

Innovative plan deserves to succeed

The city of John Day's aggressive Innovation Gateway development plan for 83 acres along the river appears to be gaining momentum, and city and county residents should be pleased.

The far-sighted plan combines several ideas and proposals for a new wastewater treatment plant, redevelopment of a mill site, a hydroponic greenhouse and facilities for Oregon State University, among other ideas.

Before anyone writes off such ideas as "pie in the sky," they need to look west to the small town of Silverton, Ore. Almost 20 years ago, the town faced a decision on upgrading its wastewater treatment plant. It could pay for a facility to further treat the city's wastewater, it could pay farmers to use the treated wastewater as fertilizer — or it could do something else.

What the city decided to do is build a garden. Here's how it worked. The city obtained a multi-million-dollar Environmental Protection Agency grant to build a radical new means of handling the treated wastewater. The design was based on a series of wetlands ponds on a hillside. The treated water from the city's wastewater plant would enter at the top of the hillside, and slowly move from one wetlands pond to the next until it was pure by the time it reached the last pond at the base of the hill.

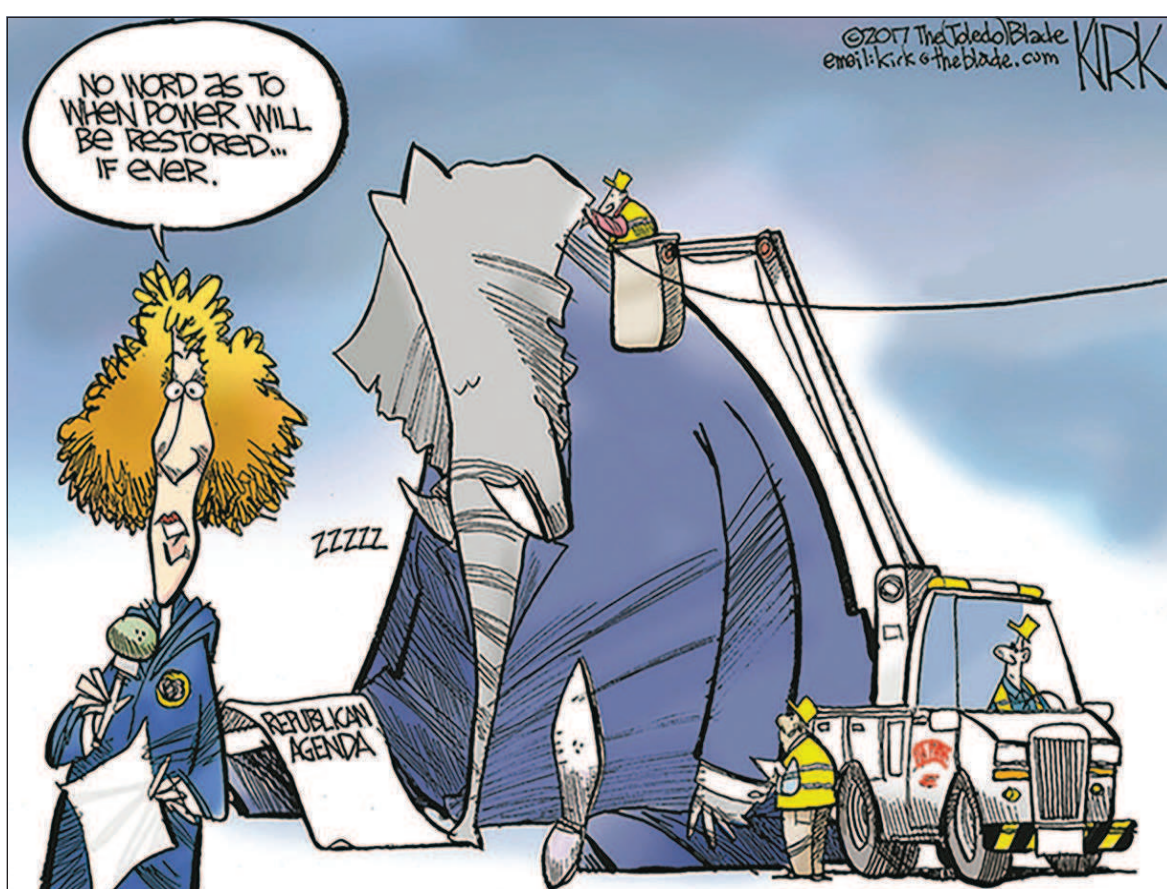
Using that as the core development, the city of Silverton, with the help of private businesses, the county and a nonprofit foundation, raised the money to build the Oregon Garden, an 80-acre collection of display gardens that attracts thousands of visitors each year. A resort hotel has been built there, and the foundation manages the garden.

