

# County should kick-start Little Kits child care

Child care should enable parents to work and help start children on the path to learning. Oregon's child care flops.

The well-connected and well-paid may be able to find good solutions. Many other families cannot find child care when they need it, let alone at a reasonable cost. In Central Oregon, the estimate is there are openings for only 1 in 3 children under age 5 in registered child care centers and in-home providers.

Deschutes County commissioners have a chance to create a win for child care in Central Oregon. And it would be a win that the community can build on.

Help kick-start the "Little Kits" program of Oregon State University-Cascades Campus and Central Oregon Community College. Commissioners should dedicate \$1 million from the county's American Rescue Plan money to help get the program off the ground.

State Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, already chose to invest \$1 million in Little Kits from the American Rescue Plan dollars he controls. Knopp was on the Legislature's Joint Task Force On Access to Quality Affordable Child Care. He knows how acute the need is. Let's make a solution happen here.

The goal is to make the program a replicable model. It will provide high-quality care enriched by learning. It aims to provide it at a price parents can afford. It will pay its workers a living wage, meaning they will be able to afford to live in Bend. It will give workers strong benefits. It will be run by trained professional staff and have opportunities for students to learn on the job. The location is not final. It might be at OSU-Cascades or COCC.

There may be 70-100 spots for children at the first site. The hope is to add other locations in the future, perhaps in Redmond, La Pine and elsewhere. The first priority for avail-

able spots will likely go to parents who are registered students at the campuses. That will enable parents to pursue education and enhance their skills so they can better provide for their children in the future. Spots will then be made available for faculty and staff at the two institutions. Kelly Sparks, associate vice president for finance and strategic planning at OSU-Cascades, told us the estimate is there will still be about 25 spots open after that for the community. But she emphasized this is just the beginning of a model that they hope to spread to more places in Central Oregon.

The missing piece is public investment. The money will go to the cost of buying and setting up a modular building. In December, when the final report came out from Knopp's state task force on child care, do you know what one recommendation was? "Increase public investment."

The Bend Chamber of Commerce has been working hard since launching its child care task force in 2018 to find creative solutions. As chamber CEO Katy Brooks explains, it is not just about child care. It's about economic development. It's about improving the future of Central Oregon. It's about meeting a critical need where society is falling flat. That's why the chamber is backing Little Kits.

We know the system we have now is inadequate and failing families. We believe OSU-Cascades and COCC will create a high-quality program where we would be lucky to send our kids. Deschutes County commissioners should invest in this solution.

(If you are wondering, kits are the young of both beaver and bobcats. And the full name of the program is a mouthful, Little Kits Early Learning & Child Care Center.)

# Solar impact debate kindles in Crook County

The sun's energy can be turned into green energy gold. But solar has a darker side.

It also brings concern about environmental impacts. A field of solar panels alters wildlife habitat.

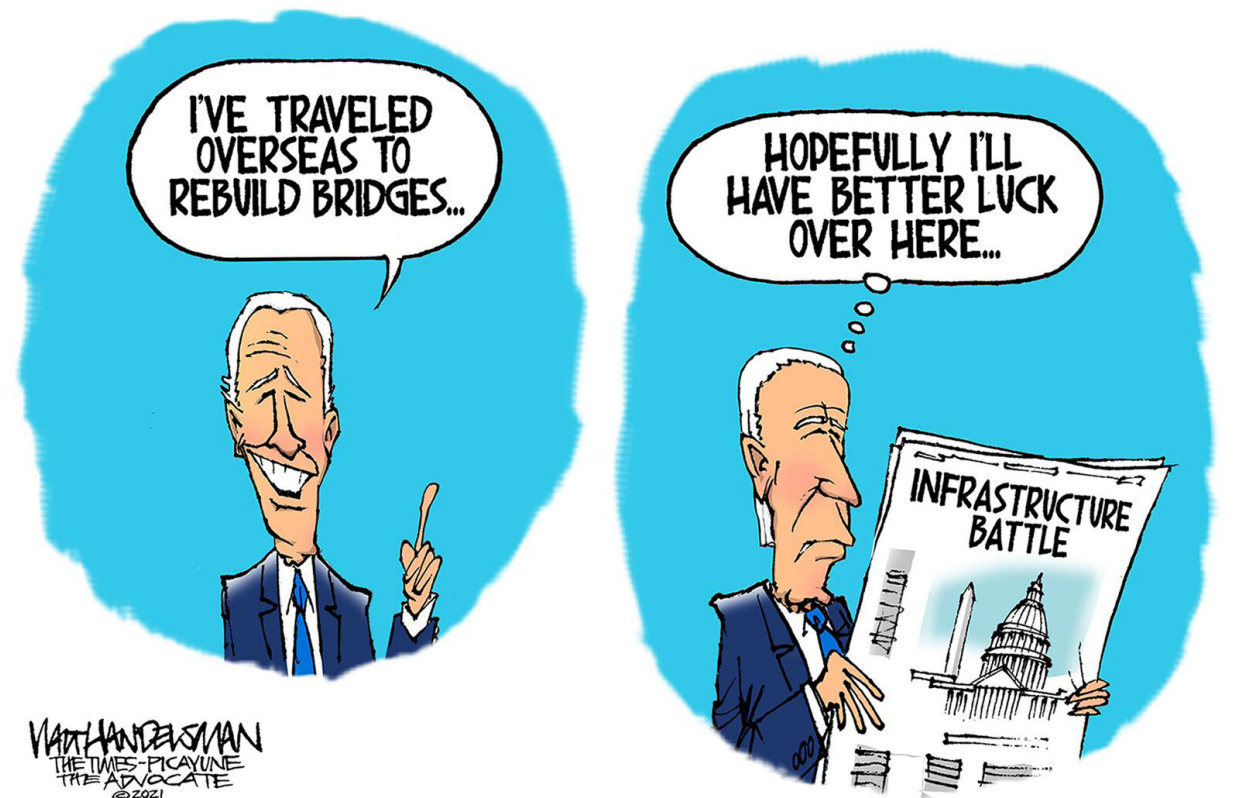
The proposed expansion of a solar project in Crook County is in one of these debates, as reported by the Capital Press. Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals has directed Crook County to revisit its approval of "West Prineville Solar Farm's expansion from 320 acres to 654 acres on land zoned for exclusive farm use."

