

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
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Vote Lawler for library board

Let's face it. In the contested race for the Deschutes Public Library District board, the most important issue is which candidate will do a better job of following through on the \$195 million library bond.

It's easy to imagine that either incumbent Martha Lawler or challenger Anne Ness would do a fine job on the bond and other issues. But Lawler has been on the board since 2011. She helped develop the bond, helped get it passed and is in the best position to execute it. That experience matters. Vote for Lawler.

This race is for the Zone 3 seat on the library board. Only people in that zone will have the election on their ballot and get to vote in this race. The zone includes southern and eastern Deschutes County.

Ness, who lives in Sunriver, is passionate about the library and the importance of literacy. She taught special education for more than 30 years and retired in 2015. She was also a school board member in Michigan. Ness has been impressively active in the community — serving as a court appointed special advocate for children and working with the group Supporters of Literacy in Deschutes County.

Ness would favor spending less of the bond money on the planned large, new library on the northern outskirts of Bend and investing more in the smaller libraries around the county. That is something to think about as the board makes choices about the bond.

Ness also has argued that the board should delay issuing the bonds and issue them in stages to "ease our tax burden." It's kind of a moot point. The board already voted to move forward on the bonds. Interest rates are low now. It's not clear

a delay would mean any overall reduction in taxes.

Lawler, who lives in La Pine, worked for years for the state of California, retiring as a manager for Caltrans, the state's transportation department. She volunteers in the La Pine Public Library and served on the library's budget committee.

She says serving on the library board has been a labor of love and she was thrilled to death when voters approved the bond. Lawler wants to ensure the bond will be a win for the community no matter where a person lives. She knows firsthand how important the La Pine library is to people who use it. One example: It can help level the playing field for people by providing internet access that they don't have. It's also no short trip to Bend from La Pine or Sunriver.

The pandemic has caused her and other members of the board to reconsider how the space in the new library building might be used. Some people may be telecommuting more in the future and not want the distractions that come with working from home. Can the library set aside some workspaces? Telemedicine also seems likely to grow in use. Can the library provide private spaces so people with no access or poor access to the internet can get health care?

Lawler told us she is proud and honored to serve on the board and would love to finish what she has helped start with the bond. Voters should give her that opportunity. Vote for Lawler.



Lawler



Ness

Require more transparency about coronavirus data

The Oregon Health Authority worked hard since the beginning of the pandemic to do what it thought best to protect Oregonians. But there have been downright confounding examples where it has failed to be open to the public about what it was doing.

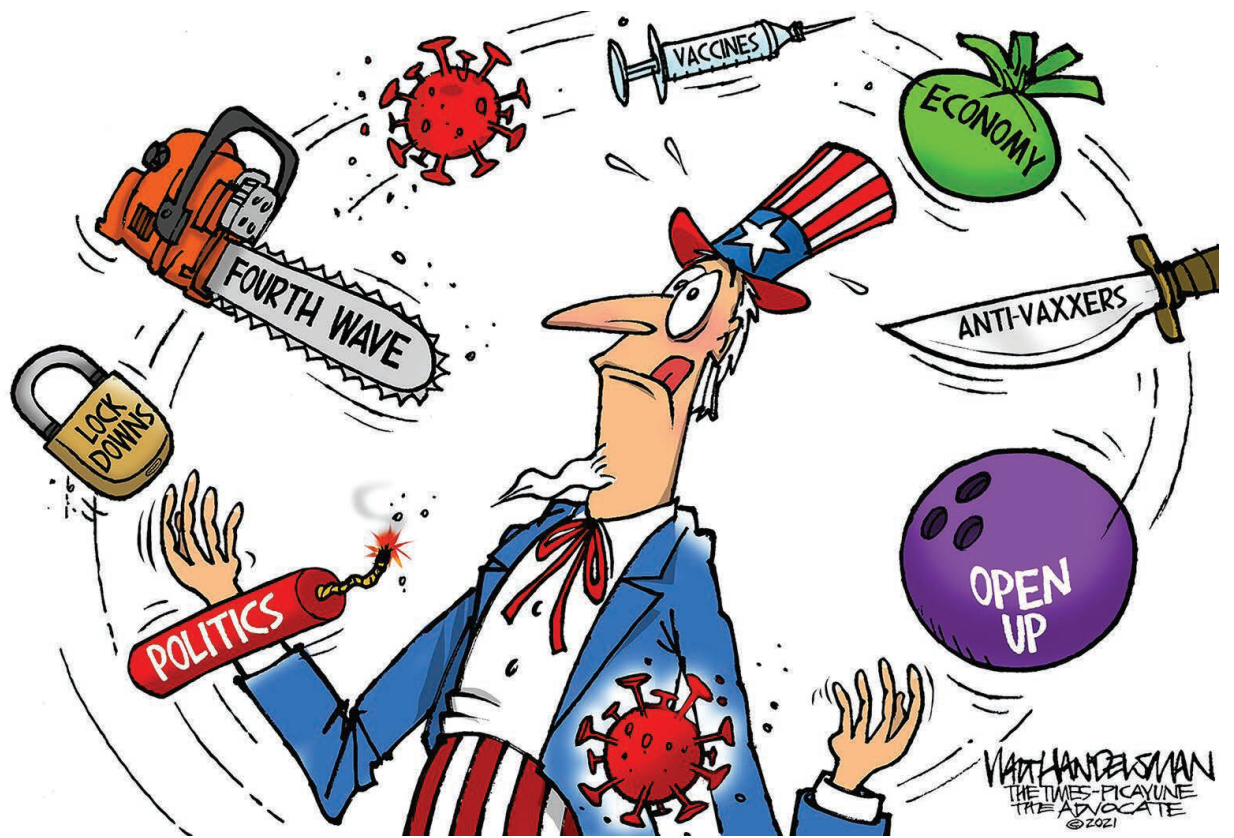
The OHA made a decision earlier this year to start releasing less information about people who had died from COVID-19. Why do Oregonians need less information? OHA said it was too much work. Gov. Kate Brown initially backed the OHA move and then reversed it.