It took a lot of hard work on the part of the local governments and volunteers, but it mostly took vision. By taking a bare hillside and converting it into a major tourist destination, they proved that they could take something as mundane as a wastewater problem and turn it into something that the entire community could be proud of.

When you look at John Day's proposal — which, incidentally, involves building a unique new wastewater treatment plant — it does have a lot of working parts. Whether all of them will come to pass, we cannot say.

But with a lot of hard work, support from the community, state and federal leaders and a little luck, John Day and Grant County could see those plans grow to fruition.

It can be done.



FARMER'S FATE

Surfing the 50-50-90 rule

Ever heard of the 50-50-90 rule? Any time you have a 50/50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90 percent probability you'll get it wrong. And get it wrong I did — over and over.

We have been encouraging our oldest son to try skiing this summer. He is extremely cautious when it comes to water, and hadn't shown much interest in trying a new activity — tubing or using his trainer skis seemed to be enough. I can see myself in him as he hesitates to try anything new — especially when it isn't possible to try it out in private first. Nothing worse than test driving a new piece of machinery with half a dozen eyes on you — just waiting for a really stupid mistake. So when he asked to try kneeboarding alone (not behind the boat), I understood.

One day early this summer, I was given the opportunity to wake-surf, a sport I have never tried and have only watched a handful of times. Now you already know that I don't enjoy learning something new in front of people, but I also hate getting in the water.

Don't misunderstand — I love water and water activities — but getting in is the worst part about them. Unless you are scuba diving in the tropics, the water is chilly and cold. And did I mention it isn't very warm? Even in 100 degree weather, I am wearing a wet suit — I'll take the teasing over the cold any day.

I looked at the surfboard. Half of me wanted to try, the other half said I was crazy for even thinking about trying something new in front of a boat full of spectators. I was waffling. Then I saw my son. I decided that if I expected him to learn new things, I could at least attempt to be an example. And an example I made too — of what not to do.

I suited up, and pushed off the



Brianna Walker

back of the boat with an unfamiliar board and a ski rope. I listened carefully to the instructions, moving the board where it belonged and holding the rope just right. "OK." I nodded to the driver.

I learned to ski when I was 10 years old, and consider myself moderately water-athletic — I got this.

Well, what I got was a nose full of water while the board shot up over my head and landed 10 feet away. The boat pulled around again. I pushed my wet hair out of my face as I repositioned the board.

"When you feel pressure on the board, just push your knees up, then hop up onto your feet."

I nodded to the driver. I felt pressure on the board... I got my knees on it... then my right foot... then my left — a mouth full of water.

Again, pressure, knees, right foot, left — crash.

Over and over and over.

I crashed forwards, backwards, sideways. I drank water, snorted water, coughed water — everything but getting up on the water. I'm not sure how long I was out there — but I know it was long enough I didn't have to worry about hydrating the rest of the day. After a particularly painful crash, I laid my feet up on the board while the rest of me floated in the water.

"Hey, why don't you try it like that?"

Sure, why not? I thought, it can't hurt any worse — and that's when I got up. Within minutes I knew this was going to be one of my new favorite water activities.

Give a girl a surfboard, and you've distracted her for a day. Teach a girl to surf, and suddenly work becomes the distraction. I

have never tried to get my swathing done as quick as this year. Get it done, catch that wave.

As the summer progressed, the same friends started encouraging my son to try surfing. He generally just ignored their attempts at getting him on that board. One day, however, he seemed less reluctant than usual. He still didn't want to surf, but he asked to play with the board in the water. Soon someone threw him the rope and we started pulling him slowly through the water. He used it as a kneeboard for a bit, then laid back down and motioned for the boat to stop. He said he wanted to try standing up. Two attempts and he was standing on top of the water. I was one seriously proud momma.

