

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright Publisher
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Hotel shelter is not the solution — but will help

The city of Bend's purchase of the Bend Value Inn for a homeless shelter may be needed now more than ever. But it is also a reminder of how much more need there is.

"I don't know that our speed ... will match the need," said Molly Heiss, director of housing stabilization for NeighborImpact, the city's contractor who will run the hotel shelter.

On Tuesday evening Heiss and representatives from the city met with people who live near the site on NE Division Street to explain how it will operate and answer questions. The shelter may be up and running by the end of the year.

28 rooms. That's what the hotel has. That could make a difference in the lives of those who get selected to live there. It could put them on a path to more permanent housing and a more stable life. There are hundreds more who live in and around Bend that there will not be room for in this shelter or the others in town. Nobody is pretending otherwise.

"This is one part of the solution," said Carolyn Eagan, Bend's recovery strategy and impact officer.

Families and individuals will be chosen for the shelter based on the hope that they seem likely to succeed in transitioning away from homelessness. It won't be the people who are most difficult to house or the people who are most difficult to treat. Where do those people go? We don't know.

A few rooms at the hotel shelter may be set aside specifically for homeless patients who are scheduled to be discharged from treatment at the hospital and lack mobility and a place to stay. It's one of the yawning gaps in the system now. There's often no good place for those people to go. Now there may be.

Maybe a dozen people who live near the hotel shelter came out

for the meeting Tuesday evening. They had many, many questions. Security? Camping next to the hotel? Needles on the ground? People tromping through their yards? Who can we call if we see something? Neighbors also pointed out a disparity. If they want to do something on their property, they have to march through the city's bureaucratic steps. The city, because of changes in state law, could skip the steps and site the hotel shelter.

Another question that came up: Why has Bend concentrated three homeless shelters in one part of town? Shepherd's House is just south on NE Division Street. And if you go the other way, not too far north is the Bethlehem Inn. Well, that was not a calculated plan. The city only picked the hotel it purchased. It is a good point, though. Why are they all in that general area? Why nothing on Bend's west side?

Heiss didn't make sweeping promises to the neighbors. She was, though, reassuring and honest. She pledged she or her successor will be available to respond to concerns and will strive to be a good neighbor. She said there might be people who use drugs who stay at the shelter, but no drug use will be permitted on site. She added that the services offered at the shelter — medical care, perhaps some meals — will only be available for people who live there. That should help minimize the impact on the local neighborhood.

You can gripe and prickle at how little the city and other governmental agencies have done to care for and help the houseless in Bend and Central Oregon. These 28 new rooms will be abundantly inadequate. But every little bit helps.



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

The Bend Value Inn is at 2346 NE Division St. in Bend. This photo was taken in May.

Don't give COVID-19 another chance

After a year of masking up and keeping socially distant, it's been such a relief to see people's faces again, to get together more freely again.

And now the federal government has made an about-face on its recommendations for indoor mask wearing. That's even for the vacci-

nated, in areas of high-risk.

We have already given up so much and lost so much thanks to the pandemic. But if we can follow the recommendations again and more people get vaccinated, we can arrest the surge in new cases. We can again give the virus less chance to take lives and wreak havoc. Sounds like a plan.



GUEST COLUMN

The Endangered Species Act is not the problem in area's water shortage

BY YANCY LIND

The Bulletin recently ran a guest column from a Central Oregon farmer asserting that the Endangered Species Act is partly to blame for current water shortages. Many local farmers need more water, but the column is written from a perspective that does not hold up to objective analysis.

Science is a cornerstone of our lives. Our understanding of the world and the material things we use every day come from scientific inquiry. Without science we would still live in the Dark Ages where lives were nasty, brutish and short. True, science is an ongoing process, but the scientific method continues to refine our understanding of the world and deliver the benefits of that inquiry.

Today, the best available science overwhelming tells us that our burning of fossil fuels is causing global warming. People in the United States and around the world are starting to experience the personal impact from it, but scientists have been sounding the alarm about warming for decades. As predicted, a heating planet is causing extreme weather events like excessive heat, drought, wildfires, as well as heavy rains and localized, temporary extreme cold events as the jet stream is disrupted.

The scientific consensus is that we are now living in the sixth great extinction event that has occurred on Earth, an event that is accelerat-



Lind

ing. Most of us are familiar with the idea that an asteroid killed the dinosaurs, but the fossil and geologic record shows that other mass extinctions occurred when carbon dioxide levels dramatically increased, most likely from increased volcanic activity. The same thing is happening now, at an unprecedented rate, and volcanoes are not the cause.

