year, there are over 90 PCP’s on the ballot in Baker County. This should be celebrated rather than disputed by our county GOP. We in Baker County are setting a high bar for the rest of the counties in Oregon in that we might be the only county to fill every PCP position this year. This is another reason to be thankful there are so many selfless individuals willing to serve.

Danny L. Johnson  
Halfway

### Everyone in county should be willing to pay for ambulances

It’s hard to understand why the city has not asked for help apparently for several years with their lacking of funds to continue the ambulance service and shocking that they suddenly announce they have set a deadline for continuing funding it. All of Baker County has been so very fortunate to have the high quality fire and ambulance service we have in Baker City. Both firefighters and paramedics are all so highly trained they could never be replaced.

I hope the city and the county can immediately come to an agreement on saving this most valuable service in our county. The fire department/ambulance had such a backing from Leo Adler when he was alive and they still benefit from his care of them. I can well imagine he would be appalled at what is going on right now at the thought of disbanding this treasure. Because he cared so very much, has anyone thought of going to the trustees of his financial holdings and seeing if there is some way to get a grant just one time to carry the ambulance service through just til perhaps the city/county could get something on the November ballot for a tax of the whole county to help fund this service.

My husband and I are both senior citizens but we definitely feel it should be part of the county taxes that everyone in the county should be willing to pay a little more in taxes to continue this service that we all have benefited from for so many years and hopefully for years to come.

Cheryl Craig  
Haines

## COLUMN

## Consider risks of Ukraine aid package

BY BEN FREEMAN AND WILLIAM D. HARTUNG

The Biden administration’s massive \$33 billion aid request for Ukraine is the latest initiative in the effort to provide weaponry needed by Ukraine to fend off the Russian invasion of their country. But the sheer size of the package, coupled with recent administration statements that suggest the U.S. goal has shifted from helping defend Ukraine to “weakening Russia,” provide cause for concern.

While Russian aggression in Ukraine has been appalling — including the seemingly cavalier murder of civilians and other alleged war crimes — it is vitally important that the U.S. consider both the risks and costs of providing this extraordinary amount of military assistance to Ukraine.

While Ukrainian fighters will benefit from these arms, these arms transfers pose a number of risks as well, not the least of which is the potential for getting the U.S. into a direct military confrontation with Russia, something the vast majority of Americans are opposed to. And, that would be more, not less, likely if Congress uncritically approves this aid package.

Putin has declared that arms shipments are “legitimate targets,” so more arms shipments puts more U.S. soldiers at risk and raises the potential for a direct military confrontation

between American soldiers and Russia forces. As Seth G. Jones of the Center for Strategic and International Studies told the New York Times, “the risk of a widening war is serious right now. . . . Russian casualties are continuing to mount, and the U.S. is committed to shipping more powerful weapons that are causing those casualties.” There is also the possibility that U.S. arms will fall into the hands of U.S. adversaries, as they have in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and elsewhere.

As Congress and the public debate these risks they should also be mindful of the direct economic costs of this new aid package as well.

For starters, if Congress signs off on this new request, the U.S. will have authorized \$47 billion in total spending to Ukraine this year alone. That’s more than the Biden administration is committing to stopping climate change and almost as much as the entire State Department budget.

The aid package is more than the total amount of money all but 13 countries in the world spend on their military.

The vast majority of this new aid package, \$20.4 billion, is for “additional security and military assistance for Ukraine and for U.S. efforts to strengthen European security in cooperation with our NATO allies and other partners in the region,” according to the White House.

This, combined with the earlier aid package, would make Kyiv the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in at least two decades, explained Elias Yousif, a security assistance expert at the Stimson Center. It would also be twice the largest yearly total ever provided to Afghanistan, when U.S. forces were directly fighting there.

In addition, there is the direct economic cost to U.S. taxpayers who, ultimately, have to foot the bill for this historic aid package. Part of that cost could come from the kinds of fraud, waste and abuse that groups like the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) have uncovered in other cases where billions of dollars were being shoveled out the door in the name of national security.

Helping Ukraine defend itself is important, but it should be done with an eye toward limiting the risks of escalation and unintended economic and security consequences. The administration’s latest aid request should be carefully debated, well accounted for, and scrutinized before it is allowed to proceed in its current form.

■ Ben Freeman, Ph.D., is a research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. William D. Hartung is a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute.