

EDITORIAL

Oregon
above
average in
tax burden

Oregon is above average in so many good ways. We'd say natural beauty per mile is one. One of the less good ways Oregon is above average is in the business tax burden.

That is according to an Oregon business group, Oregon Business & Industry. And it's pretty much what you would expect a business group to say. But if you look at the research of the Oregon Legislative Revenue Office, there is definitely something to it.

The report from Oregon Business & Industry is based on work by the national accounting firm Ernst & Young. It says:

Oregon's effective business tax rate is 3% of the gross state product. That's above the national average, which was 2.6% in fiscal year 2021.

Add together the state and local total effective tax rate and Oregon's rate is at 5.4%. That's above the U.S. average of 5%. It puts Oregon as the state with the 21st highest tax burden by state.

Now look at what the state's Legislative Revenue Office says.

The office does a regular report on state revenues to see how Oregon compares and how it is changing.

The 2022 report uses 2019 data.

The Legislative Revenue Office has looked at taxes with more of a people focus than a business focus. "Over the most recent years, the tax burden has been close to or just above the middle of the states, edging its way back into the top half," the 2022 report says.

Maybe the best number to pick is Oregon's taxes in dollars per person. That was \$5,388, putting Oregon in 21st place by state.

Oregon is also relatively high in government charges for state services, sixth in the nation at \$2,449 per person.

Like we said, Oregon is above average.

Of course, if you want schools, if you want police protection, if you want fire protection, if you want clean drinking water and clean air, if you want waste disposed of properly, if you want government programs to help the poor, if you want roads and bridges, and if you want so many of the other things government provides, government needs revenue to do it.

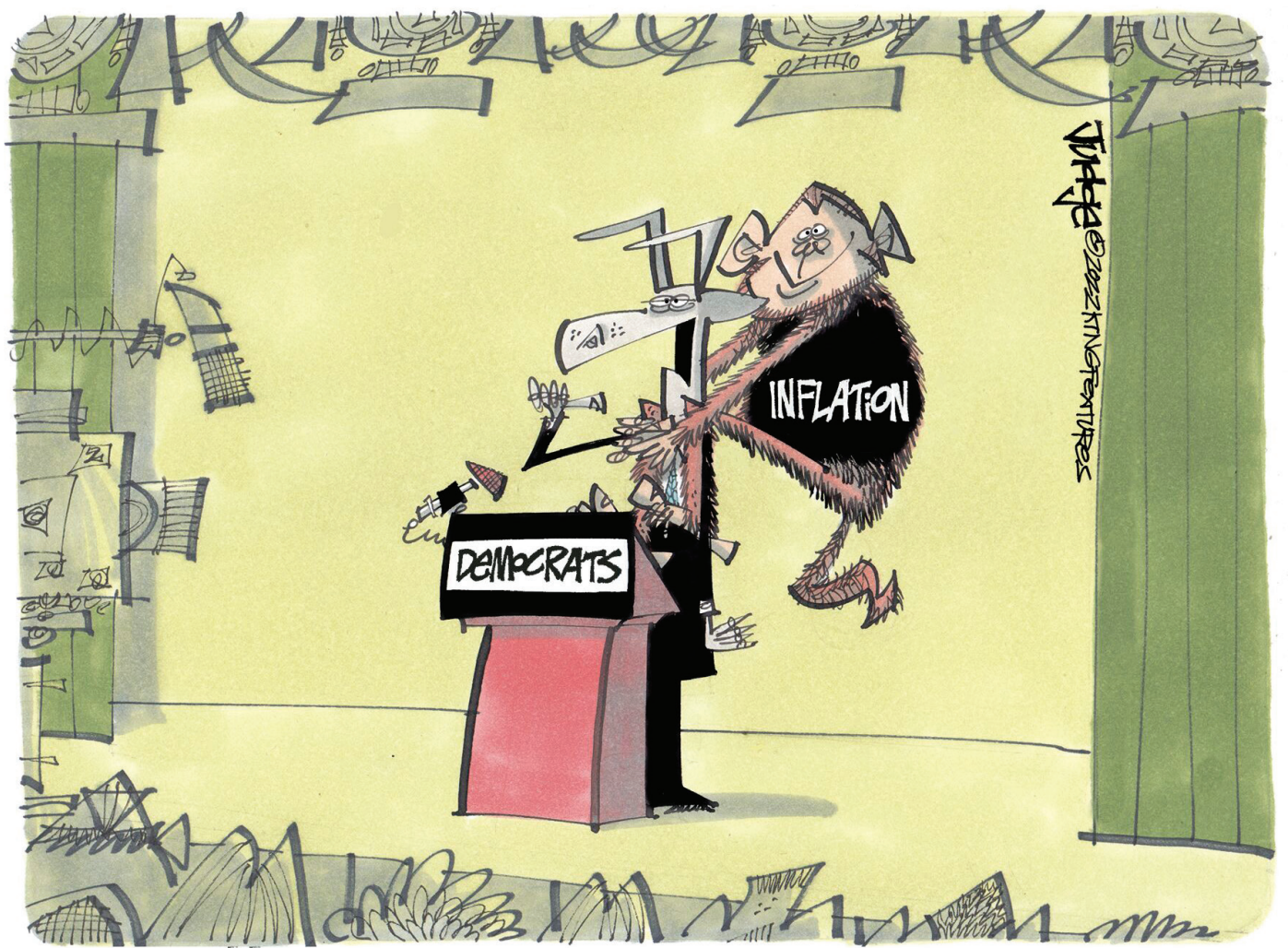
States are also different. Comparing across states is not completely fair. There are going to be different needs for government services depending on the situation of the different states.

