

# Transparency loses with Gov. Brown, Legislature

Who owns government information — citizens, or the public employees our taxes pay to produce it?

Oregon continues to struggle with this issue. Lawmakers have twice failed to pass legislation that would set limits on the time and fees for responding to public records requests. And groups that shape state policies and laws, including political party caucuses and work groups that advise the governor and Legislature, routinely meet in secret.

Gov. Kate Brown succeeded in some small efforts directed at situations arising from the Kitzhaber/Hayes scandal. But more meaningful improvements have died on the vine.

A legislative leader told our Capital Bureau reporters that a key reform stalled this year because city and county governments opposed deadlines and fee limits in the bill.

It is always possible to find examples of gadflies stretching open-records laws by making overly broad or burdensome requests.

However, the American system of government deliberately vests the news media and citizen activists with a large role in making certain the public knows what civil servants are doing and saying. Inconvenience and expense are never valid excuses when an agency fails to live up to fundamental expectations.

The rise of email — and a trend of government employees and elected leaders using personal accounts to conduct what is supposed to be public business — makes it particularly important that transparency laws keep up with changing technology. It is reasonable to require officials to promptly submit such emails for official archiving.

Beyond the issue of government documents in all formats, some public entities in Oregon routinely shut the press and public out of meetings, or fail to publicize them. This is never acceptable.

Oregon prides itself on strong adherence to democratic principles. Our leaders must do much better at living up to these aspirations.



## WHERE TO WRITE

### GRANT COUNTY

- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
- **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
- **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflong-creek.com.
- **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
- **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
- **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

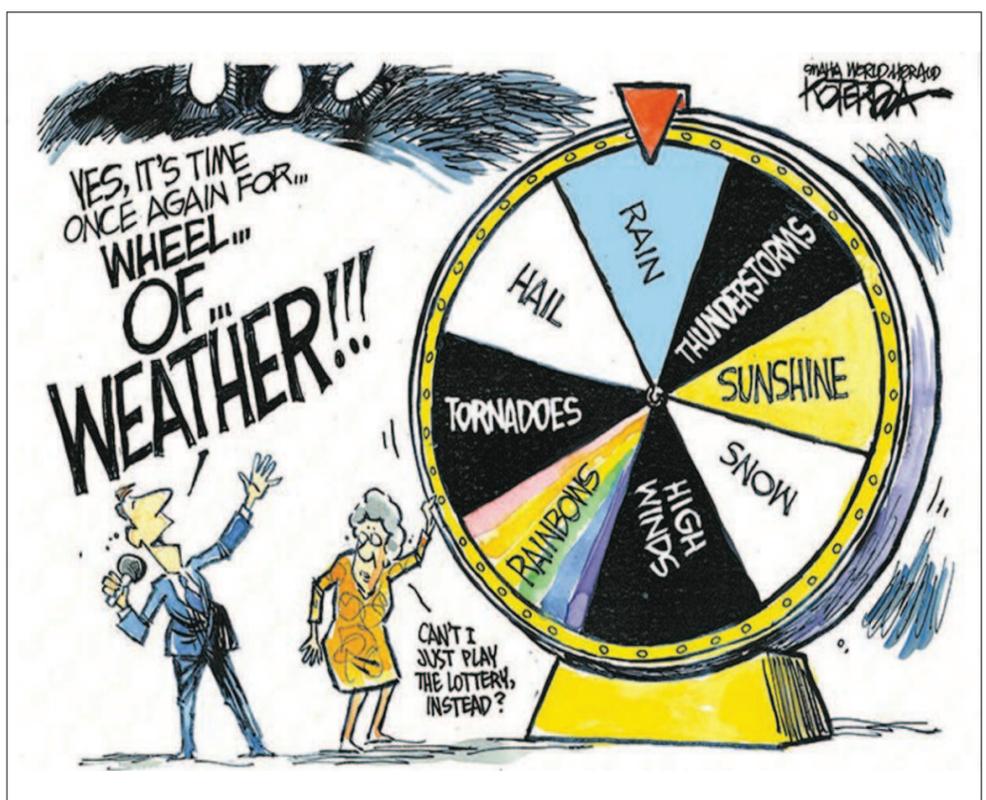
### SALEM

- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
- **State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R** — (District 30) Room S-223, State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-986-1950. Email: sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us. Email: TFER2@aol.com. Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli.
- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

- **The White House**, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.
- **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Email: wayne\_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Website: http://wyden.senate.gov Fax: 202-228-2717.
- **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D** — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Email: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997. Oregon offices include One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204, and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.
- **U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R** — (Second District) 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct email because of spam. Website: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Why protest educational meeting?

**To the Editor:**  
Feb. 22 at the Mt. Vernon Grange, an interesting college-type class on range history and use was presented by Angus McIntosh, Ph.D., who is a professor and author at New Mexico State University.

Sixty-five local people listened to one of the few individuals that is certified as an expert on range issues able to testify in federal court cases. It was an education class on early range use from Spanish land grants, through the first western states, up to the current (Bureau of Land Management) and (Forest Service) regulations concerning grazing.

