



Trump's team needs to move on trade deals

Our colleagues at Politico last week published an analysis that showed the nation's 11 former partners in the Trans-Pacific Partnership are involved in 27 separate negotiations with each other, with major international trading blocs and regional powerhouses such as China.

It reports that seven deals that impact U.S. farmers have been signed since the Trump administration pulled the United States out of the TPP.

The TPP was seen by many, but not all, U.S. agricultural groups as a boon. It included the U.S. and 11 other countries — Japan, Canada, Mexico, Australia, Vietnam, Chile, Malaysia, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore and Brunei. Japan, Mexico and Canada are among the biggest trade partners for U.S. agriculture.

Negotiations on the pact began in 2008 under President George W. Bush. A deal was reached in October of 2015.

President Barack Obama supported the final deal and submitted it to Congress for ratification. With an election looming, Republicans and Democrats in Congress weren't anxious to be pinned down on a deal that had both support and opposition that crossed party lines.

The pact's critics included the Republican and the Democratic presidential nominees.

Donald Trump said the deal would undermine the U.S. economy.

As secretary of state, Hillary Clinton raved about the deal, calling it the "gold standard" of trade pacts. Candidate Clinton opposed the deal during the campaign and vowed to oppose it as president.

So without ratification prior to the election, the U.S. was destined to reject the TPP in its present form.

Following through on his campaign promise, President Trump withdrew from the accord on Jan. 23.

Among the other parties in the pact there are differing opinions as to what the TPP means without the United States. Shinzo Abe, Japan's prime minister, says the deal is meaningless without the U.S.

Nevertheless, our trading partners around the Pacific Rim aren't wasting time. There are a host of bilateral and multilateral discussions in the works. China, Trump's campaign nemesis, is trying to make deals with our trading partners.

Throughout the campaign, and since taking office, Trump said he'd replace the 12-party pact with a series of bilateral trade deals that would bring jobs and industry back to the United States. That sounds great. When can we expect that to happen?

Farmers and ranchers, a group that largely supported Trump's election, have a lot riding on foreign trade. The U.S. exports \$135 billion in agricultural products each year. It could always be better, but it's pretty great as it is.

It's hard to say what dumping the TPP and renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement may mean for the economy in general, and for farmers and ranchers in particular.

But at the moment it's fair to ask what happens next, and when will it happen? We await a tweet, or any other appropriate communication, from the Oval Office.

Grant County eclipse preparations 'wonderful'

To the Editor:

I, along with thousands of others, had the pleasure to visit John Day and Grant County for the recent eclipse. It was wonderful. If I didn't know better, I would think that you host thousands of people every month. But I do know better. A successful week such as this one is a testament to hard work and careful planning. In my preparation, I followed the work of the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, government officials, nonprofits and many local citizens who came together, spent many hours and set a standard for others to follow. I congratulate everyone in Grant County.

Jay Bakst

Port Ludlow, Washington

Bipartisan parks bill maintains strategic investment

To the Editor:

I support Jim Hammett's call last week for increased federal investment in the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Grant County is rural, natural resource dependent and over 60 percent federally owned and managed. What happens, or not, on federal land within the county significantly impacts the socioeconomic opportunities and pulse for area communities whether the land is administered by the Forest Service, BLM or National Park Service.

As a former Grant County judge, I believe one of the most effective ways to increase and diversify the value of our natural resources is for Congress to responsibly invest in and wisely manage its assets in Grant County. This will result in new, outside dollars coming to the county that will enhance local infrastructure and create additional socioeconomic opportunities that enrich the quality of rural life many of us care about, as well as the public experience of those who visit the area.

That is why Jim Hammett's recent op-ed on the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument was so timely. The Fossil Beds represent a federal asset in our backyard that supports over 150 jobs and generates \$10 million in local spending. It is an asset well worth protecting, maintaining, and investing in. It is also a strategic investment because it diversifies the value of the county's existing natural resources and thereby contributes to a more robust local economy.

Mr. Hammett is right: Eclipse visitors will return, and we should ensure the Fossil Beds have the necessary resources to keep its facilities open, safe and accessible to the growing number of future visitors. Unfortunately, there is a serious maintenance backlog at the Fossil Beds that needs to be addressed. Fortunately, the bipartisan bill before Congress, H.R. 2584, the National Park Service Legacy Act, is a good way to address that problem at the Fossil Beds — and indeed, at national parks across Oregon and the country. I encourage folks to support this bill and ensure it gets passed so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of our rich natural resources in Grant County.

Mark Webb

Mt. Vernon

'Residents couldn't have been nicer'

To the Editor:

We just wanted to send a congratulations to the cities of John Day and Prairie City. We attended the spectacular solar eclipse in Grant County. Your police, public services, business owners and local residents couldn't have been nicer or done a better job. The signage, directing traffic, crossing guards, portable toilets and activities were simply incredible. Everyone came

together. The result made the historic event even more special. We spent money on gas, groceries, restaurants, gifts and hardware. Walt and Kathryn Kight made our camping experience — well, an experience. It was a family-friendly party for three days. We appreciate everything that was done to accommodate the floods of people that came to Eastern Oregon for the eclipse. We'll never forget the experience and the welcome we received. Sponsor a one-year reunion with prizes for the best photographs, and many of us will come back.

