

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright
Gerry O'Brien
Richard Coe
Publisher
Editor
Editorial Page Editor

Improve the Deschutes 911 radio system

When Deschutes County's new digital radio system for emergency responders launched in 2017, it had problems.

There's no need to recite the troubled past in detail. County commissioners and county 911 worked hard to correct it. Just a taste, though, for perspective: It got so bad that Bend police officers filed a workplace complaint with the state that the flawed system was endangering their safety.

Those days have passed. The system works. That doesn't mean that it is without its warts. It also must be able to handle future needs.

Well, improvements are in the works.

A consultant for Deschutes County 911 issued a report earlier this year outlining problem areas and solutions. In Bend, for instance, there are still some issues when communicating inside large buildings. The report says there are problems with signals around Awbrey Glen Golf Club. Bend's coverage in the southeast part of the city could use improvement. Redmond also has problems with coverage in large buildings. And Redmond is primarily covered by only one tower site at Cline Butte. Redmond could use more redundancy in case there is ever a problem with that tower. There are some other issues, as well.

Three bits of good news: There's

a plan to fix those problems and more. It's already part of the planned county budget for 2022. And your taxes for 911 services in Deschutes County won't go up to pay for them but will stay the same.

The potential improvements include building an additional radio tower at Long Butte, which is between Bend and Redmond. That will help cover Redmond and should improve coverage around Awbrey Glen Golf Club in Bend. That has an estimated cost of \$716,000.

There's a great deal more detail in the consultant report. We had to ask for the report to get it. No big deal. Deschutes County 911 promptly emailed it over. At 911, they do know how to act fast.

Maybe not many are as interested as we are in the county radio system. But we think it would be a better general practice for government agencies to post such reports on their websites. The report is as detailed an update there is on a critical government system, a system with a regrettable history and a system that has already cost taxpayers more than \$5 million. Seems like it's worth making that information easily available for everyone.

Historical editorial: New fifty-four forty

Editor's note: The following historical editorial originally appeared in what was then called *The Bend Bulletin* on July 20, 1906.

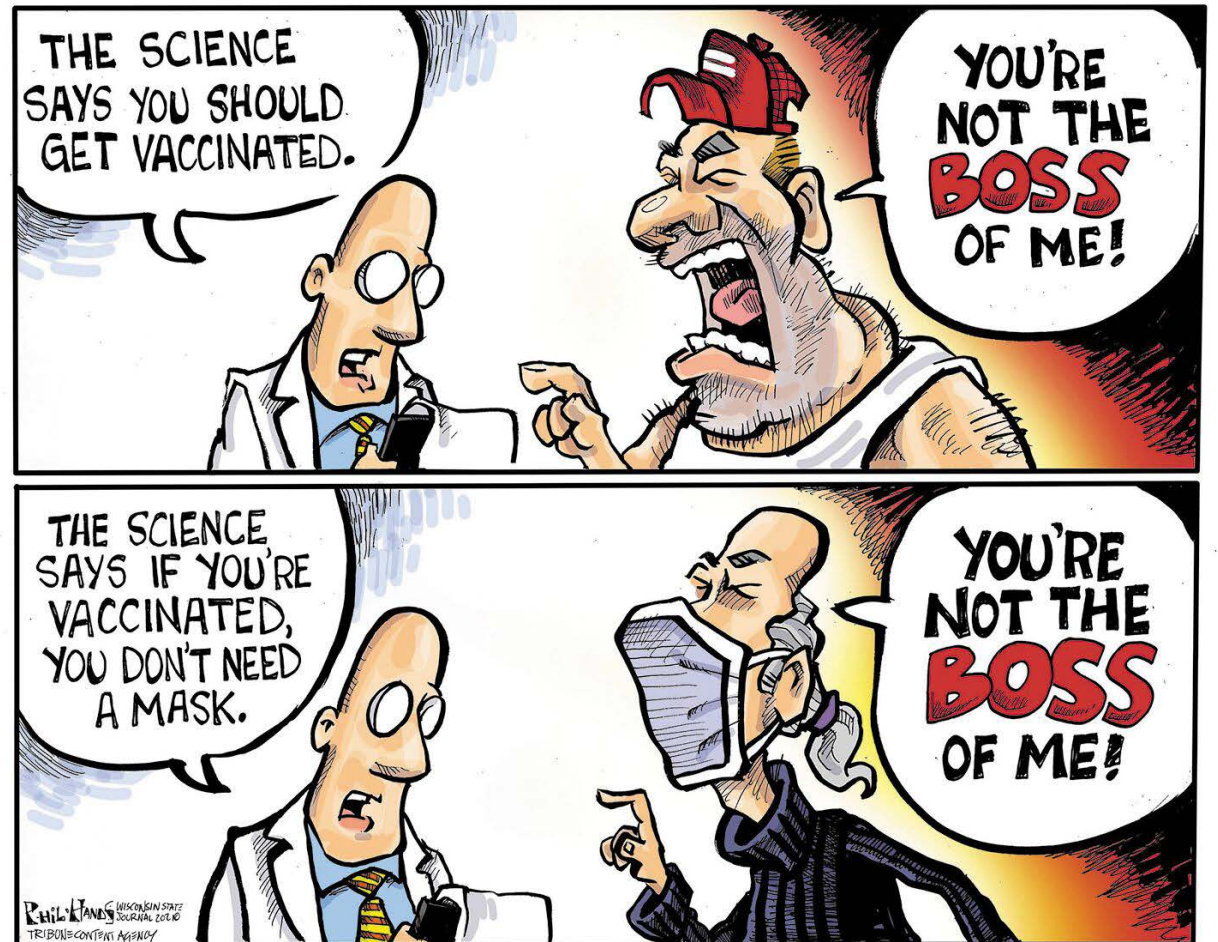
In the days when Oregon was occupied jointly by the Americans and the British much was heard of the phrase "Fifty-four forty or fight," the meaning being that the American boundary should go up to the parallel of 54° 40' or there would be war.