As an angler and fish advocate, I am quite aware of the science that says anadromous fish like salmon and steelhead will likely be extirpated in much of the Columbia Basin in our lifetimes. In many places, low flows and higher temperatures are creating lethal conditions for anadromous fish as well as resident fish like trout and whitefish. A great example of this can easily be seen this summer on the Crooked River below Prineville.

The Oregon Water Resources Department has a web site that graphs flows in many rivers including the Crooked near Smith Rocks State Park. At times this July flows have been so low as to not be measurable. At other times flows have been around 10 cubic feet per second. At 10 cfs you can literally cross the river without getting your feet wet by stepping on the exposed rocks. According to Oregon Water Resources Department, the water temperature

during this period has reached 90 degrees. These are conditions that will kill all aquatic life, at least stress nearby plants, and negatively impact animals that are part of the ecosystem.

Readers of The Bulletin are likely aware of the ongoing effort to reintroduce steelhead and spring chinook salmon into the upper Deschutes River Basin above Lake Billy Chinook. As of July 22, 72 returning adult spring chinook have been moved from the Lower Deschutes into the lake, and over half of them have moved up into the lowermost reaches of the Crooked River. They will not make it far, however, certainly not to their historical spawning beds.

We have had decades to prepare for the impacts of global warming, but little has been done. It is a global issue, but local action can be taken. Eighty-eight percent of the water rights in Central Oregon are held by irrigators, and over half of that is wasted from canal seepage and widespread inefficient irrigation practices. If anything, the current state of our local rivers illustrates that environmental protections are far too weak. Should we drain even more water from our environment or share and more efficiently use the diminishing resources that we have? Environmental protections are not the problem. We are.

■ Yancy Lind lives in Tumalo and writes about fish and water at coinformedangler.org.

High Desert Museum is a national treasure and deserves our support

BY JOSH NEWTON

Dr. James Bradburne, the director of Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, has stated that the value of a museum should be measured by what it does, rather than what it possesses; he has also stated that museums are best understood as "everyone's big house," providing a place for people to contextualize the human experience through civic dialogue and conviviality.

The High Desert Museum is our big house. Earlier this year, the Institute of Museum and Library Services named the High Desert Museum as one of six winners of its national medal—the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that have made significant contributions to their communities. This is a proud achievement and richly deserved.

The museum's late founder, Don Kerr, was known for his unbounded enthusiasm for all that is the High Desert of the American West. The museum still reflects Kerr's wonderment and carries his original vision to wildly excite and responsibly teach others about this unique and transformative landscape. The museum has an enduring commitment to the exploration of the historical and contemporary issues of the High Desert, endeavoring to provide insight and understanding for visitors of all ages.

GUEST COLUMN



Newton

The museum focuses on being accessible to all and on strengthening its relationships with the Indigenous peoples of the High Desert. It has forged a collaborative relationship with the Museum At Warm Springs, which has allowed the two institutions to cooperate in areas of mutual interest.

Another example of the Museum's importance to our community can be found in its pandemic response of creating a place-based virtual learning opportunities for students, teachers and families. The museum has hosted the Doc and Connie Hatfield Sustainable Resource Lecture since 2012, which is a well-recognized forum for discourse about holistic ranching in the High Desert.

The museum is now the largest cultural institution east of the Cascades in Oregon. It annually receives 200,000 visitors, including over 31,000 children. The museum has an estimated annual economic impact of \$21 million. Its sound financial management has led to independent recognition by industry

rating entities, balanced budgets for more than a decade and a growing endowment.

The museum has spent nearly four decades serving its community. When it opened, Bend had a population of fewer than 20,000. Bend's population now exceeds 100,000, and, of course, the rest of Central Oregon has experienced similar growth.

The museum is currently developing plans to meet the needs of our increasing population. It is planning to renovate some of its flagship exhibits and to create new spaces in order to continue to fulfill its mission and better serve the community. In short, the museum is working to make its "big house" even bigger so that it can continue to be a "crucible and producer of culture," in the words of Dr. Bradburne.

The museum has always been fortunate to receive broad community support. It has worked hard to return that support by building and maintaining an institution that provides enduring value, which is now nationally recognized. I believe that Kerr would be very proud not just of the museum but of the special community that allowed the museum to flourish through its continued support.

■ Josh Newton lives in Bend and is a member of the board of trustees of the High Desert Museum.

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.

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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.

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Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions

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