

Hard to get the measure of 97

Aside from electing the next leader of the free world, Measure 97 is the most important decision Oregonians will have to make on the November ballot.

And it will be a hard one. The measure, if passed, would bring in nearly \$3 billion a year to state coffers. Depending on your outlook, it will either solve many of Oregon's chronic problems or be a crippling weight thrown over residents and the state economy.

And that's really at the heart of the disagreement: If you trust government and the legislature's ability to spend that money wisely — to revamp Oregon's flagging education system, to improve health care in our state, to solve a serious crisis in funding state employee retirements — then Measure 97 is a no-brainer.

But if you're more suspicious, this looks like the largest tax increase in Oregon history, a bureaucratic cash grab with no defined plan for how to spend the windfall.

The measure itself is quite simple, which is part of the design and also part of the problem. It would impose a 2.5-percent tax on all corporate sales in the state above \$25 million, regardless of actual profits.

That means the big out-of-state corporations that make billions in profits and sell expensive things in Oregon would pay more taxes — companies like Intel and John Deere, for example. But so too will Safeway and Pacific

Power, Wal-Mart and Walgreen's and Powell's Books. Increasing taxes on those companies is likely to get passed along to the consumer in some form or in full, increasing the cost of living for everyone and costing middle-class private sector jobs too.

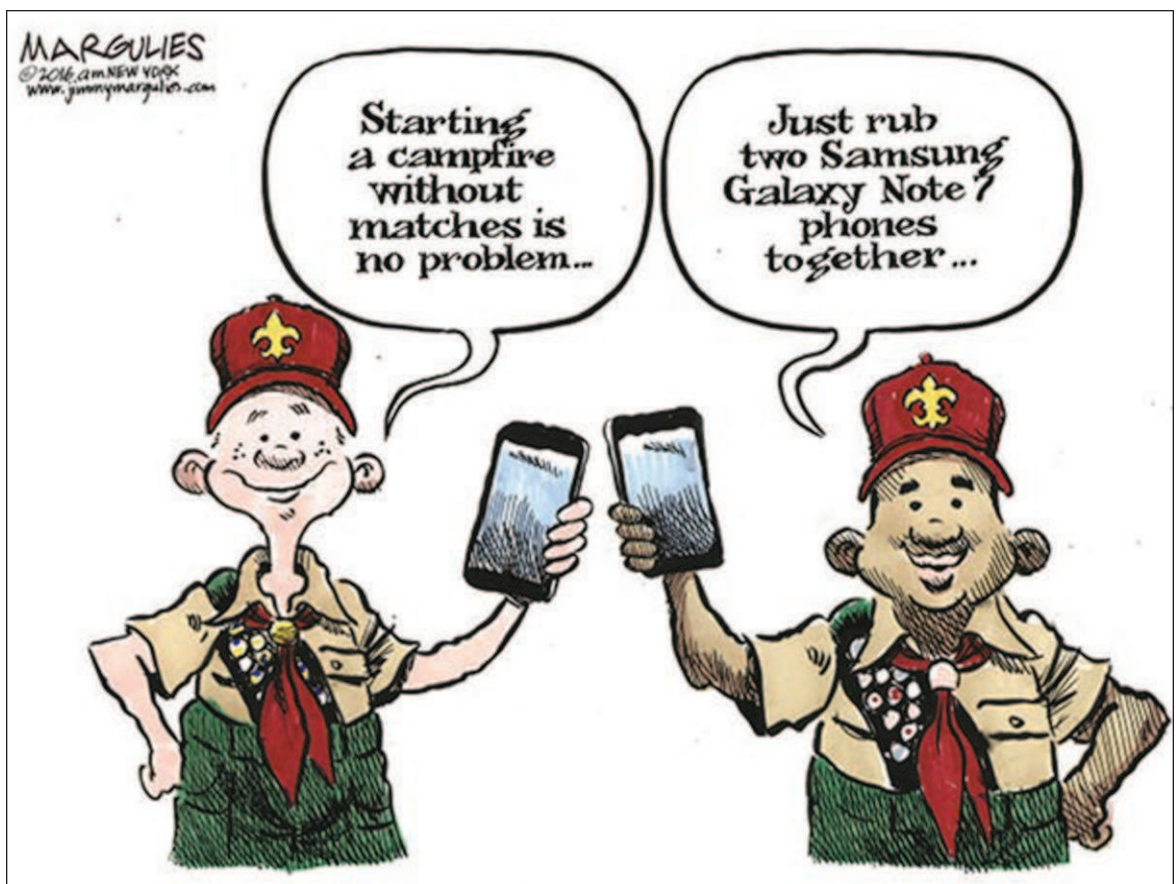
We are reluctantly standing against the measure.

We know schools are not adequately funded, and our students are suffering for it. And we know that without a major overhaul, the state will never have the steady revenue stream required to continue improving, instead of constantly being mired in a cycle of cuts and temporary hires.

We know health care costs will continue ad infinitum, and we know that the state signed a contract — an unaffordable one, perhaps, but still a contract — with state employees.

The state needs to find ways to increase and stabilize revenue streams, but a big no-strings-attached money dump is not the answer.

