

Law enforcement is on right track

Public safety appears to be on the right track in both Redmond and Warm Springs.

Redmond recently announced its plan to build a new police station, while the Confederated Tribes at Warm Springs has received the OK to construct a new jail that will be up to federal standards.

Key to the Redmond facility is the addition of an “on-site mental health triage center,” according to a story by The Bulletin’s reporter Garrett Andrews.

That will be similar to the stabilization center that is operating adjacent to the Deschutes County jail and sheriff’s office, which has been a large success story.

A stabilization center is a holding facility for people who may be having a mental health crisis. In the past, those people would be dropped at the hospital emergency rooms and pretty much left to fend for themselves, not to mention the cost to the county for such services.

The Deschutes County Stabilization Center has been open for the last 13 months, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since the center has been open, Andrews writes, 30 people have indicated to staff they would have killed themselves had the facility not been there.

The facility sees a daily average of nine people ranging in age from 6 to 93 years old. Most people come in during the day, though the center is busy throughout the night.

It’s no secret that Redmond is a fast-expanding city and needs to stay ahead of the population boom. The current station is 25 years old and used to house 36 employees. Today, the staff is up to 61 employees.

The addition of a crisis mental health facility really meets that need that police officers are often unqualified to handle. It takes the pressure off the officers and the hospitals.

Meanwhile, in Warm Springs, according to a story in the Madras Pioneer, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has agreed to fund a new jail on the reservation. It has been in dire need of renovation due to neglect.

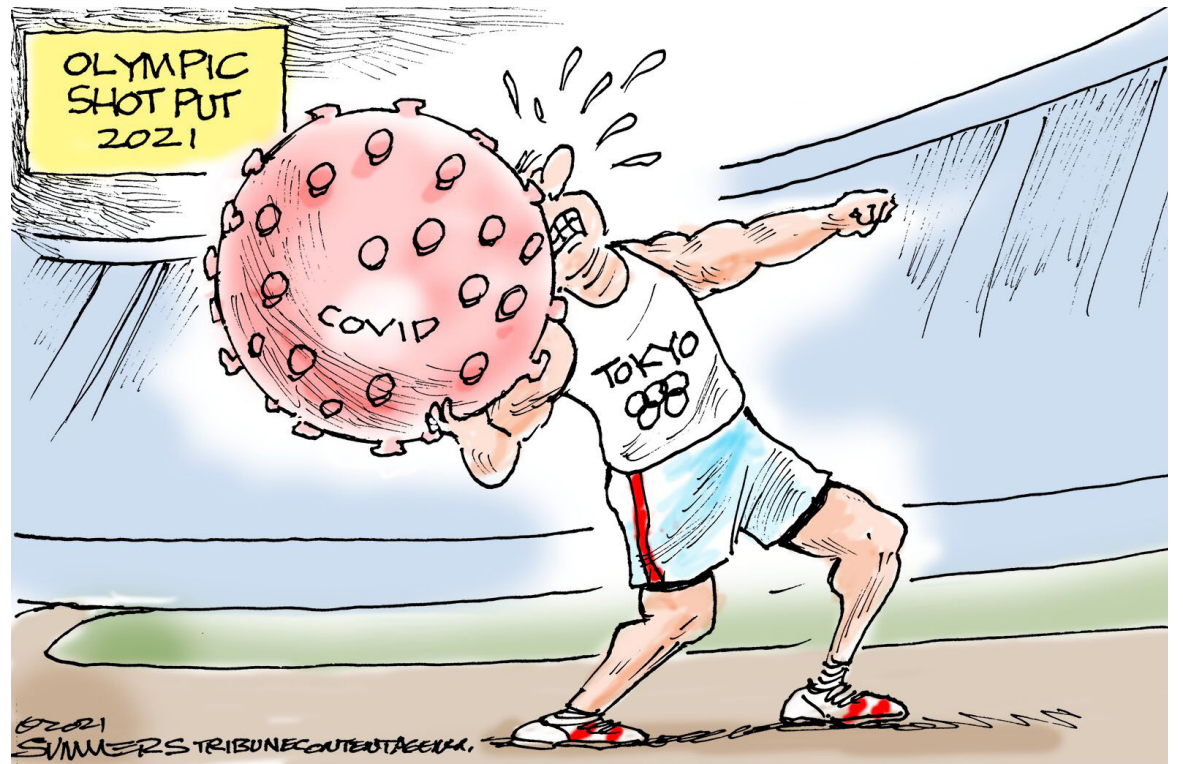
“The straw that broke the camel’s back was COVID,” Bill Elliott, chief of the Warm Springs Tribal Police Department, said in the Madras Pioneer. Elliott describes the cinder-block, 51-bed jail as “a dungeon.”

Built in 1989, the structure has a primitive ventilation system. The department closed the Warm Springs jail permanently in August because individuals could not be isolated from the coronavirus.

But the jail has been closed on and off since 2017, according to The Pioneer. The reservation experiences frequent power outages, and the jail’s backup generator frequently fails. The troubled water system on the reservation made it unsafe to house inmates at the jail, and inmates and staff suffered through the summer of 2020 without air conditioning.

Elliott said the intent of the new jail is to have a facility that provides a safe environment for both inmates and staff and is capable of handling issues such as areas to contain possible outbreaks of contagious diseases. And it will be a place for the most vulnerable of the community’s population, providing access to mental health and other services to assist in options to incarcerations or rehabilitation.

Public safety is so much more than locking people up. These two projects show that the strength of a community is to demonstrate in how well it handles its most vulnerable.



Bureau of Land Management has gone rogue in managing wild horses

BY PRISCILLA FERAL

You’d think that the Bureau of Land Management would have learned from its recent assault on Utah’s beloved Onaqui wild horse herd that Americans want the agency to keep its hands off wild horses and halt the rest of the 2021 roundups.

The Onaqui roundup, which ripped 435 wild horses from the range after drugging them with fertility control for years, drew the ire of the public, celebrities, legislators and advocates. Everyone made it clear they want wild horses to be free, not privatized through an adoption program that does not protect wild horses from slaughter.

Still, it’s business as usual for the meat-industry-loving BLM. Now, Oregon’s wild horses are targeted. The BLM is slated to roundup 750 from the Beatys Butte, Stinking-water and Pokegama Herd Management Areas.

However, since the Onaqui wild horses are so frequently visited and famous, all eyes are now on the BLM — and public backlash matters.

There is hope to derail BLM’s wild horse extinction plan through Friends of Animals’ ongoing legal efforts, but also if the public keeps pressure on new leadership — Deb Haaland and Nada Culver, a new BLM director — to demand reforms to rein in this rogue agency, which has obliterated the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971.

The BLM can legally establish appropriate management levels, or AML; however, it doesn’t use science to do so. Then it perpetuates the lie that there are too many wild horses, convincing Congress that

GUEST COLUMN



Feral

roundups and fertility control are necessary.

BLM has shirked responsibility to maintain thriving natural ecological balance, letting doomed

livestock dominate the range. Case in point — the AML within the Beatys Butte HMA, which spans 437,120 acres, is a scant 100 to 250 wild horses. However, a staggering 4,469 cattle can graze in the Beatys Butte Common allotment.

It is the 50th anniversary of the WHBA, the perfect time to begin phasing out livestock grazing allotments in wild horse HMAs and to start using scientific models to determine AMLs and to survey the range. Doing so would also give our planet a better chance to combat the climate crisis.

Speaking of, wild horses have a positive impact on the habitat where they evolved. A recent study reveals they are ecosystem engineers, using their hooves to dig more than 6 feet deep to reach groundwater, which helps other wildlife. Other studies show wild horses do not decompose the vegetation they ingest, which allows them to spread seeds of many plant species and sequester carbon in their droppings. And they help to build more moisture-retaining soils and prevent catastrophic fires.

The BLM should be fostering an appreciation for wild horses and other native species through eco-

tourism instead of wiping out every animal deemed a threat to ranching. It makes economic sense, too.

According to the Department of the Interior Fiscal Year 2019 Economic Report, forage and grazing supported an estimated \$2.2 billion in economic output and about 40,000 jobs. In contrast, Interior’s lands hosted an estimated 501 million visits. Recreation accounts for 469,000 jobs and contributes \$60.6 billion to the economy.

And we don’t mean creating more paved roads, just create maps and put up some signs to point people in the direction of wild horses as their feet touch the Earth while hiking.

BLM’s belief that wild horses only have value if they can be adopted out, domesticated and trained is a national disgrace. It was recently publicized in the media that the “Wild Spayed Filly Futurity” event 2019 winner was from the South Steens HMA in Oregon, and our hearts sank because we visited there in 2016. Witnessing the wild horse herd dynamics was magical.

One staff member will never forget that a BLM employee at the Burns District office told her the best place to see wild horses in Oregon is the Wild Horse Corral holding prison. That statement alone says volumes about what the BLM is all about.

Priscilla Feral is president of Friends of Animals, an international animal advocacy organization founded in 1957, and advocates for the rights of animals, free-living and domestic, around the world. It is currently involved in a lawsuit against the BLM’s multiple 10-year wild horse management plans, which conflict with the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971.

