

A powerful power council

Even before Ted Ferrioli and Richard Devlin officially joined the Northwest Power and Conservation Council this month, they were talking by phone several times a week about their upcoming work.

Two decades in the Oregon Legislature forged those connections. Ferrioli, of John Day, was the longtime Republican Senate leader. Devlin, of Tualatin, was Senate Democratic leader and later co-chairman of the Legislature's budget committee. Said Devlin: "We've always had a pretty good working relationship."

That relationship will be key as the pair move from the 90-member Legislature to the eight-member, four-state council. It comprises two members each from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

The council influences billions of dollars in public and private spending on power generation, fish protection and restoration, water use and other areas.

"The job is an intersection with every single public policy issue that affects the quality of life in the upper Columbia River Basin," Ferrioli said.

"The future of the sustainability of communities really depends on our continued access to low-cost, highly renewable hydroelectric power — and increasingly on alternative energy sources, including wind, geothermal and solar. If you look at the epicenter of all those issues, they all intersect in the upper Columbia River Basin."

Gov. Kate Brown appointed Ferrioli and Devlin to succeed Pendleton lawyer and rancher Henry Lorenzen and former Secretary of State

Bill Bradbury as Oregon's representatives.

They have their work cut out for them.

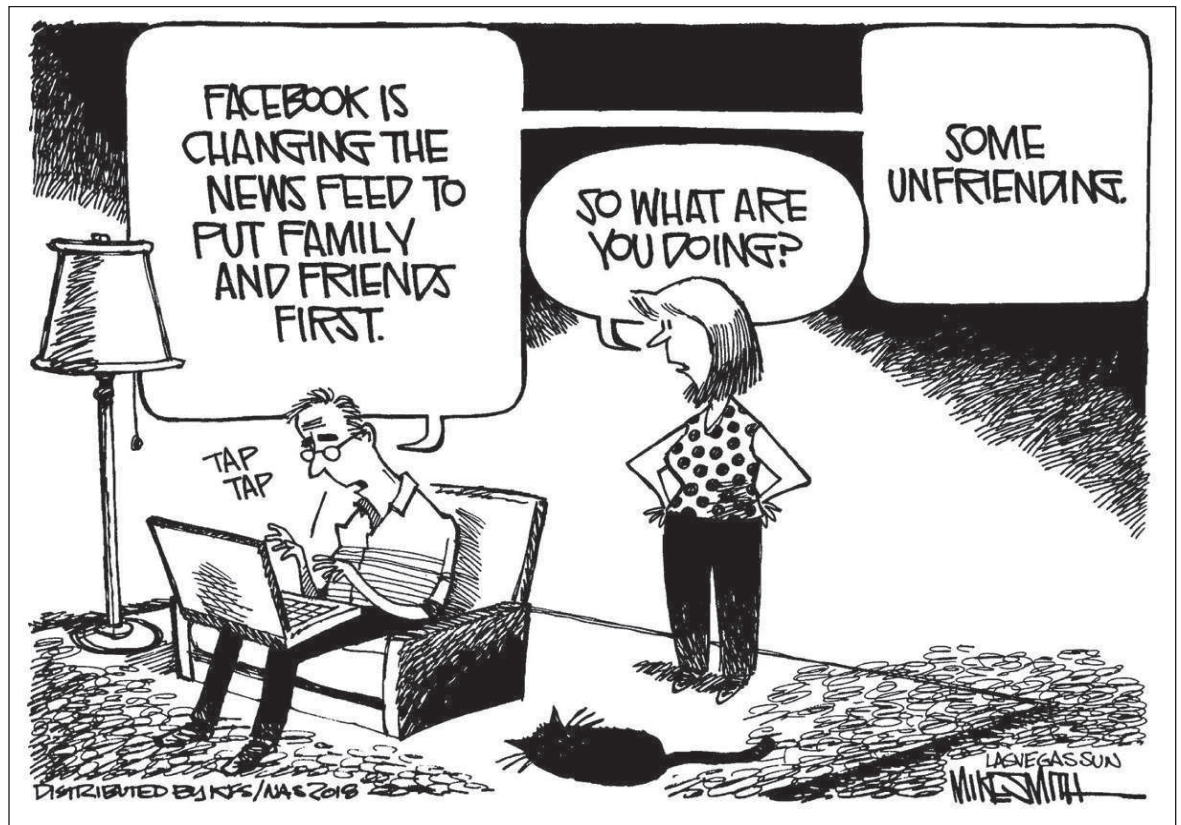
Congress authorized the council in 1980 as an independent agency to assess the Northwest's electricity needs — planning both for electricity and for protection of fish and wildlife. Congress acted in response to the multi-billion-dollar fiasco of the Washington Public Power Supply System, better known as WPPSS, in which public officials grossly overestimated the region's future demand for electricity and the viability of nuclear power.