But there is always reason to look at state performance with tax dollars. State audits should be expanded. Deschutes County government has had a great program for self-auditing what it does. Why don't more local governments have that?

And there is always reason to, at least, consider how necessary new or existing programs, regulations or taxes are.

Among the many things to consider this election, which candidates that you can vote for will be the most aggressive in looking for ways for government to improve, carefully weigh the benefits and the costs of any new tax or program and fight to ensure every tax dollar is well spent?

■ *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.*



"ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY RUNNING MATE."

OTHER VIEWS

When fear meets technology

BY ALLAN RIPP

Walking around my son's cozy Los Angeles neighborhood with its Tesla-lined driveways and stunning telescopic views of the Hollywood Hills, I noticed the neighborhood had its eyes on me.

Stepping from house to house and street to street, I encountered a friendly, disembodied voice. "Hi!" she said. "You are currently being recorded." Never mind I was in the middle of the road.

At night, the same walk triggered a bright light beaming from garages and closed front doors, as my movements tripped motion detection recorders en route. Fenced dogs barked furiously and signs warned of "armed response." I began to think of the rising palm trees as guard towers.

Living in New York, I don't often notice the citywide surveillance apparatus but see its effects in scary news stories of home invasions and subway assaults, with video captured by Ring cameras and CCTV. Afforded the safety of a large apartment building with a doorman, I keep our front door unlocked. Our wide-angle peephole has been bro-

ken for years, covered by duct tape. Our biggest protection is a mezuzah Torah prayer mounted over the entrance.

But in the SoCal enclave where my son lives, near Culver City, with hillside cul-de-sacs and only a trickle of pedestrians, the idea of smart security devices seems reasonable, even if I felt like a perp whenever I set foot outside his house. A forensic video record exists of my walkabouts, no doubt catching me adjusting my pants, cleaning my ears and yes, double bagging the garbage after our family meals. I can also be heard answering my unseen chaperone: "You talking to me?"

Los Angeles and New York, like many major cities, have been plagued by an uptick in crime, which has heightened local suspicion, including in the racially diverse liberal neighborhood I was visiting. Add to that a set of technology tools that allows homeowners to create their own virtual and connected security forces.

The taped footage from smart door cameras is increasingly deployed by prosecutors in courtroom

settings to prove criminal activity in plain sight. One of my colleagues in the Bay Area successfully used video of a home break-in to convict a local thief who was recorded in broad daylight hiding on his porch, and later carrying computer equipment from the house.

Although defense lawyers try to suppress such "gotcha" evidence as a violation of an individual's 4th Amendment rights against unreasonable or warrantless searches, the footage has just as often been ruled admissible for being in "public view," that the camera just happened to have captured.

But in a low-crime area like my son's, even modest infractions get noticed. He was busted for depositing his dog's crap bag in someone else's bin and a tape quickly made the rounds on the local Nextdoor app. "Watch out for this guy!" was the Interpol-like alert. Now a model citizen, he snapped if I let his dog set foot on his neighbors' artificial lawns or pee on their cactus.

One evening we reviewed some Ring footage on my daughter-in-law's phone — it's become the latest version of "America's Funniest Home

Videos." There she was returning home tipsy one night, fiddling with her keys and telling the dogs to "Shush, my babies." In another segment shot from the living-room camera, my son was caught face-planting over a laptop cord. My wife was captured in spooky night vision cradling our newborn granddaughter at 2 a.m.

No one likes being watched, but absent private sentinels or cops on the beat, residents rightly welcome an extra pair of high-tech eyes, though some window blinds might help.

I was awakened at 3 a.m. one night by the San Quentin-strength security light outside my son's guest bedroom. It stayed lit for minutes, and I thought I heard something rustling outside. I considered waking the household, but all went quiet, and I fell back asleep.

The next morning, we examined the video and saw evidence of a violent encounter with an unwanted guest: A large spider had tangled with an insect in its web. No arrests were made.

■ *Allan Ripp runs a press relations firm in New York.*

COLUMN

The Beatles' 'Revolver' finally gets the magic touch

The Beatles made their last recording 52 years ago but the quartet continues to delight their fans in new ways, which is quite a feat considering two of them are dead.