Later that day, my husband, who has never skied or wakeboarded, announced that he wanted to try as well.

"If at first you don't succeed, we have a lot in common." I smirked at him.

I was happy to see him try, yet getting the camera out to capture some epic crashes. He got the same instructions I had earlier this summer.

They tossed him the rope... he hollered "hit it"... the boat took off... my finger poised on the camera — and he got up. The first try. My first reaction was shouting hur-ray — followed by a close second of "I was in the water how long?"

"Sometimes it's not about how good you are, but how bad you want it," he smirked.

I set down my camera and picked up my soda. I guess he'd never heard of the 50-50-90 rule. I wonder if he heard about the guy who got hit in the head with a can of soda? He was lucky it was a soft drink.

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.

WHERE TO WRITE

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• **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.

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• **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.

Guest opinion: If net neutrality dies, the internet dies with it

By Kris Craig

To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Do you like paying more for less? If so, then you're going to love President Donald Trump's plan to eliminate net neutrality.

For those not familiar with the term, it basically means that an internet service provider can't slow or block your bandwidth to certain websites, nor can they charge you extra fees for access to certain parts of the internet. It is this philosophy, codified into sensible regulations supported pretty much unanimously by the tech industry, that allows you to freely navigate the internet.

It's what allows you to subscribe to any video streaming service you want, instead of being forced to use the one provided by your cable company. It's what protects small business owners from having to pay

a ransom to every major ISP in the country in order to not have their websites blocked or slowed.

Net neutrality may not be around for much longer, though, if the telecom industry and its lapdogs in Congress get their way. The rules that protect us from abusive practices like the ones I described are in the process of being repealed by the new FCC. I cannot overstate the disastrous effects this will have on our economy — with the exception of the telecom giants, who stand to profit immensely.

Congress has the power to prevent this by passing net neutrality legislation, but they have thus far failed to take any action on the issue. Where does Sen. Jeff Merkley stand on all this? That's a good question. Since we're not hearing much from him or his colleagues on the matter, let's see what we can glean from his

recent campaign contributions.

According to OpenSecrets, Sen. Merkley has accepted the least money from the telecom industry among members of the United States Senate. He should be commended; however, that doesn't mean we should assume that he'll do the right thing on this issue. Voters need to make sure he knows that if net neutrality is lost because he failed to fight for it, so too will his Senate seat be lost after the 2020 election.

Let's say that car companies were allowed to charge you extra for driving to certain destinations. Better yet, they can charge you for driving to any destination not on a predetermined list. You'd still own the car, but you'd have to keep paying the people you bought it from every time you drive it. Does that sound fair? Don't worry, the car will probably still take you to your destination,

either way, though the onboard computer has been programmed to not let you drive faster than 15 mph until you pay the ransom. They wouldn't call it a ransom, of course; they'd call it an "optional upgrade," even though they're not providing any additional services or features.

Fortunately, unlike the telecom companies, America's automakers have had the good sense not to attempt such a greedy and ill-conceived power grab. Without net neutrality, companies will be allowed to massively slow your internet speeds any time you access sites that you haven't paid extra for. Worse still, they'll be able to block all of their customers' access to any website that either competes with them or refuses to pay a ransom.

For example, a cable company might decide to severely throttle (slow) or outright block their sub-

scribers' access to outside streaming services while giving preference to their own streaming video platform. And if the Blue Mountain Eagle or some other news organization were to publish an article criticizing any of the major telecom companies, they'd risk losing most of their website traffic and ad revenue, which could lead to a chilling effect on journalists.

These are just some examples of the kinds of abuses that could happen if Congress allows net neutrality to be repealed. It is essential that Americans' access to the internet not be obstructed. That is why I urge you to call Sen. Merkley at 202-224-3753 and tell him to save net neutrality before it's too late.

Kris Craig is a self-syndicated columnist and a software engineer with a quarter century's experience and opinion articles published newspapers and magazines.



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