It was an enlightened evening only marred by Judy Schuette and several others that paraded on the shoulder of the highway with “protest” signs. Schuette’s sign said, “Militias Threaten, Intimidate,” and another placard declared, “Obey the Law.”

What the nonsensical signs had to do with the educational meeting was a mystery. Those attending concluded the people were just ignorant and morphed from being “protesters” with a cause to simply being “crackpots.”

Tad Houpt  
Canyon City

### Faithful support for Hammonds and Bundys

**To the Editor:**  
Better late than never. Aren’t life’s punches fun? This snow goose needs a good polar bear thump about every five years to keep this man humble.

I lend my faithful support behind the Hammonds and Bundys and a hearty thank you to Ms. Odalis Sharp and her children, who sang beautifully and lowered my blood pressure as I sat quietly at the machine the night of a tragedy in our own neighborhood. I pray that Christians in ours and Harney County saw fit to welcome Ms. Sharp and the riders from various states (the law abiding ones not disrupting the field station, birders, wetlands or Paiute culture).

I pray she and others made it onward and upward to wherever God intends them next (perhaps to Klamath country to rally behind farmers — while respecting Klamath Indian and Modoc cultural sites).

I hear good things are happening there, but it’s not heaven ’til heaven, and even if Chinook salmon, lamprey, steelhead and Lost River suckers all reach their historic ranges and thrive,

there will be tensions on dry years — ditches to clear, weeds to pull and burn, fences to mend, conveyance pipes to repair and biological opinions to adhere to.

I agree with Mr. Lent’s comment about the militia’s right to be in Oregon. (Minas Tirith [Gondor] is going to need assistance from Helm’s Deep and all Rohirrim in our fight against the ensuing storm of goblins and orcs [violent gangs and drug cartels], Southrons and the Haradrim [deceived occupiers, confused environmentalists — including the Monkey Wrench Gang], Nazgul, Angmar, Sauron [Muslim brotherhood, Islamic State terrorists, other dark forces]).

I do not agree with his comment about the FBI being 100 percent tainted as they do still have a majority of solid storm troopers.

I agree partially with Mr. Mead except to comment that things are more dire today than when professor Leopold roamed our great land and when Annie Dillard wrote about that vile cat, Osage orange and Tinker Creek while that giant waterbug slurped bullfrog guts and Miss America ate apple pie and enjoyed baseball on lazy Sunday afternoons.

Scott Cotter  
John Day

### Public servant protects the rights usurped by the government

**To the Editor:**  
Let’s see if I have this right. We have an elected public servant who has openly stated that he will protect our rights, even and especially from the federal government’s encroachment.

And that makes us — angry?  
Seriously?

Krista Griffin  
John Day

### Healthier forests and stronger communities

**To the Editor:**  
Ms. Preston, I encourage you to read last week’s well-written article, “Restoring the Forest.” It describes how informed community involvement and collaboration has significantly increased federal investment on the Malheur (National Forest) and resulted in healthier forests and stronger communities.

The Public Forest Commission (PFC) isn’t mentioned because it hasn’t participated in this effort or contributed to its success.

I cautioned PFC against sup-

porting the “Grant County, Oregon Public Lands Natural Resources Plan” because it’s illegal (not to mention a striking example of government overreach). I challenged putting it on the ballot because doing so would be unconstitutional.

As you know, Circuit Court agreed and ordered it removed. Grant County is better off as a result.

Mark Webb  
Mt. Vernon

### Questions for sheriff detractors

**To the Editor:**

Foundation of all government must be truth and full disclosure to the people — which, through ignorance or conspiracy, is not now the case. If any “judge” or alleged officer of Oregon tells a lie or refuses to answer a question, they, not Sheriff (Glenn) Palmer, must be prosecuted for crimes against the people. Therefore, the detractors of Sheriff Palmer must answer:

Q1. Who owns the laws of the fictional “this state,” ORS 131.205, and “in this state,” ORS 323.010, and do those laws have anything to do with the Grant County created in 1864, its creator, the 33rd union state of Oregon and their 1:2:1-3 (1787 Constitution for the United States of America) people, citizens and free persons?

Q2. Are the detractors of Sheriff Palmer allegedly granted power to bring false claims against him via ORS 9.528?

Q3. Have the detractors of Sheriff Palmer taken the Article 6 Oath of said 1787 Constitution and is their Grant County and state of Oregon the Grant County created in 1864 and its creator, the 33rd union state of Oregon?

Q4. Have the detractors of Sheriff Palmer brought claims against him, the living man on the land, or only against Sheriff Palmer, a US Trust in the Buck Act state of “OR”?

Consequently, aforesaid questions going unanswered by ignorant county commissioners (that answer to the bar) and fake bar “judges,” the only gaff committed by Sheriff Palmer is his hiring a bar associate as counsel, which is a contract into the evil sham of this state and in this state.

The solution is for the people to demand answers to aforesaid and resume original 1859 and 1864 governments by county charter when the impostors fail to answer.

Hank Albertson  
Lakeview

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



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