

Eastern Oregon University serves as a rural rescue

In a nation that too often looks down on its rural residents, Eastern Oregon University embraces them. Its ties to rural America are so strong that the just-concluded 2018 Oregon Legislature unanimously declared EOU as “Oregon’s Rural University.” State Sen. Bill Hansell of Athena carried House Bill 4153 on the Senate floor, and Gov. Kate Brown last week signed the bill into law. The designation through HB 4153 is more than symbolism. It is a recognition that EOU has achieved a remarkable niche in higher education. EOU combines a sense of place — the La Grande-based university operates 11 centers throughout rural Oregon — with a well-regarded distance learning program that enrolls students from throughout Oregon, and beyond. Regional universities such as EOU were cast adrift when Oregon’s big research universities convinced the Legislature five years ago to dissolve the State Board of Higher Education in favor of independence for each institution. Meanwhile, EOU had suffered such turnover in leadership that state Rep. Greg Smith of Heppner has worked with seven EOU presidents during his nearly 18 years in the Legislature. EOU has prospered under the home-grown leadership of Tom Insko, an Eastern Oregon

native and EOU graduate who was plucked from the private sector to become university president in 2015. Insko has been a consistent advocate for EOU in the Oregon Capitol. The 2018 Legislature approved \$9.9 million in bonds for a new EOU fieldhouse, which will be constructed with cross-laminated timber, and \$390,000 for replacing the track and related infrastructure. Every Oregon university has its niche. Western Oregon University serves many first-generation students, and promotes itself as providing a close-knit, private college-style of education at a public university price. The University of Oregon is the state’s flagship university and one of only 62 institutions in the prestigious Association of American Universities. Oregon State University is a land, sea, space and sun grant university — one of only three U.S. universities to obtain all four designations. But Eastern Oregon University is the first institution to have its official designation — “Oregon’s Rural University” — incorporated into state law. That status should enhance its opportunities to promote rural economic development and to obtain grants that support its rural mission. Most of all, the designation underscores the value of a rural education and EOU as the right place for that education.



GUEST COMMENT

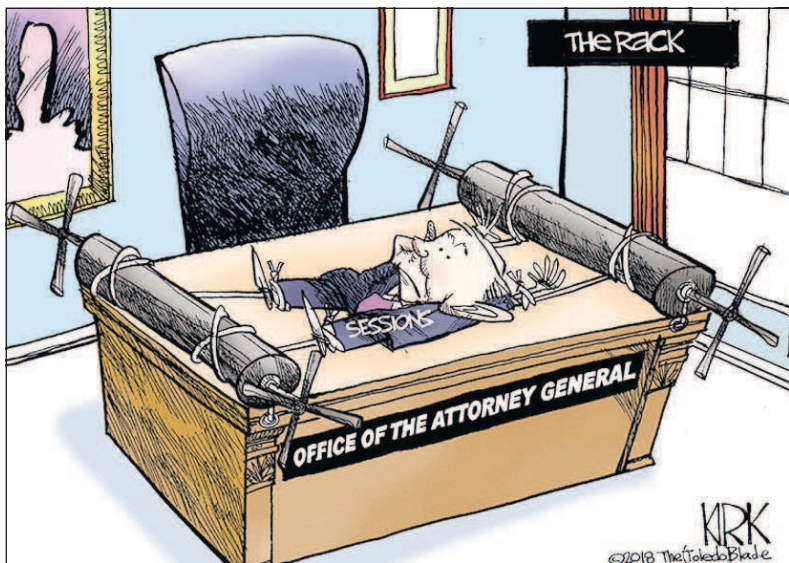
New NAFTA rules should stop theft of intellectual property

By Peter J. Pitts
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

The seventh round of NAFTA renegotiations just ended. As American negotiators look ahead to round eight, they should prepare to demand stronger protection of intellectual property rights. Robust IP protections would prevent Canada, Mexico and other trading partners from freeloading off American ingenuity — particularly our medicines. Development of a new drug is an expensive endeavor, requiring top-tier scientists and equipment and years of clinical trials. There are many false starts and dead ends. Altogether, it costs \$2.6 billion to bring a single drug to market. Intellectual property rights, such as patents, give inventors the chance to recoup this enormous investment. IP protections allow companies to sell drugs exclusively for a limited time. The United States has some of the strongest IP protections in the world. As a result, it is the world leader in drug development. U.S. biopharmaceutical firms invest more than \$60 billion annually in research and development, and they received more than half of all drug patents granted worldwide in 2014. Unfortunately, however, other countries embrace our inventions while regularly undermining Amer-