Historical editorials: Breaking quarantine

The following historical editorials originally appeared in what was then called The Bend Bulletin on Aug. 24, 1906.

The action of certain parties in insisting on breaking a quarantine established by the Bend board of health, to say the least, deserves the most severe censure. When a board of health imposes a quarantine, with no purpose in mind other than to obey the law and protect public health, and this quarantine is disregarded by some, there is no alternative left but a summary arrest of those violating the law. The recent arrests in Bend were amply justified and those arrested got no more than their just deserts. The city officials should be commended for the faithful performance of a duty that, that the best, must have been an unpleasant and disagreeable one.

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Bro. Myers of the Laidlaw Chronicle takes exception to The Bulletin’s statement classing George L. Simmons excellent ranch “in the Bend country.” He would prefer that the Simmons ranch be credited to Laidlaw. Well! Well! We are sure no offense was intended. Yet, Bro. Myers, for many years, yea, long before the thriving little town of Laidlaw was even conceived in man’s mind, the country in this part of the Deschutes Valley was designated as “the Bend country.” So The Bulletin was not so far amiss after all. Be that as it may, we are glad to hear so many good crop reports from this whole “upper Deschutes valley” (as Bro. Myers would have it called), glad to hear of “the Laidlaw country’s” prosperity, of Redmond’s fine crops, and similar good reports from all parts of the compass. Laidlaw is to be congratulated upon having so valiant a defender of her rights as in Bro. Myers.

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Apartment boomtowns may be next bubble as demand moves

BY CONOR SEN
Bloomberg opinion

It was hard enough to build apartments in high-cost cities like San Francisco before the pandemic triggered an exodus from urban neighborhoods, and now the economics are even tougher. But that’s giving smaller cities a chance to catch up to the rental boom that previously lifted other noncoastal metros like Austin and Denver. For builders, it’s a riskier calculation.

The divergence in the rise and fall of rents between high-cost and low-cost metro areas means it makes better sense to build apartments in places like Spokane, Washington, than San Francisco — at least in the short-term.

To best understand this, look at rental prices in different metro areas now compared with the onset of the pandemic last spring. The June data from Apartment List shows that in the

highest-cost metro area, San Francisco, rents are still down almost 15% from where they were in March 2020. On the other end of the spectrum, the metro areas with the fastest rent growth have been those that came into the pandemic with some of the lowest prices in the country, including Fresno, California, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Rising construction costs are another big factor for anyone looking to build anything right now. Rick Palacios Jr. of John Burns Real Estate Consulting showed earlier this month that the cost of building a home has risen by 22% year-over-year. And while apartment buildings aren’t the same as single-family houses, a broad-based increase in the cost of construction is going to pinch multifamily developers as well.

So those builders in San Francisco are dealing with rents that are down 15% and construction costs that are up 20%.

Meanwhile, rent prices are booming in interior-West metro areas like Spokane and Boise, Idaho, rising more than 30% since March 2020. That makes those places more attractive to builders than they were 18 months ago, even with the higher construction costs. To the extent those cities missed out on last decade’s millennial stampede to downtown apartments in places like Denver, Nashville, and Austin, Texas, there’s an additional incentive to build in places that need to catch up.

As economic conditions return to normal, we don’t know how long these higher rents are sustainable in metro areas that benefited from changed priorities during the pandemic. We had a decade to acclimate to the idea of technology companies and young college-educated workers moving to the urban centers of large metro areas all over the country, and

apartment developers built housing to meet that demand.

Right now, the theme makes sense of homebuyers moving to Boise where they can afford a bigger house than they could on the West Coast.

But are there really going to be growing numbers of people wanting to rent luxury apartments in metro areas of 250,000 to 500,000 people that aren’t set to land the next technology-company campus? That’s perhaps a riskier proposition for apartment developers.

Another, more sobering thought is what all this might suggest for rents down the road in San Francisco. If the increase in construction costs is permanent, to get back to pre-pandemic economics for apartment developers we might need to see market rents that are far higher than they were in early 2020.

Maybe it’ll take one-bedroom

apartments going for \$4,000 a month to get the dirt moving on multifamily housing. And until that happens, fewer housing units will be delivered in the city over the next couple years.

It’s possible the current lower-rent period is just a passing reprieve for Bay Area renters, similar to how things were for a few years after the dot-com bubble burst in the early 2000s — before rents soared to previously unthinkable heights.

So we should expect the apartment construction pipeline in high-cost cities to slow down until rents rise enough — or costs drop enough — to give developers the economics they need again. But that doesn’t mean apartment construction will dry up everywhere. It’ll just shift to where the rents have risen enough to make it profitable.

Conor Sen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and the founder of Peachtree Creek Investments.