Marty Hawke

Pismo Beach, California

Donnie Leonard

Paso Robles, California

'Kudos to all the local heroes'

To the Editor:

Kudos to all the local heroes who kept our community on an even plane during this very unusual summer. Through the crowds of the Rainbow family and the eclipse, the folks at Chester's Thriftway and Len's Drug and the gas stations kept the shelves stocked and even kept their usual positive and helpful attitudes during what had to be a stressful time. Also the police, the highway patrol and sheriff's departments, the Forest Service kept us safe and secure. All those who gave of their time and expertise to plan for the events, you "done good." There were so many others not mentioned here who were also part of the effort. I'm sure that other communities in our area had the same protection and cooperation as John Day. We did it! Ye a.

Ed Carwithen

John Day

'An experience we'll always treasure'

To the Editor:

The community of John Day showed friendliness and hospitality. My husband Mel and I were there recently to view the eclipse, which was fabulous, memorable. Robert Ake and family were especially helpful to us. We'd seen a sign he posted with availability of RV space on his property and were so happy we'd been guided there. Perfect place to be up on his hill and perfect for viewing the eclipse. He made sure our stay was a pleasurable one, always checking if we needed anything. It's an experience we'll always treasure.

Rosa Barringer

Everett, Washington

Have forest boundaries changed?

To the Editor:

The definition of boundary is quite concise: that which indicates or fixes a limit or extent; that which makes a bound, (marks) a bound as of territory.

Have the boundaries of our national forest changed? Have they been extended to include local cities and communities along with private domain? If not, then why are Forest Service law enforcement officers being used to assist our local private civilian officers outside of our national forest boundaries?

Read Cops and Courts in the Blue Mountain Eagle Aug. 23. Evidently, their jurisdiction or sphere of authority has been extended. Was this a temporary extension, or are they permanently boundless? No matter how you cut it folks, these are federal law enforcement officers. It certainly is reassuring to know we are so well covered, protected!

Michael R. Christensen

John Day

Collaborative trust and inclusion

To the Editor:

Forest Service "collaboratives"

do not want to grant Eastern Oregon residents a vote at the table.

They want people to "participate" but not to ask for a vote in the process. That's why now, finally, when residents of Grant County ask for voting status, the Blue Mountains Forest Partners come out with defamatory statements of residents being "untrustworthy," hoping to marginalize those trying to participate in a meaningful manner.

My mom had to sit through a shaming by the Blue Mountains Forest Partners because she was "untrustworthy," because I question the collaboratives and how they use economic hardship to justify restricting motorized access to the mountains of Eastern Oregon. Using "vegetative treatments" to "restore" the forest, while restricting motorized access when they help the Forest Service "develop projects."

The collaboratives are supposed to be civil and open to diverse public input, but, if that input does not align with the collaboratives' stated goals, they become personal, nasty and petty.

The question is, can we get logs to the mills without "rewilding" Eastern Oregon? We did it for decades, and grew some of the healthiest wildlife populations around. Unfortunately, the environmental community turned that on its head with their litigation strategy, and they now get to drive their message through these collaboratives, while excluding public input through voting membership.

To paraphrase a collaborative board member, "my grandmother always told me, you are the company you keep." The other lesson most of us learned from our grandparents was "the only thing you have is your word." Unfortunately, collaborative members never learned that lesson, because every time they give you "their word," they backtrack from it.

Eastern Oregonians should not be shamed upon requesting voting member status to "diverse and inclusive" groups, but unfortunately, that's how Eastern Oregon collaboratives operate.

John D. George

Bates

Prospective collaborative members meet requirements

To the Editor:

Mark Webb, executive director of Blue Mountains Forest Partners, local collaborative, has taken on the role of "executive dictator" of the group. During the July monthly meeting when several local citizens stated their intentions to join BMFP, Webb responded with an empathetic, "No!"

The potential members have met the requirements as laid out in the bylaws and have signed a letter of commitment, meeting the same required criteria as the current members of the Blue Mountains forest collaborative. Can this nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with the mission "Blue Mountain Forest Partners is a diverse group of stakeholders who work together to create and implement a shared vision to improve the resilience and well-being of forests and communities in the Blue Mountains" discriminate because Mr. Webb says "no"? It cannot be that some of the those aspiring members once were elected to the now-nullified Grant County Public Forest Commission.

In the recent past, there were four members of the BMFP that held elected positions on the Grant County Public Forest Commission, so that isn't the reason. Something is fishy with Webb. What is he trying to hide? Could there be a discrimination suit around the bend if he continues to deny Grant County citizens from joining the BMFP?

Julie Perkins

Dayville

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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@cityoflongcreek.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



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PUBLISHER..... MARISSA WILLIAMS, MARISSA@BMEAGLE.COM
 EDITOR..... SEAN HART, EDITOR@BMEAGLE.COM
 REPORTER..... RYLAN BOOGS, RYLAN@BMEAGLE.COM
 COMMUNITY NEWS..... ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
 SPORTS..... ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
 MARKETING REP..... KIM KELL, ADS@BMEAGLE.COM
 OFFICE MANAGER..... LINDSAY BULLOCK, OFFICE@BMEAGLE.COM
 OFFICE ASSISTANT..... ALEXANDRA PERKINS, OFFICE@BMEAGLE.COM

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