Just a few months ago, OHA banned the public from access to a meeting of OHA's Vaccine Advisory Committee. Every other meeting

had been open to the public but it decided not to because it "had completed its official duties" and was working on implementation of its vaccine distribution plan. The public should not have access to that?

You have also likely seen those graphics that OHA releases showing COVID-19 cases per week. Oregonian reporter Brad Schmidt made a records request for the actual numbers used to make one chart. OHA denied his request. Oregonians can't know the precise numbers?

Oregon Senate Bill 719 sets out to correct some of that tendency toward secrecy. It would make it clear that basic aggregate data about disease investigations should not be denied to the public. Pass SB 719.



From oil company to energy company

If the oil majors are diversifying in a transition from fossil fuels to renewable power, then quantification of investments in clean energy instead of fossil fuels would be a believable indicator of change.

Oil company or energy company? In a paper by Matthias J. Pickl, results show that of the eight major oil companies, five have undertaken considerable investments in renewable energy. Their renewable energy strategies reveal a categorization into two main groups: Royal Dutch Shell, Total, BP, Eni and Equinor have embarked on a transition from being oil companies to energy companies; while ExxonMobil, Chevron and Petrobras remain focused on hydrocarbons.

Natural gas is used extensively in the generation of electricity, partly because it is cleaner than coal but also more cost competitive. This is the main approach that Exxon and Chevron have taken, sticking with what they know best — transitioning away from oil by investing more in natural gas. Renewable energy and electricity lie outside the core competencies of big oil so acquisition is an easy but conservative first step. It is a conservative step. Gas is cleaner than coal, but it is still a fossil fuel.

There is a strong interaction between oil companies and utilities because the former produces raw materials needed for generation of electricity by the latter. The choice of wind and solar power sources for electricity generation significantly reduces demand for coal and oil, but less so for natural gas.

Electricity sector. Cleaning up the electricity sector is a key target for economywide decarbonization because emissions from electricity generation (27%) and residential/commercial emission sources (12%) are equivalent to 39% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions (2018 US Environmental Protection Agency data).

Transportation sector. Electrification is here to stay, and as the exponential growth in manufacturing and

Climate Changed

CENTRAL OREGON
CROSSROADS

By Scott Christiansen



sales of electric vehicles around the world highlights, this demand will help to lower the 28% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions that are contributed by transportation. This potentially rapid shift to electric vehicles will decrease the need for gasoline and diesel fuel from oil companies.

Transition. The use of the term "net" in net-zero means that the pluses and minuses on the emissions front will total zero — not that petrochemical companies will stop producing oil and gas. The oil majors will remain integrated oil giants, with an increased presence in the electricity space to increase diversification.

Making utilities do better. A Sierra Club report titled, The Dirty Truth about Utility Climate Pledges, recommends that utilities do three things: retire existing coal plants by 2030, terminate plans to build new gas plants, and build clean energy faster. The analysis is based on integrated resource plans (IRPs) and major announcements for the 50 U.S. utilities that remain the most invested in fossil fuel generation. Plans were examined for 79 operating companies owned by 50 different parent companies, representing more than half of all remaining coal and gas generation in the U.S.

Not a good report card. Apart from a few pioneers, utility companies are falling short. The report assigned a score to utilities in the U.S. based on its plans to retire coal, construct new gas plants, and build new clean energy. The aggregate score for all companies studied was 17 out of 100.

