

# Land sales have big impact on ag economy

There's more to an agricultural land sale than a willing buyer and a willing seller.

A farm or ranch changing hands can impact neighbors and the local economy almost as much as the parties directly involved.

That's why when ag land goes up for sale it's a big deal — far more important than just dollars and cents.

The price of exclusive farm use land — a designation used by the state to identify the best ag land — has skyrocketed in recent years as it changed hands. Some remained orchards, vineyards, farms or ranchland, but other tracts were taken out of production for a variety of purposes including conservation, recreation and even a state park.

In each case, the sale can have a profound impact. Some examples:

- Neighboring farmers and ranchers see the price of expansion increasing, potentially beyond their means. At the same time, the comparable value of their land continues to grow, impacting their finances.

- The area where the state purchased ranchland for conversion to a state park has seen mixed impacts. Neighbors have seen the pool of grazing land shrink, but nearby towns

have seen the number of visitors increase.

Overall, the biggest impact is when land is taken out of production.

Because agricultural land is more than real estate, buyers and sellers need to take the local economy into account.

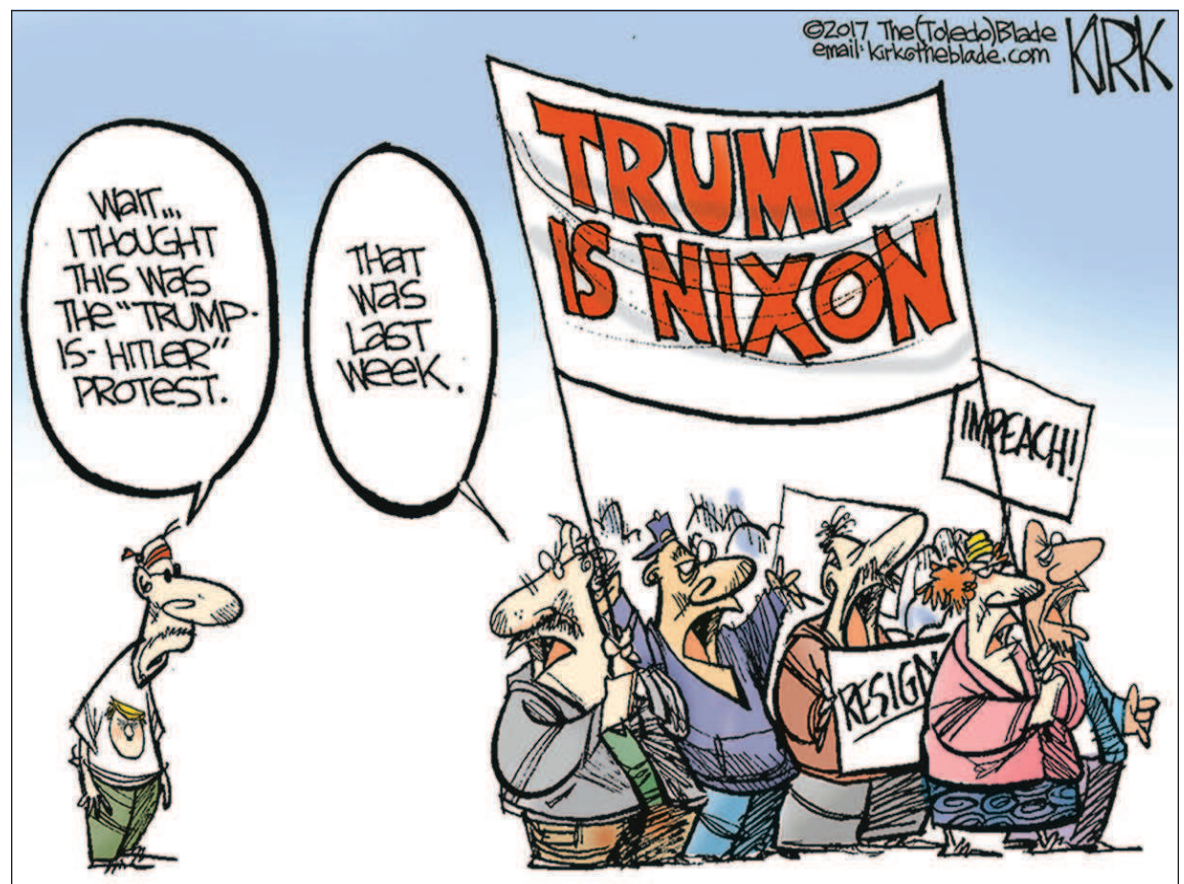
For example, taking vast swaths of ranchland out of production will impact other ranchers and their ability to graze livestock. If livestock is no longer raised, that will impact the economy. Equipment will no longer be bought or serviced in nearby towns. Seed and fertilizer dealers will see the number of customers shrink. Cattle will no longer go to market, impacting livestock auctions.

