



EO Media Group/Eric Mortenson

A worker guides a glulam beam into place Oct. 3 during construction of the First Tech Credit Union headquarters building in Hillsboro. The building, which will be five stories high and contain 156,000 square feet of office space, is believed to be the largest U.S. structure so far built using advanced lumber products such as cross-laminated timbers and glulam beams, posts and flooring.

Wood construction becomes sexy again

These are exciting times for the timber industry. It's been awhile since that's been the case in Oregon. Government forest managers and their political bosses finally appear to recognize that more effective management of public forests is needed to help prevent future wildfires and reduce their severity. Rep. Greg Walden and Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley have all stated their support for legislation that accomplishes those goals — rare agreement between Oregon's Republican and Democrat leaders.

Beyond timber management, however, are innovations that promise new uses for timber in construction. Among them is "mass timber" that is used in "tallwood design." As an example, a credit union in Hillsboro is using glulam beams to construct its new five-story, 150,000-square-foot headquarters building.

Another building planned for Portland will be 12 stories tall and constructed of cross-laminated timber, called CLT. It will dwarf the seven-story building in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that is currently the tallest mass timber structure in the nation.

To explore the uses and design possibilities of mass timber, the University of Oregon architecture program is combining efforts with Oregon State University's forestry and

engineering programs to create the Tallwood Design Institute.

In other words, wood construction is sexy again. Once relegated to home construction and one- or two-story projects, lumber was seen as an excellent material for relatively small structures.

Then came cutting-edge projects such as the Metropol Parasol in Seville, Spain. It is among the largest wooden structures in the world. Made of laminated lumber coated in polyurethane to protect it from the weather, the ethereal design of six interconnected "mushrooms" soars 85 feet tall and covers an area that is 490 feet by 230 feet.

Built in 2011, it shades the entire city square and houses a restaurant, museum, farmers market and a walkway that allows visitors a bird's-eye view of the historic city.

The future of mass timber is nearly unlimited. Larger mass timber such as CLTs made by DR Johnson Lumber Co. in Riddle, and mass plywood panels made by Freres Lumber Co. in Lyons, offer architects and engineers possibilities that didn't even exist a few years ago.

Better-managed forests, combined with innovative products, designs and structures demonstrate that the timber industry's future is brighter than it's been in a long time.

Misinformation about 911 ballot measure

To the Editor:

There is a lot of misinformation out there about the 911 ballot measure, and last week's letters to the editor contained a few notable examples. In the interest of fairness please revisit these points that were in last week's LTE and cannot be left to stand as true.

The city manager did not impose a tax on the whole county. In fact, he deserves kudos for lobbying for the \$420,000 grant money from the state used to bridge us to 2019 and bringing the statewide problem of insufficient 911 taxes to the attention of the legislature from the perspective of our little corner of the world.

Other points erroneously blame the problem on the city of John Day, and its employee benefit packages. The city has done the entire county a favor over the last several years, shouldering the burden of 911 dispatch costs when smaller towns simply cannot pay their share due to minuscule tax bases. Pointing to the Public Employee Retirement System as the problem is ridiculous. That is determined at the state level, and any reform on that funding is a different fight entirely. We face the same challenges in our schools.

The public employees that serve our community, whether teachers, police officers, dispatchers, etc., are valuable assets, not burdens, and are worth the cost, in my opinion, to keep our communities safe, strong and viable.

Let's keep the focus of this election on the facts — keeping 911 local will improve outcomes in emergency situations, for both victims and responders. I will be voting yes on measure 12-69, rather than gambling with the safety of my family and neighbors, while potentially sending dollars and jobs to another county.

I hope you'll join me.

Elaine Mezzo
John Day

Cartoon beneath dignity of journalism

To the Editor:

I was disappointed upon seeing the cartoon in the last issue of the Blue Mountain Eagle. It is beneath the dignity of serious journalism that prides itself on reporting facts, not engaging in gutter-sniping, divisive politics.

I would hope to see our weekly paper maintain a level of civility not shown in a mean-spirited cartoon such as this, which demeans the office of the presidency of the United States. If this is all you can put out, we will cancel our subscription.

Walt and Agnes Hall
John Day

Local dispatch center maintains our independence

To the Editor:

One of the most attractive aspects of living in Grant County is the fact that the majority of us cherish our independence. One of those aspects is our ability to respond to emergency situations through our local 911 dispatch center.

There are those who say the proponents of keeping the dispatch center here in Grant County are fear-mongering, making statements that if the service is outsourced there will be no one to answer your call. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The real issue here is: Do you as individuals want to have that emergency call that could mean life or death to a friend or loved one, or perhaps a stranger in an automobile accident on the road, answered

by a remote center or a person who is knowledgeable and personally invested in the well being of this county and its citizens?