The issue revolves around the intent of House Bill 2329 passed in 2019.

That law change aimed to make it easier for counties to site solar energy facilities. The question is: Does that mean counties get to make decisions about wildlife mitigation requirements?

LUBA essentially said no.

We don't know what will eventually happen with this project. But if you have an opinion about how these state regulations should work, tell your legislator.



# Climate change and calculating the carbon price

BY BRENDA PACE

**Editor's note:** This is the third in a series of four columns over the next two months on climate change and potential legislation that may give readers information they can take action on in the effort to meet carbon emission reduction goals.

Water in the Klamath Basin is in such short supply that in late May thousands of juvenile salmon in the lower Klamath watershed died. Water for Klamath Project farmers has been cut to zero by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Topsoil in Madras is being depleted since water allocations are forcing farmers to leave half of their acreage fallow. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that only 55% of U.S. topsoil has adequate moisture, 10 points less than last year.

While the pandemic caused prices of many foods to rise, shortages from the farm are also a factor. The causes are drought, storms and fires coincident with higher levels of carbon in the atmosphere.

The previous column described federal legislation to reduce carbon emissions as generally falling into three categories: expenditures, regulation and/or a carbon price. Here are some updates on what is actually happening.

The climate change expenditures in President Joe Biden's infrastructure bill have likely disappeared. Existing programs including electric car and energy-efficient appliance tax credit will continue for at least this year. Theoretically offsetting those lost climate change elements, many bills have been introduced for bits and pieces of the carbon picture, but each will nevertheless have to pass Congress.

Given the difficulty of passing expenditure bills, the energy grid should be the target. Utilities are trying to cope with incorporating renewable sources to reduce their own emissions while also supplying additional power to support an economywide conversion from fossil fuels.

The switch goes beyond electric vehicles to manufacturing, agriculture, heating and just about any other process you can think of. There are technical problems (seasonality and inverters) and cost.

Wood McKenzie, an industry consultant, estimates \$4.5 trillion to adapt and upgrade but Oil Price — an oil and gas consulting firm — says \$7 trillion to also fix poorly developed and maintained grids like the Texas

system. The federal Department of Energy and National Renewable Energy Laboratory are already working on technical issues. This is a challenge and investment worthy of the U.S. federal government.

Regulations on energy utilities that were in effect during the Obama administration are closer to being reestablished. However, recent data indicate that without additional efforts, emissions may still be well above 2050 goals.

Carbon reductions from Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards have been reduced by more than 60% since an automaker petition last year.

Even so, regulations could have extraordinary value if they can be implemented in an infrastructure bill. Concrete and steel (4% to 4.5% of industrial emissions respectively) will be major components for repair and construction of highways and bridges. Both have emerging capabilities to reduce carbon emissions well below current levels.

McKinsey reports dated May and June 2020 provide instructive reviews of steel and concrete processes and inputs that reduce carbon. There are enough options for companies to pick those most appropriate for their operations. Given the amount to be spent on new infrastructure, new carbon-reducing technologies should be embraced whatever the final plan.

In short, neither expenditures nor regulations for carbon reduction have progressed this year. What's left, however, is powerful. A price on carbon is waiting in the wings. A price on carbon levied only on the original producers of fossil fuels will make it through every transaction in the economy based on the level of carbon emitted.