In these militant days we hear much of another fifty-four forty and it means a real fight in every case — not with the British but with home-grown greed entrenched in slimy politics. This fifty-four forty is section 5440 of the revised statutes of the United States, under which most of the land-fraud indictments are brought. It is a conspiracy statute.

It provides that if two or more persons conspire "to commit any offense against the United States or defraud the United States in any

manner for any purpose, and one or more said parties do any act to effect the object of conspiracy" all shall be liable to a penalty of "not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$10,000 and to imprisonment not more than two years."

The fencing of the public domain, procuring and "expediting" unlawful land entries and other offenses fall under this statute in Oregon because of the peculiar political condition that prevailed here for a long time, in which there was "safety in numbers" and the many links made a chain of great strength and smoothness. But the "numbers" that made fraud a "safe" business in Oregon failed to find security when there was no response from Washington. The Washington government is more disposed to enforce the fifty-four forty of this day than it was in the far-off cry of a past generation, and the dreams of many "influential" citizens are thereby muchly disturbed.



Support Central Oregon's YouthBuild as participation outgrows funding

BY GARY NORTH AND RYAN ECKMAN

As members of the Central Oregon business community, we know it will take hard work and tenacity to rebuild our community after the COVID-19 pandemic. Lucky for us, we've seen such strength firsthand, and well before the pandemic, as members of Heart of Oregon Corps' Employer Advisory Council, or EAC.

Heart of Oregon's YouthBuild program partners with opportunity youth — young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor employed — to pursue their education, prepare for future careers and grow into community leaders. They receive construction training and pre-apprenticeship skills by building, repairing and renovating affordable housing in our area. In our capacity on the EAC, we help position them for success by engaging in mock job interview sessions, job site tours and even hiring graduates to join our own crews.

These young people demonstrate grit and leadership beyond measure — they just don't have equal access to opportunity. But when they reach their full potential as working citizens, all of us benefit. Our neighborhoods flourish with refreshed housing, public service projects and young leaders

GUEST COLUMN



Bulletin file

A Madras High student checks a measurement for shed walls as part of Heart of Oregon Corps YouthBuild.

who are equipped with the tools they need to thrive. Our goal, as employers, is to continue to build the life skills that Heart of Oregon YouthBuild teaches and help create meaningful careers. And as our economy starts revving up again, it's imperative for all of us to partner with opportunity youth in transforming their lives and communities. With serious drive and unique perspectives, they are a gift to any workforce. It's been a pleasure to welcome these graduates to our own crews. And, if they

decide this field is not the career for them, that is more than OK. First and foremost, our primary goal is to help them expand their skills so they leave with more confidence in their own abilities and the drive to find their path.