ica’s IP. Take our NAFTA partner Canada. Our northern neighbor imposes price controls on drugs. Because of these artificial price caps, Canadians spend up to 55 percent less on pharmaceuticals than Americans. That’s unfair — especially when you consider that the average Canadian’s family income is slightly above the average American’s. The Canadian price caps eat into companies’ research and development capabilities and shift more of the costs onto American consumers, who pay more as a result. Canada also regularly undermines American manufacturers’ patents. Its courts revoke American patents, enabling Canadian companies to create knockoff copies of our patented drugs. The problem is so bad that the U.S. Trade Representative put Canada on its 2017 “watch list.” This isn’t just a Canada problem, or even just a NAFTA problem. Australia, which has a trade agreement with the United States, promised to notify U.S. patent owners if Australian drug companies want to make a generic version of a U.S. medicine that is still under patent. The notice is designed to give American companies a heads up, so they can take proactive legal action to prevent patent infringement. But Australia hasn’t been giving U.S. companies this advance notice. It only alerts American firms after Australian generic manufacturers

begin marketing knockoff copies of the medicine. In effect, the Australian government is aiding and abetting patent infringement. It’s helping domestic firms rip off American companies. Or consider India and Brazil. These countries engage in “compulsory licensing” schemes. Compulsory licensing is legal under international law, but only in limited instances. It allows local companies to produce generic versions of patented medicines in desperate times — such as an infectious disease outbreak. However, India, Brazil, and other nations abuse this policy and allow drug-makers to produce just about any generic without any urgent reason at all, and without the patent owners’ permission. When other countries steal our intellectual property, American manufacturers lose revenues needed to invest in more research and development. They’re forced to scale back operations or postpone new research projects — thereby hurting American workers and patients. American trade negotiators ought to make strengthening IP rights their top priority. The status quo hurts American workers and undermines the creation of lifesaving drugs. Peter J. Pitts, a former FDA associate commissioner, is president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest.



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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).
- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.
- **Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

You don’t fight guns with new regulations

To the Editor:
Sometimes the solutions to a problem are the simplest ones and the least expensive ones. Banning guns in public places like schools leaves it wide open for an invasion or massacre. If the teachers and employees of schools would be willing to carry a concealed weapon, a gunman could be stopped before he killed so many people, if any. I would be willing to bet, if the gunman knew that the people in school were armed, he wouldn’t try these mass shootings in most cases. The personnel of the schools that would be willing to carry a concealed weapon would be trained in gun safety and marksmanship. There wouldn’t have to be any need for security guards to be hired. By the guns being concealed, a gunman wouldn’t know who was going to shoot back! In addition, much more needs to be done to keep the firearms out of the hands of the mentally disturbed and terrorist-related individuals. There is the old saying, you fight fire with fire! You fight guns with guns. You don’t fight guns with a bunch of new regulations!
Kenneth R. Moore
Mt. Vernon

Prairie City Panthers make us proud

To the Editor:
I am so proud of our Prairie City basketball team! The Panthers did great. Sam Workman, coach, and Ty, Bo and Mike assisting put in a huge handful of time, energy and patience with these boys. I am proud of all the coaches, teachers, fans and all the players. We are lucky to live in a place where everyone has a chance to play and learn how to interact with people. The coaches and players deserve credit. You did good. See you next basketball season.
Rosalie Averett
Austin

Resources should be managed better

To the Editor:
The resources of this county are water, grass, timber, gold and some coal. It seems for some reason everything goes full circle. Well, it is time to put this county back to work. For the past some 30 years, our state and federal agencies have poorly taken care of the county resources. In 1990, over 200 million board feet of timber laid to rot in the forest. A few years ago, 47 homes were burned up Canyon Creek

and one side of Canyon Mountain. Many more homes, timber and grasses were lost due to this horrible fire. Due to government regulations and environment rules, these results are a disgrace to society. I suggest that the agencies do a 60/40 management lease and let the ranchers and loggers manage the land. All junipers in this county should be cleared. Build a gin factory and create a bark dust factory. Build a dam. One juniper tree drinks 200 gallons of water a day, what a waste. Building a dam would create power, energy and tourism. Let the cattle graze on the forest like they used to. This would cut down a lot of fuel for fire. Clear your mountain streams so that your fish and water can do what they are supposed to do. If all of the above were done, it would create jobs and money, and we could be proud of our beautiful resources. I have written letters before, but nothing seems to get accomplished. So I hope you reading this will make some of my suggestions possible. My great-grandfather came here with the miners and built the first homestead in Grant County in 1862. So I can’t help but be concerned about land, timber, water, gold and coal.
Austene Lee Trowbridge
Hendrix
John Day



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