Five nuclear plants were started, one was completed and currently operates, and WPPSS now is called Energy Northwest. The region's ratepayers still pay the price for those past bad decisions made by good people.

As Lorenzen left the Northwest Power and Conservation Council on Jan. 16, he warned that state legislators and other policymakers once again were making decisions about renewable energy and other resources on the basis of politics, not the state-of-the-art methodologies developed by the council.

"Our challenge, I believe, is to make certain in the future, to the best we can, that the methodologies that we have developed also are taken into consideration by those entities, those persons who are making those decisions, whether it be the traditional utility managers or the legislators," Lorenzen said.

As veteran legislators with statewide perspectives, Ferrioli and Devlin should be the right people for that task.



GUEST COMMENT

Become a high school official

By Bob Gardner and Peter Weber

To the Blue Mountain Eagle

They don't make the headlines, their names are not in the box scores and they don't make the all-star teams, but some of the most important individuals in high school sports are the contest officials.

These individuals are so important that, in fact, there would be no organized competitive sports at the high school level without the men and women who officiate these contests every day across the country. Subtract the dedicated people who officiate high school sports and competitive sports would no longer be organized; they would be chaotic.

In most areas, high school officials are retiring faster than new officials are being added. And junior varsity, freshmen and middle school games are being postponed — or

even cancelled — because there are not enough men and women to officiate them.

Anyone looking for a unique way to contribute to the local community should consider becoming a certified high school official. For individuals who played sports in high school, officiating is a great way to stay close to the sport after their playing days have ended. Officiating helps people stay in shape, expands their social and professional network and offers part-time work that is flexible, yet pays. In fact, officiating is a form of community service, but with compensation.

Another benefit of officiating is that individuals become role models so that teenagers in the community can learn the life lessons that high school sports teach. Students learn to respect their opponents and the rules of the game and the importance of practicing good sportsmanship, thanks, in part, to those men and women who officiate. And the objec-

tivity and integrity that high school officials display is an example that every young person needs to observe firsthand. In short, communities around the country will be stronger because of the life lessons that high school officials help teach the next generation.

Officiating is a great way to stay connected to sports and to give back to the local high school and community. We need dedicated men and women to become involved so that high school sports can continue to prosper for years to come.

Individuals interested in learning more about becoming a high school official, or even beginning the registration process, can do so at highschoolofficials.com.

Bob Gardner is the executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations, and Peter Weber is the executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OTEC delivery charge inequitable

To the Editor:

Oregon Trail Electric Consumers Cooperative residential members have experienced increases in OTEC's monthly "delivery charge" on their monthly bill in recent years. In a little over eight years, accompanied by an impressive propaganda campaign, OTEC has raised this fixed charge, the money you have to pay OTEC just to buy electricity, by almost 300 percent, from \$10 to \$29.50 per month, and they would like to raise it even higher. Idaho Power's monthly charge is \$8 for Oregon residents and even less in Idaho. Public Utilities Commissions in the various states tend to keep these monthly delivery charges low and recover most delivery costs through a tiered-rate system based on usage and its benefits, but electric cooperatives are for the most part unregulated monopolies that have little oversight from the Public Utility Commission, so they get away with the practice.

OTEC constantly reminds members of our low rate for electricity used, but figures from OTEC tell another tale: Because of our high delivery charge, more than half of OTEC members would have a lower bill if they were with Idaho Power. That's you if you average less than 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month.

Consumer Reports commissioned a study of these fixed charges that indicated that higher fixed charges are inequitable, increase the bills of low usage customers like singles and elderly the most and disproportionately impact the poor while reducing incentives for energy efficiency.

There are changes that could help lower fixed charges on member's bills, though.

Employee compensation would be a good place to start as the top eight employees took home \$2,286,446 in compensation and other benefits in 2016, skewed high by the \$785,135 raked in by exiting CEO Werner Buehler. The elected directors' yearly take for three to eight hours of work a week varied from \$16,100 to \$26,250

with an hourly wage that ranged from \$71 to \$103 per hour, depending on the director.