Considering that the average age of farmers across the West is about 60, what happens when agricultural land changes hands takes on added importance.

Whether land stays in the family or is sold to absentee landowners, how it is used profoundly impacts the region.

Overall, the best case scenario is the land will remain in agriculture, supporting ranchers, farmers and the economy.

Whether, or how, that can be mandated will remain a continuing debate across the West.



## GUEST COMMENT

# Courage, honor, sacrifice

By Cameron Smith  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Cameron Smith

diverse community, spanning four generations across five major wars. With every veteran counted, we must also recognize the sacrifice of their spouses and families, who served on the home front while their loved ones were in uniform.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that today's battles are fought by less than 1 percent of our population. The weight of the most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan has been borne by the few. Most of our citizens today have not been directly impacted by war. The same cannot be said for our Gold Star families, who have lost a loved one in service to our nation.

We can never forget the true cost of war — a cost far beyond dollars and cents. A hundred years ago, in World War I, we lost over 115,000 dedicated service members — almost 1,000 of whom were from Oregon. Those who survived the battlefields in Europe did not come home to a robust system of veterans' health care and benefits. But they

banded together in service organizations and fought to advocate for the nationwide network of support we have today.

Across the ages, from the beaches of Normandy and the Pacific islands to the mountains and jungles in Asia, countless Americans have stood up to serve and have laid down their lives. At the most basic level, they fought to protect the one on their right and the one on their left, but ultimately their fight protects us all and preserves the values we hold dear.

This Memorial Day, as we kick off the start of summer and turn to enjoy Oregon's incredible parks, beaches, rivers and mountains, we must encourage all citizens to pause and honor our fallen and Gold Star families. We stand on the shoulders of all those who came before us and will never forget our veterans' service, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Thank you for your support of Oregon's military, veterans and their families!

*Cameron Smith served three tours in Iraq as a Marine and is the director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.*

## FINANCIAL PLANNING

# Mom and dad, did you cover everything?

By JJ Montanaro  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

solid financial foundation. Their good position didn't come by accident; it came from sound financial training that began during childhood and has continued over the years.

Here are five lesson plans that I hope you'll consider building into your effort to help equip your kids with the financial tools they'll need to be successful:

1. Differentiating needs from wants. Understanding the difference — and knowing to satisfy the former before the latter — will prove essential in day-to-day financial decisions.

2. Avoid falling victim to peer pressure. You've certainly hit on this as it relates to other areas of your kids' lives — drugs, alcohol and the like, but there's also a money slant to it. Whether it's buying the latest gadgets, a slick vehicle or trendy fashions, kids shouldn't blindly follow the herd into financial problems.

3. Capitalizing on the power of time. Time and compound returns are your child's best financial friend. Make sure they know it. Matching what they save, setting up a Roth IRA with their part-time employment income and sharing your own experiences with long-term investing can help drive home this message.

4. Make saving and investing a priority. There's not a right or wrong here, but they are different and there's probably a place for both in their financial life. It's important to create savings for short-term goals and emergencies and invest money for longer-term plans like retirement and, here's the kicker, not only with what's left over at the end of the month.

5. Understand the rules of the credit game. Credit can be a useful financial tool and a dangerous temptation. How our kids manage it can affect them in a lot of different areas. Getting a job, renting or buying a house, insuring a car, receiving government security clearance or being approved for a competitive loan are all examples of where effectively managing credit can yield positive results.

Outfit your kids with the tools they need to succeed. And remember, the parenting doesn't stop after their initial venture into adulthood. It's a lifelong endeavor. The good news: If your kids are like mine, the older they get, the more receptive they become.

*JJ Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA Military Affairs. This article was published in the American Legion Magazine April 2017 and was re-published with permission.*

It's the American coming-of-age: After high school graduation, proud parents send their kids off to college, the service or the wider world, with one simple instruction: Go figure it out.

"Johnny, Jane: At long last, it's time to start thinking about your values, your beliefs, your work ethic. Finally, you can begin to explore life's most important truths." Not!

Good parents just don't do that. We spend years nurturing and preparing our children, cultivating the qualities they will need to be successful, productive, happy human beings.

Too often, though, we forget about preparing them in a crucial area that will have lifelong effects: personal finance. How much time do we spend teaching kids about money and how to use it wisely? Do we think they'll just figure it out once they leave home?

A reader recently shared her success story. She focused on teaching her son about finances, helping him learn about making smart choices. Now, years later, her son and daughter-in-law have a beautiful home, no credit card debt, robust TSP accounts and a



## 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).
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