The sheer brilliance of their music is untarnished by time.

Even with John Lennon gone since 1980, and George Harrison since 2001, the songs they made with Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney have lost none of their original capacity to thrill, enchant and enrich listeners.

Including millions who, like me, weren't yet born when the group disbanded in the spring of 1970.

Technology, which can make past achievements seem plain, or even irrelevant in their quaint simplicity, has had precisely the opposite effect on the work The Beatles produced in the latter half of their career.

(Their output is prodigious in quantity as well as unsurpassed in quality. Compared with modern pop music, when artists frequently let several years pass between albums, The Beatles were incredibly prolific. During eight years of recording they released 13 albums, including two albums each in 1963, 1964 and 1965. They also put out multiple standalone singles in each of those years.)

Since 2017, the 50th anniversary of The Beatles' most famous album, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," producer Giles Martin, son of the band's original producer, George Martin, has remixed five albums, starting with Sgt. Pepper's.

The basic concept with remixing is to start with the original tapes — actual magnetic tapes in this case; the emergence of fully digital recording was far ahead — and use computer tools to burnish the songs so they're as close as possible to the sounds the band actually created in London's Abbey Road studio.

The changes Giles Martin wrought are subtle yet revelatory.

He didn't introduce any new sounds.

Rather, he used modern production techniques to enhance what was always there on the aging tapes — for instance, making McCartney's melodic bass lines and Starr's inventive drum fills more prominent, or doing the same with the group's peerless vocal harmonies.

When I first listened to the remixed Sgt. Pepper's



Jayson Jacoby

more than five years ago I marveled at how these songs, all of which I've heard many dozens of times, rang in my ears with a new potency despite their familiarity.

I wouldn't have believed I could enjoy The Beatles' music more than I had.

But I was wrong, and rarely so happy to be wrong.

In the ensuing years I have enjoyed the subsequent remixes of "The Beatles" (1968's double album, better known as the White Album), "Abbey Road" from 1969 and "Let It Be" from 1970 (re-released after "Abbey Road" but recorded before).

Yet ever since Sgt. Pepper's came out I have been preoccupied with one question: What about "Revolver"?

That's the 1966 album which for many fans — including me — marks the apex of The Beatles' recording career.

Sadly, the consensus seemed to be that "Revolver," due to the comparatively rudimentary four-track recording techniques The Beatles and George Martin employed in 1966, was not suited to Giles Martin's audio alchemy.

For the same reason the band's earlier albums, including such achievements as 1965's "Rubber Soul" and "Help!," were likely to be poor candidates for remixing.

Then Peter Jackson got involved.

Thank goodness for hobbits and orcs and the prodigious financial resources they afforded Jackson, the film director.

He's also an avowed Beatles aficionado.

Jackson created "Get Back," the three-part documentary that chronicles the January 1969 recording sessions that eventually resulted in the "Let It Be" album a year later.

While working on that project during the pandemic, Jackson's company, WingNut Films Productions, and engineer Emile de la Rey devised a process known as "demixing."

The technology befuddles me — it involves artificial intelligence, for one thing — but I can grasp the basic concept.

In effect, the process separates each part of a recording — down to individual guitar parts and even individual drums in Ringo's kit.

Jackson's team employed the technology in "Get Back" to make dialogue audible.

The director also offered the proprietary process to Giles Martin, who suggested that it might make possible to remix "Revolver."

To my eternal gratitude, it was indeed possible. A CD of the new "Revolver" remix showed up in my mailbox on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Less than an hour after I got home from work I was listening to the songs and marveling, just as I did five years ago with Sgt. Pepper's, at The Beatles' inimitable ability to craft songs that, to my ears, will never sound anything but fresh.

I had, I suppose, become accustomed to hearing The Beatles' old songs in a new light — the audible equivalent of looking through a pane of glass that's just had its layers of dust rubbed away.

But "Revolver" was different because, until recently, I had presumed its songs would not be refreshed like those of later albums.

To reiterate, Giles Martin didn't change the original recordings. He honed them, bringing listeners as close as possible to an experience none of us can ever have, which is to be with The Beatles in the studio.

Martin's deft touch revealed details I had either never heard, or that were difficult to distinguish among the other sounds.

On "For No One," Paul's gorgeous but melancholy ballad, I hear a piano figure that I never noticed before.

There's also a brief, recurring electric guitar riff in "She Said She Said" that I didn't remember.

Those are just two examples. I suspect all fans will discover their own bag of riches from this kaleidoscope of sounds.

The remixed "Revolver" package includes a bonus that I appreciated far more than the usual selection of alternate takes of songs. Giles Martin also performed Jackson's demixing magic on the classic double A-side single The Beatles released in 1966 — "Paperback Writer" and "Rain."

That single, along with "Revolver," would constitute a credible career for most bands.

For The Beatles it was only one year.

■ *Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.*