Another place to look are programs unrelated to OTEC's purpose of providing power and assisting members with their electricity infrastructure needs. OTEC spent \$655,681 on these unrelated programs in the last five years.

Christopher Christie
Baker City

high as 16-story buildings, just as the people who visit and live on the Oregon Coast will see miles and miles of drilling rigs.

I appreciate your strong statement on behalf of the residents of western Oregon. As governor for the whole state of Oregon, I would respectfully request that this same statement be made on behalf of the residents of Eastern Oregon.

JoAnn Marlette
Baker City

Transmission line hurts Eastern Oregon

An open letter to Gov. Brown:

I heard your perfect response to the Trump Administration's plans for offshore drilling along our Oregon Coast: "In what universe would this be okay? Our coastal beaches are really important to Oregonians. They are very important to who we are and very important to our economy." I knew I had to write to you on behalf of all of us in Eastern Oregon.

Eastern Oregon has been fighting for its very life for the past 10 years. Now Idaho Power, a \$6 billion out-of-state corporation, has plans to take advantage of Eastern Oregon. They are trying to do it as quickly and quietly as possible.

The proposed B2H transmission line from Hemingway, Idaho, to Boardman, Oregon, offers no direct benefit to anyone in Oregon. It will impact prime agricultural land and local landowners, degrade our wild lands, endanger our wildlife. Tourists travel to Eastern Oregon to escape crowds and industrialization. They come to hike or hunt, enjoy our relaxed pace of life and enjoy our natural scenery.

I live in Baker City, where tourists come to visit the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. The B2H, as planned, will cross the Oregon Trail eight times. Monster 200-foot-tall towers, less than a quarter mile from the center's picture windows, will mar the view of the Oregon Trail.

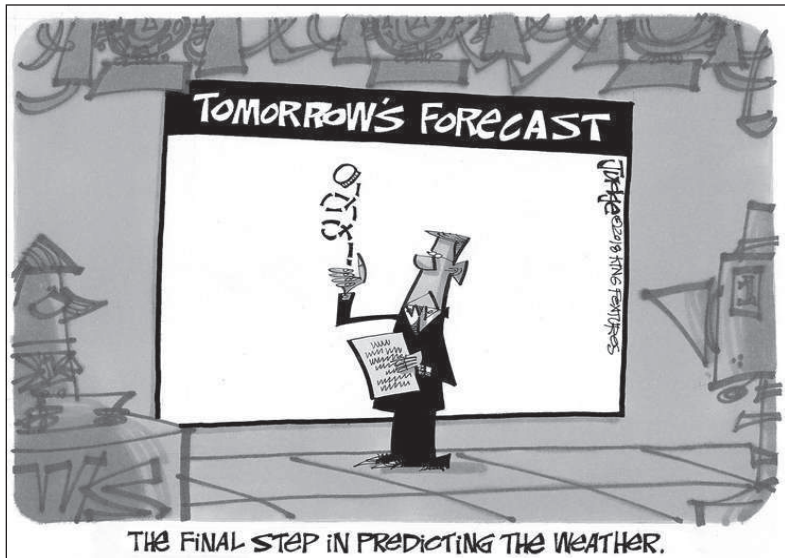
With the B2H, visitors will travel along 300 miles of transmission lines supported by steel towers as

Government works follow template

To the Editor:

In regard to the story "The FISA Memo: What We Know So Far" by the American Liberty Report, I would like to post this letter. Those who have been working for the government for any extended period of time have never learned, or have forgotten, to think for themselves. Their job has always been a set template of what to do, when to do it and never to question it, so when something new or different comes along they refer back to the template, and if the question is not answered there, the question or situation must be either radical, irrelevant or wrong. We cannot expect lifer government employees to accept anything new that they have not been trained on, or anything that actually comes from the people they are supposed to serve. The sad thing is that these government drones are teaching that same SOP to our youth, who can get a temp (at least) entry-level position at the government, which pays twice what they can get in the private sector entry level. And so, the beat has gone on for the last 30-plus years. President Trump comes along and turns the template upside down, and they hate him for the message he delivers from all of us working people. I can hear the piper coming down the street. Can you?

Tim K. Smith
Hines



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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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