

# EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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## Listen hard to what St. Charles is saying

If a person gets in a car accident or has a heart attack in Central Oregon, they may not get the kind of care they usually would. That is what scares Dr. Jeff Absalon of St. Charles Health Systems the most.

St. Charles is overwhelmed by COVID patients. "I can't overstate this," Absalon said Thursday during a news conference with Gov. Kate Brown. "What we are going through right now is unimaginable. ... We are overwhelmed."

As of Thursday morning, St. Charles had 62 COVID-19 patients, the most it had at any time during the pandemic, said Absalon, the chief physician executive for St. Charles. And the surge driven by the more contagious delta variant is not over. We should all really take a moment to reflect on what Absalon said.

His words should be a warning and a guide.

The hospital has roughly 200 open positions for nurses. And that is as demand for care has risen and the level of care required is more acute.

"Just a few days ago I had the honor of stepping into our intensive care unit in Bend," Absalon said. "Unfortunately it was just a few minutes after we lost a young COVID-19 patient. ... Our nurses had tears in their eyes. And yet they had to get right back to work to care for patients that needed their services. And that's what they did. And that's what they do."

"We have also had family members that have had to say goodbye to patients through a glass door or through an iPad."

"We have also had patients come into our hospitals who don't believe in COVID-19. ... They are diagnosed with the disease, but don't believe in it."

*"There are those who didn't believe in COVID-19 or didn't believe in vaccinations until they were in our care gasping. ... And became believers and encouraged their family members to get vaccinated and to take measures to prevent the spread of this disease. That's what's happening in our hospitals and health system."*

— Dr. Jeff Absalon of St. Charles Health Systems

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"That's what's happening in our hospitals and health system."

There is a clear path out of this. Get vaccinated, if you are not. It will help protect you and those you love. It will give the virus less chance to mutate further into new more contagious and virulent variants.

Be extra careful with masking and social distancing.

And when you are out and about exercising, working or working around the house, remember, if you get injured, St. Charles may not be able to give you the kind of care it would normally.

## Historical editorial: Where lies the shame?

■ *Editor's note: The following historical editorial originally appeared in what was then called The Bend Bulletin on Sept. 21, 1906.*

The Prineville Review in speaking of the "shame of Oregon" due to the land fraud exposures says: "The public would never have known it was injured by any of the defendants except Puter had it not been for Hitchcock and the Oregonian."

"The public would never have known!"

Does the Review mean to imply that the shame of a rascally deed consists only in being caught in the act? Is it honorable to steal as long as you are not found out and as long as the public does not know that it is being robbed? Wherein lies the real shame and dishonor of unlawful deeds — in the deed itself or in being caught and exposed? Which

would react ultimately to a state's shame and dishonor: To have a horde of thieves holding her high offices and corrupting her citizenship, or to have the office-holding thieves and their accomplices exposed and punished.

The silly ranting by some of Oregon's papers against the government's land fraud prosecutions is disgusting and in itself a cause for shame. It must be evident to anyone who followed the evidence in the most recent trials in Portland that the defendants were guilty, guilty of an elaborately laid conspiracy to rob the government — in other words to steal. Just ordinary, every day, "low-down" stealing. It would be more to honor Oregon's honor for her citizens to unite in condemning such rank rascality, rather than to defend the accused and the attack the government's policy of prosecution.



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## My Nickel's Worth

### Plan for Bend's environment

Bend is no longer a small lumber/farming/ranching town. City Council needs to take the responsibility they were elected to do and plan for Bend's future for the next 30 years. The lack of forward planning by previous councils is evident, so please don't repeat the shortfall.

Large proposed projects are on the immediate horizon. City planners need to evaluate these projects for potential environmental impacts such as air quality; greenhouse gas; surface water runoff quality; land use compatibility with area development; construction and operational noise; construction and operational traffic, including peak hour intersection level of service, traffic safety, and roadway capacity; 30-year water supply; wastewater treatment capacity; police and fire response times; school capacity; recycling; cumulative impacts, etc.

These environmental issues should be addressed by the developers prior to any city approvals so the city council and Bend residents know the project impacts before being approved. If there are impacts, measures to reduce impacts to an acceptable level to the city and the residents should be conditions of approval.

These upfront studies are vital to provide full disclosure of project impacts for everyone. Yes, the city needs additional housing to address the affordability issue. However, the city does not need to sacrifice quality development for additional housing.

If a developer truly has the best interest of Bend at heart, providing important studies to determine the potential significant impacts of their project should be in their best interest too. Bend is a growing community

and no longer a small lumber/farming/ranching town.

— Phil Martin, Bend

### A perfect storm

We are besieged each day with ominous warnings about climate change. It has become almost a cult religion and those who dissent are ostracized. Recently western governors attributed wild fires to climate change. This conclusion cannot be accepted without careful consideration of actions by state and federal governments that may be the main driver.