In the U.S., 180 billion monetary transactions occurred in 2018, according to the Federal Reserve — that is 21 million an hour! It is hard to imagine the rate and volume of monetary transactions, but it is even harder to imagine how many government

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expenditures, regulations and administrative agencies would be needed to affect each product or service bought or sold precisely on the basis of their carbon emissions.

Under carbon-pricing provisions, revenues are distributed to households such that a majority of households are better off despite carbon price increases. Other analyses (OECD, 2021) demonstrate an increase in employment and higher wages with carbon pricing similar to what has already occurred in the solar and wind industries.

Carbon pricing bills are also designed to equalize goods with different carbon emissions when they are imported. This means that importers can't undercut the prices of U.S. goods that have lower emissions. The bills also recognize sequestration, that is, the storing of carbons within products (like concrete), soils, plants and underground.

Moreover, innovation is skyrocketing as scientists and engineers recognize the challenge of climate change. Converting from fossil fuels to green electricity is one methodology. Using fuel cells and nonpolluting methane are others. To implement these processes, industry needs to see a demonstration of national will to support the effort. For this, it needs an inexpensive, market based and economywide program. That's a carbon price.

Burning fossil fuels changes more than the weather. It is also the source of air pollution, which killed 230,000 people in the United States in 2018. Yale Environmental also estimated the treatment of pollution-caused disease at \$600 billion in that year alone. Whether it's climate or disease, if you don't think it can get any worse, think again. NASA and NOAA agreed that 419 ppm is the correct estimate of current atmospheric carbon.

Last column: Who supports what?  
■ Brenda Pace is retired from Pace Research Co., a regional economics consultancy, and the Center for Natural Lands Management, a habitat management nonprofit for endangered species responsible for more than 75,000 acres.

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.

# How to help COVID-crippled businesses: Get a vaccine!

BY LANE JACOBSON AND DREW KAZA  
As small business owners in Sisters, we are often asked by our loyal customers just what they can do to help us out after the detrimental impacts of COVID-19 over the past 15 months.

In the past, we might have given a variety of answers. But right now, the answer is simple: please go get your vaccinations. And if you already have yours, find a way to encourage or help someone who hasn't yet received a vaccination get one.

Yes, short of locking yourself in your home with stacks of books and movies (which honestly sounds alright to us — but we're biased), being vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself from COVID. But getting a COVID vaccine is also the ultimate act of selflessness... especially now. With Oregon on the precipice of reaching the Health Authority's stated

goal of 70% adults vaccinated, any effort made to help achieve the 65,000 or so remaining shots necessary to get to 70% is certainly "helping the team." In this case, it's Team Oregon — and in our case, small businesses that continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic's impact.

Even today, without meeting the vaccine threshold, our customers are forced to social distance and keep their masks on.

There remains a misperception or two around the "end" of the pandemic. One is that by having hit 65%, Deschutes County is already out of the woods. The other is that the state is prepared to drop all restrictions, regardless of vaccine levels, on June 21. But neither is true.

As of this writing, 1 in 67 residents of Deschutes County has as active case of COVID-19. With new vaccines into arms stagnating (a lot), we

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could still be weeks away from reaching Gov. Brown's 70% threshold. Last week, her office and the OHA reiterated that June 21 was simply the target date for lifting restrictions — so in theory, we could be in for a few long weeks. Don't believe us? Just look at the UK, which had originally targeted the exact same date (June 21) for ending its "lockdown" and all associated restrictions. However, in recent days, a spike of the Delta variant in that country has forced it to backtrack. As of Monday, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has declared July 19 as the new date to resume "normal" social contact.

Oregon cannot afford another month, or longer, continuing under the straining stipulations of medical mandates. But as conscientious mer-

chants in a community with countless vulnerable individuals, we are not about to argue with the policies of health experts and will continue to put the safety of our community first.

Yes, Deschutes County has done an admirable job getting to the high 60s in vaccinated individuals. But all around us are counties that have achieved far fewer folks with vaccine protection so far. That leaves us at unusual risk throughout the normal interplay of summer traffic, recreation and commerce. The new variants could easily spike here — and attack our younger populations or those who have still not been fully vaccinated.

We all want to lose the masks. We want to hug our loved ones — hell, in our case, there are quite a few of our regular customers we are ready to hug also. But we're going to wait until it's safe to do so and we've been given the all-clear.

It's never been easier to get the vaccine than it is now, with a number of walk-in locations throughout the county — entirely free, with no insurance or identification required.

Just visit Deschutes County's COVID resources pages for more information and then act today — don't delay.

As we mentioned before, the single best thing you can do to help your beloved local small businesses survive the next few months and return to serving the community in the way we all want is to get your vaccinations — or help someone close to you get one.

To quote an old ad slogan from a (formerly small) Oregon business: "Just Do It!"

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