It's an honor to be part of their journey. We thank the Oregon congressional delegation for its support of the Department of Labor's YouthBuild program funding in fiscal year 2022 to help these young people receive the training they need to become the skilled, educated leaders they were meant to be. Our communities need their perseverance and work ethic now more than ever. But each year, there are more interested YouthBuild participants than its federal appropriation can support. For as much good as Heart of Oregon does every single day for youth in our community, funding is finite.

And so, we invite you — whether you're a neighbor, a business leader, or a local, state or federal official — to join us in recognizing the importance of the Heart of Oregon YouthBuild program in our Central Oregon community with your time, donations and support.

■ Gary North is vice president of R&H Construction in Bend, and Ryan Eckman is general manager of Mike's Fence Center in Bend.

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column
P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

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.

Let's come together to Envision Bend amid changing city needs

BY LAURA FRITZ AND JAMES DOROFI

Pilot Butte's unmistakable profile can be seen from great distances in our region. It is viewed as a kind of symbol of our community: sitting close to the center of town, straddling east and west, north and south and offering vistas as far as the eye can see. It reflects our history, our connection to place and our views to the horizon.

This butte has served as a wayfinder for the native peoples who traversed this region for millennia. In more recent times, this cinder cone jutting up 500 feet at the edge of Oregon's High Desert has become a kind of beacon not only for those seeking a sense of direction, but also for people moving to this area seeking better lives.

No surprise then that the Bend 2030 board of directors has chosen Pilot Butte as the visual symbol of our nonprofit organization's new name and brand identity: Envision

Bend — Shaping Our Future. It captures what we aspire to for our community: a clear sense of direction and better lives for all our residents.

In recent months The Bulletin has published a number of guest columns addressing the issues facing this growing and changing city: continued expansion and new development; transportation and environmental challenges; public health and safety concerns; affordable housing and the unsheltered; looming drought and wildfires; and so much more. Beyond our region, our world is changing so fast we can barely keep up. Climate change, population migrations, social media and cyber-crime are examples of some of the major shifts underway.

And the global pandemic has accelerated the change. Virtually everyone and everything has been touched by the virus — jobs, families, schools, health care, travel, recreation, government, social services and more.

GUEST COLUMN



Dorofi



Fritz

While the long-term impacts are still unclear, some aspects of life may never go back to "normal."

Given all the change around us, it's no wonder that Bendites are a little on edge. The ongoing transformation of our little slice of paradise from big town to small city has caused growing pains. And no one wants to lose those things we love most about living here.

In short, as a city and a community we are at a crossroads.

This is not the first time we've been in this place. Back in 2005, when Bend faced unprecedented growth, the community came together in a groundbreaking conversation to plan for a better future. The Bend 2030 project resulted in a forward-thinking vision and plan of action.

Many of the big ideas included in the vision were eventually accomplished: a four-year university campus, regional transit system, more diversified economy, better-connected trail system and more. Bend 2030 went on to sponsor dialogues on such pressing issues as traffic, housing, civic equity and governmental reform.

Today, while much has been achieved, even more has changed since the original vision was adopted. Our community vision needs updating, and this is the perfect time to revise and renew it. Once again, it's time for Bend to come together in a

collaborative, inclusive and nonpartisan way to plan a desired future for the next generation.

Envision Bend is gearing up to do just that. Over the summer we will be reaching out to our sponsors and community partners, launching our new website and crafting a visioning project to commence in the fall. More than ever, we want all community members to get involved.

As we look to our community's horizons, we invite all members of the Bend community to have a voice in shaping our future. Stay tuned for announcements, sign up for emailed updates at our new website (www.envisionbend.org), or email us directly at info@envisionbend.org.

And join us on this journey. ■ Laura Fritz is executive director of Envision Bend (formerly Bend 2030), a local nonprofit that brings diverse stakeholders together to give all members of the Bend community a voice in the city's future. James Dorofi is chair of the Envision Bend board of directors.