Tax policy is terribly complex. The bluntness of Measure 97 will hurt Oregon, and the corresponding help is not quantifiably better. What Oregon should do is defeat this measure, then hold legislators and the governor accountable for getting business and labor together. Once at the same table, they shouldn't get up until we have a plan for stable funding for Oregon schools and health care programs. Measure 97 isn't it.



GUEST COMMENT

Being prepared is not just for scouts

By Susan Johnson
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

No matter where you live, a natural disaster can strike at any time. Here in the Northwest, we're told to expect the next big earthquake at any time. Many of our majestic mountains are dormant volcanoes. The natural beauty of our forests can turn into horrible forest fires from a carelessly thrown cigarette butt. Extreme winter storms are a serious risk. Floods are common throughout our region, and we also get the occasional tornado. While sometimes instantly fatal, survival often depends on whether you are prepared.

The Oregon Health Authority maintains a preparedness website with information on current hazards, how to prepare and the ability to sign up for text or email updates.

Are you and your family ready for a disaster? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers three simple steps to be prepared: Get a kit, make a plan and be informed.

Your kit will include items like food and water, health supplies, personal care items, safety supplies, electronics, important documents, extra cash and your emergency plan.

Your emergency plan will include a family communication plan and a family disaster plan. Your disaster plan should include safe spots in your home for disasters like earthquakes, multiple meeting places and the best escape routes from your home. You should practice your contingencies as a family.

If a family member is very young, older or has special medical needs, your planning will need to be more extensive. You'll also need

supplies for your four-legged family members.

You can stay informed by signing up for alerts from your emergency management agency. A NOAA weather radio (battery-powered, solar or hand-crank) can provide updates. Oregon Office of Emergency Management provides information, and Emergency Preparedness Essentials provides a list of local emergency management contacts.

Preparedness will differ depending on where you live, including whether you live in an urban or rural area. However, no matter where you live and what potential disasters you face, you should always be ready. Be prepared — it's not just for scouts!

Susan Johnson is the regional director for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region 10.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

McKinley has 'selflessness, sense of duty and great values'

To the Editor:

On Memorial Day weekend 2014, my family and I were spending time at our property when I started not feeling well. We decided to head towards town and medical care. I went into cardiac arrest on the side of the highway between Mt. Vernon and John Day.

My wife started CPR and was thankfully able to get ahold of emergency services. Todd McKinley, Undersheriff, was off duty and working on his truck after the Mt. Vernon Memorial Day parade earlier in the day.

He heard the call and, even though off duty, came to my wife's aid in my rescue, along with EMT Kara Kohfield, who was also off duty.

Thanks to their quick response, I am alive today. We sent a letter expressing our appreciation to Sheriff Palmer at the time, and we never received a response, nor did they ever hear of our appreciation.

We are now happy to call both of them friends today and believe that Todd McKinley would bring his selflessness, sense of duty and great values to the office of sheriff of Grant County.

It is about time that he receives the recognition he deserves, and I think the county deserves a sheriff that recognizes and appreciates the talented, hard-working folks that are in the county.

Laura and Tim Feighery
Newberg

McKinley a thorough, professional expert

To the Editor:

A few years ago, I served on the jury of a rather high-profile trial. Todd McKinley was undersheriff at that time, and his testimony comprised the major part of the prosecution.

The defense attorney tried his best to undermine Mr. McKinley's credibility, but the deeper he probed, the more apparent it became that Mr. McKinley was in absolute command of the facts and thoroughly knowledgeable about proper investigative procedure. Throughout a very lengthy, antagonistic cross-examination, Mr. McKinley remained calm, professional and unfailingly polite, and his testimony proved to be above reproach. After sitting through two days of testimony, it took us, the jury, just over an hour to render a guilty verdict on six counts.

It is this thoroughness, professionalism and expertise, conducted with the utmost courtesy and respect, that I so appreciate about Todd McKinley. Any interaction I have had with him since that time has only served to reinforce my good impression of his forthrightness, professionalism and integrity.

Lynn Larssen
Seneca

McKinley 'best choice' for sheriff

To the Editor:

Over the past few months and weeks, I have approached many people about showing their support for Todd McKinley by posting a sign somewhere on their property. It

was amazing how many folks told me that "We are definitely voting for Todd, but we just can't put up a sign. We are afraid of retaliation."

Unfortunately, given the climate that our current sheriff has fostered in this county, I understand completely.

Remember this. When you receive your ballots in late October, no one will be forcing your hand. I believe if you fill in the oval next to Todd McKinley's name, and enough of us do just that, we will have a sheriff that will return the sheriff's office to the public. Other law enforcement agencies and people who have been forbidden to enter the Grant County Sheriff's Office will be able to conduct business and interact with the sheriff as it should be. When there are events such as mass casualty trainings, the sheriff's office will be represented. If a crime is committed, the facts will be scrutinized, rather than personal opinion and emotion dictating who or who doesn't get arrested. When the call for help comes in the middle of the night from one of our outlying communities or rural areas, every effort will be made to respond in a timely fashion.

One of the most important measures of a man (or woman) is how the people who have to work most closely with them over a long period of time feel about that individual. If you know someone or are someone who has worked with Todd McKinley in the past, then you know his boundless energy, his levelheaded judgment and his solid decent character. There is no doubt this man is the best choice for our next sheriff of Grant County.

Dan Maynard
John Day

WHERE TO WRITE

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- **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.
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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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