If you have ever personally observed our local dispatchers here on the job handling a real-time emergency, you will know how deeply their hearts, minds and souls are invested in the critical service they do so well.

I guess what I would say to the naysayers is this: If the ambulance is 15 minutes later because of lack of knowledge of our area and Granny doesn't make it, oh well. She lived a good life.

If little Johnny gets run over out on the farm and is bleeding profusely and emergency services from afar are trying to determine where the Hidden Valley Ranch is and the time lost costs him his life, I guess that's just the price we'll have to pay for giving up our independence.

What is that worth to you?

I am a property owner and a taxpayer. I'm voting yes on 12-69.

Dan Maynard
John Day

Vote no on pricey 911

To the Editor:

Vote no on pricey 911. The John Day fire and police dispatcher and the 911 dispatcher are the same person. It doesn't matter which number one calls; the same person answers the phone.

So instead of dialing 911 and paying for it, just put 541-575-0030 on speed dial and call for free. What difference does it make if 911 gets moved to Condon or Connecticut? We here in the valley would still get our fire and police emergency calls responded to quickly and efficiently.

Richie Colbeth
John Day

Dayville benefits from beef donation

To the Editor:

I read with interest Carl Sampson's article "Ranchers' donations feed area students." Dayville School also benefited this year with a generous donation of beef by the Mr. Jim Dovenburg's Widow's Creek Ranch and facilitated by Mr. Trevor Faulkner.

It would be my hope that these gentlemen also get the recognition for helping the Dayville students.

Kathryn Hedrick
Dayville

Editor must provide more information

To the Editor:

Sean Hart, editor of the Blue Mountain Eagle, in an article Oct. 18 stated the sheriff met with "occupiers and the president of a militia group" in January of 2016. There were only local people at the meeting besides the three from the refuge.

One can only read into the statement there is an organized militia with an elected leader here in Grant County.

The editor must provide more information on this "militia" and its president. I hope this is not "fake news" we hear so much about.

Ron Ballard
John Day

Editor's note: Sheriff Glenn Palmer met in John Day with three people who were occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Jan. 12, 2016. Palmer met in John Day Jan. 15, 2016, with Brandon Curtiss, president of the group 3% of Idaho with the slogan "When tyranny becomes law, rebellion becomes duty," which was providing a "security buffer" around the

refuge. The full article, "Groups linked to Burns refuge meet with Sheriff Palmer," is available to view online at myeaglenews.com and was published in the Jan. 20, 2016, edition of the Eagle, which is available to view at the Eagle office.

Ballot measure an effort to keep dispatch local

To the Editor:

We would first like to thank the Blue Mountain Eagle, radio station KJDY, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Fire Hall Press for providing the voters of Grant County information about Measure 12-69, the 911 tax. This is a very complex issue, and we urge every voter to understand the issue thoroughly before voting.

The bottom line: The ballot measure is an effort to keep our 911 dispatch local and to provide time to change the current state funding for 911.

We urge you to vote yes on Measure 12-69 and then begin working on our state legislators and governor to adequately fund 911 services in Oregon.

Kris and Roy Beal
Mt. Vernon

Small, temporary dispatch tax 'more than worth it'

To the Editor:

After attending the forum regarding ballot measure 12-69 on Oct. 18, I am even more convinced that this measure must pass. Our local dispatch is a significant advantage in seeing better outcomes for medical and other emergency situations, as well as ensuring responder safety.

We're already at a disadvantage due to our remote location and distance from advanced help.

Why would we compound that with increased response times and less locally knowledgeable and invested dispatchers?

When experts in their fields of emergency medical response, law enforcement, surgery, city management and dispatch said in no uncertain terms that regionalized dispatch will increase response times and decrease successful outcomes, I heard them loud and clear.

Dr. Thomas said that minutes and seconds count, and any additional time before help arrives "adds up to bad outcomes." From a physician's perspective, he said this is a "no brainer" and that "whatever system gets us there as fast as we can is what we should be doing."

Furthermore, if we lose this local service, we will never get it back. We'll be less safe and at the mercy of their costs and management quality.

Future negotiations with an outsourced dispatch will likely cost us more, as we'll have zero leverage and zero input.

This small, temporary tax, which may never be implemented and cannot extend beyond five years if it is, is more than worth it. Our community needs this, just like we need strong schools, our hospital and clinics, local police, etc.

Either we work together to continue building a strong, safe, viable community, or we watch ourselves dry up and blow away, one strand at a time.

When you live in a rural area, it's a short drive to see plenty of examples of that very thing. Please vote yes with me, and keep our 911 dispatch local.

Lindsay Rausch
Prairie City

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

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• **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

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• **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.

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