We know that there were massive fires consuming 4.4 million acres of California forest and shrub lands annually. And they occurred when the Earth was cooler than today. If this historical footnote is accurate, then what other factor is at work? Until the early '90s, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and state forestry departments allowed harvesting and concomitant replanting of our forests. As part of the timber operations, roads were built to permit access to the harvest sites. These roads created fire breaks and ground access to facilitate arrest of conflagrations. Massive fires were thus constrained and contained.

What happened? Environmentalists discovered the spotted owl and hooted that logging must stop. In Oregon harvesting was cut by three quarters. Fire breaks disappeared. The forest became overcrowded with both overstory and understory trees and brush. Bark beetles flourished. A perfect fire storm was in the offing.

Necessary but partial solution is to increase prescribed burns; enhance harvesting; and restore fire breaks. A return to 1980 management of our forests ought to reduce the magnitude

of fire risk to our communities. And there is a bit of irony: environmentalists who demanded that harvests be curtailed to leave the forest pristine are reaping what they sowed — destruction of that sought to be preserved.

— Thomas Triplett, Bend

### Don't dry up our water

I am writing to express serious concern about the developments that are being considered and are already in the approval stages in Bend and the surrounding area. I have been reading about how concerned everyone is about the water situation in Central Oregon. Rightly so. You read about farmers suing to get more water. Rightly so. Then you read about new developments — Stevenson and 27th come to mind. Where is the water going to come from to support a few thousand more people?

I lived in San Luis Obispo, California, and there was concern expressed because the water table was being drained. Building slowed. They found a new source from the Lake Nacimiento water project. And like magic, development exploded. New shopping centers. New homes. Now California, like Oregon, is in a drought, again, and water concerns expressed. But I see no sign of construction slowing or even stopping.

I try to do a few things to help. I turn off my irrigation when it's raining. I make sure my sprinklers aren't watering the paved street. I eliminated 12 sprinkler heads by going to more efficient and less flooding ones. I take shorter showers. We can all do something to help. If we keep kicking the can down the road, this will truly be a desert.

— John Brower, 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.

## Connecting park and rec staffing challenges and services

BY DON HORTON

Today, the Bend Park & Recreation District has 50 staff positions open. These positions are front-line positions that are critical to the services we provide our community. In the midst of a pandemic and preparing for a busy fall season, our team is heads-down trying everything possible to find good people to fill these positions.

I've worked in parks and recreation for 35 years and I've never experienced anything quite like this current staffing challenge. It's not unique to parks and recreation — all industries are facing critical shortages of employees.

Restaurants, retailers, schools, construction, sales and government organizations like the Bend Park &

Recreation District are facing unprecedented crossroads in attracting and retaining employees.

We're putting our best foot forward to attract team members who want to be part of a great organization doing important work for the community. Several of our long-time employees and leaders started their careers as lifeguards, trail builders and camp counselors that grew into careers in the park and recreation industry that is increasingly a destination rather than a stepping stone.

We have increased pay rates, converted 20 part-time positions into full-time positions and offered great benefits for individuals and family dependents. We provide paid time off, medical, dental and vision health insurance plan options, a recreation



Horton

### GUEST COLUMN

facility pass and discounts on many recreation programs for employees that also extend to family members. Employees at Bend Park & Recreation District take great pride in providing parks, trails and recreation services to the community. We believe in Play for Life and we are willing to train others who share our passion for serving the community.

We've had some success with on-the-spot hiring events and have two more scheduled in the coming weeks. These hiring events have been a great way for candidates and hiring supervisors to connect to fit candidates into the right position. We're advertising, incentivizing employees to refer friends and family and posting signs in facilities, parks and vehicles to

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reach out to potential employees.

We've weathered labor shortages in the past by stretching our resources a little thinner and finding ways to do the work with less staff, but those options have been exhausted. This time, we must fill the needed positions or service levels will be reduced.

Without more lifeguards, the pool hours will decrease. Without youth recreation leaders, we can't provide crucial child care to the working families relying on it when school begins. Without custodians, some restrooms may be closed and trash may be collected less frequently.

I need your help to prevent this from happening by helping us get the word out that your park and recreation district is at a critical juncture and needs staff in order to continue offering programs at the levels we've historically come to expect.

My hope is that the tenacity of our recruitment efforts will bear fruit for the park district and for all other employers who are also challenged in the current job market.

We're all counting on it. If you or someone you know is considering a job, please encourage them to explore openings and join an organization that lines up with values of our community.

More information about our openings can be found at [bendparksandrec.org/jobs](http://bendparksandrec.org/jobs).

■ Don Horton is executive director of the Bend Park & Recreation District.