Readers can find their power company and its score in the report. For example, PacifiCorp (Pacific Power and Rocky Mountain Power) is the operating company with the most

remaining coal without a retirement commitment (30% of energy generation), scoring 10 out of 100; Portland General Electric scored 48 out of 100. Notably, 22 out of 79 operating companies scored 0 out of 100, with no plans forecasting a change in direction.

Climate goals. Out of the 50 parent companies included in the report, 33 have a stated climate goal; however, in general, most companies are not factoring their stated climate objectives into their latest IRPs. One reason is that net-zero emissions goals are set for 2050, 30 years away, while most IRPs have a duration of only 15 to 20 years. In other words, they claim they will reach net zero, but do not show how through their capital investments. Therefore, the Sierra Club report says utility climate goals should be legally binding; apply to all subsidiary companies; and include a short-term target of reducing emissions by at least 80% by 2030 — confirmed by meaningful IRP commitments.

Modeling the path ahead A whole atlas of model results are available to guide governments toward the formulation of a clean energy future. For example, Wärtsilä has modeled 145 countries, including a breakdown for a dozen U.S. regions, to show the cost-optimal energy mix for producing electricity from 100% renewable energy sources. But, as with utility companies, laws and actions by governments and the willingness of the private sector, are required to transform these "road map" model results into reality.

The Sierra Club report concludes that publicly stated climate goals are meaningless greenwashing without publishing strategies and investment plans to show how companies intend to get from point A to point B — just like the scholarship of Matthias J. Pickl demonstrated for the big oil companies.

■ Scott Christiansen is an international agronomist with 35 years of experience. He worked for USDAs Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Letters policy: Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

My Nickel's Worth

Spring planting for biodiversity

I am a retired biologist. Nature walks are still one of my favorite pastimes, but my walks are sadder now. I know the numbers and varieties of birds, bees, butterflies and other insects are drastically declining. This is partly due to a lack of native plants in our expanding neighborhoods. Our yards are mostly water demanding lawns and our gardens are full of ornamental plants from big box stores, colorful, abundant and inexpensive, but these nonnative plants provide little to nothing for local insects and birds. They have not co-evolved and so do not meet each other's needs. Native plants provide food, cover and reproductive needs for our local insects and birds and fortunately, native plants need less water, too.

Everyone wants to know what they personally can do to help the di-

minishing biodiversity. For easy and immediate help, put native plants in your yard this spring. To find native plant suggestions for our area, go to Audubon's website, audubon.org/plantsforbirds. Create a miniature nature preserve in your own yard.

— Gail Sabbadini, Bend

Pay them more

The solution to the, so-called, shortage outlined in the March 31 "Bend restaurants starve for workers" should be obvious to restaurant owners who are entrepreneurs in a free market. When demand exceeds supply the price must go up to restore balance. Employers seem to understand this when it comes to the things they buy and sell — except for labor. When the catch is down, they have to pay more for fish to keep it on their menus. But they seem to believe labor is different

and should be available at "normal" wages. They don't seem to consider paying more for labor as an option and cry shortage. Mr. Swigert sees that workers are going to other jobs now available; but doesn't see the obvious solution. Make your jobs more attractive by raising the pay and benefits. It's called competing. You pay a higher price for fish when you have to. If you pay a competitive wage the so called "labor shortage" will disappear. That's the way capitalism works. I think it is obvious that restaurant workers aren't overpaid and with revenues up 30%, why not?

When we eat in a restaurant, we understand that when the price of fish, or labor, goes up we pay more for the meal. That's also part of capitalism as it should be. Why should workers who provide me the meal be paid less than a living wage so I can pay less?

— John Alexander, Redmond

Risks for wait staff

I empathize with restaurant owners and their myriad difficulties during the pandemic. However, I seldom read about the risks of working as wait staff. Diners eat without masks (there is little choice). Indoor dining is increasing, and some restaurants don't have other realistic options. Wait staff can be masked up, but the sheer volume of folks encountered, and the risk of breathing diner's exhalations is quite significant — even when protecting oneself with a mask. The percentage of folks that are vaccinated is still not even a majority. A reasonable person would view a wait person's (and other staff's) personal risk of contracting COVID as frightening at the present time. Perhaps it is not so "baffling" that there are insufficient applicants for open positions in restaurants.

Please support our community, the unemployed and our local economy and get vaccinated.

— Gary Elnan, Bend

Flatter is not smarter

When I picked up Saturday's paper and read "Worrell Park may become flatter, more accessible," my first thought was, "hold on, wait just a minute here!" Bill Worrell Wayside Park is not only a lovely, quirky corner of downtown Bend, it is a beautiful, remnant example of the area's natural landscape, a small haven surrounded by burgeoning development. To replace it with just another curated experience is short sighted. And to spend \$2.5 million doing so is unconscionable. There is likely far greater need for those funds elsewhere.

— Julie Naslund, Bend

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.