

Adopt-A-Highway

After receiving complaints about an Adopt-A-Highway permittee, the Eagle reached out to John Eden at the Oregon Department of Transportation for some answers.

Eden looked into the situation, and ODOT will be rolling out some changes to improve the program in our district.

Previously in the district, which includes Malheur and most of Grant and Harney counties, Adopt-A-Highway volunteers have been allowed to remain in the program by picking up litter along their designated stretch of roadway twice per year. Eden said long winters and wet springs led to that number, when other areas of the state were required to do so more often.

However, as a result of a statewide effort to decrease trash along highways, all new and renewed Adopt-A-Highway permits in the district will require at least three litter pickup events per year. The pickups will be verified by the local maintenance office to ensure compliance.

The complaints received by the Eagle focused on John Day Taxi, which has a permit on Highway 26 just west of John Day, but Eden said the business operated by Richie Colbeth appeared to be in compliance with the program. Eden said John Day Taxi applied to be in the program in January 2017 and completed its first verified cleanup in April 2017. Colbeth said he and his crew picked up litter four times in 2017.

Going forward, Colbeth will be required to report the pickup operations to Eden directly, who will verify the work with the maintenance manager in John Day. The permit is set to expire in February 2019, and Eden said he will review the permit with the district manager at that time before a renewal is offered.

Eden also said some people may have misconceptions about the Adopt-A-Highway program and what it is intended to do.

"In all fairness to the John Day Taxi folks, I have learned that stretch of highway is a portion of the route taken by most to the local landfill, so part of the problem may be folks not covering or securing trash that is being hauled to the dump," Eden said. "I would also reiterate that the Adopt-A-Highway program is not intended for the permittee to clean the roadside every time a piece of trash falls along the highway. It is intended to give folks an opportunity to help the community and the state by volunteering a few times a year to perform an organized cleanup."

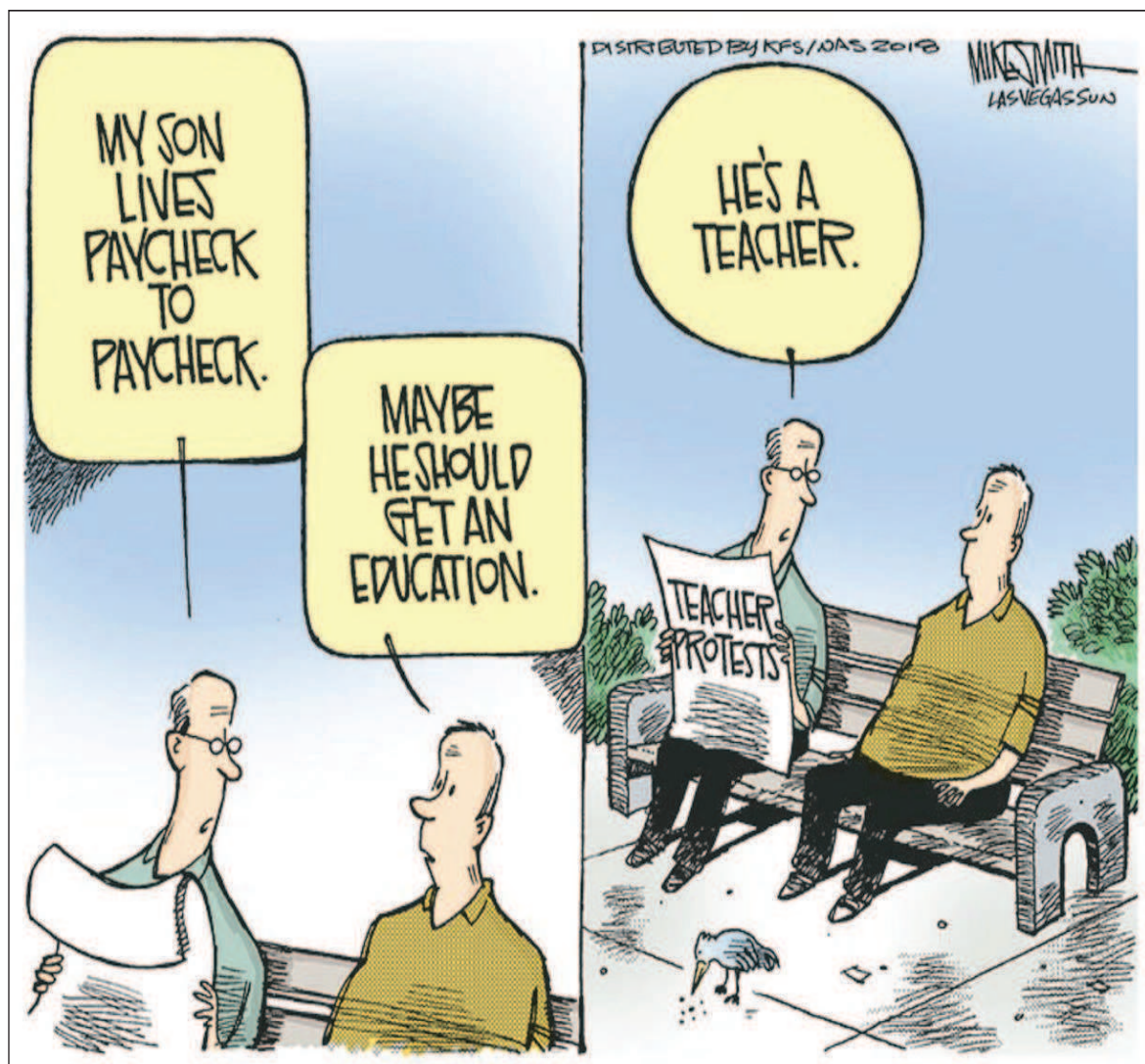
Eden visited John Day and inspected Adopt-A-Highway permit sites. He said he saw trash in John Day Taxi's area but also in an area adopted by Community Corrections east of town.

"If there is a legitimate concern for the trash," he said, "it is my humble opinion that the best results would come from pitching in to help pick up litter all over town or remind folks to cover their loads when going to the dump."

Eden said there are a variety of opportunities for people who'd like to help. People can join one of the current Adopt-A-Highway groups or adopt their own section of highway.

Another program Eden said has worked in other communities is SOLVE, which started as a beach cleanup and has expanded into a volunteer operation in which people can create their own events: <https://www.solveoregon.org/create-your-own-event>. If everyone pitches in, a lot could be accomplished.

It sounds like progress is being made regarding Adopt-A-Highway and litter, and we hope to see it continue.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rand went above and beyond

To the Editor:

There's an aspect of Officer Damon Rand's accomplishments that's been overlooked. He accepted the responsibility of searching for my missing nephew, Farren Stanberry.

Back in June 1980, my mom, Beulah Harrison, and I dropped Farren off at the old Joaquin Miller campground.

He wound up in San Francisco and disappeared. After an exhaustive, fruitless search involving DNA evidence, he went as far as he could go, but at least he tried.

Sandra Colbeth
John Day

If guns kill people, forks make people fat

To the Editor:

If guns kill people, do forks make people fat? They both have to be loaded, and action has to be taken before they are harmful.

I have lived in Long Creek my entire life and have had many opportunities to hunt, especially with my dad and brother, but never once did I ever see a gun just jump out of a vehicle and shoot an animal.

Perhaps this could work as an alibi for poachers but not a legal hunter. The gun has to be aimed and the trigger has to be pulled by a person.

Nancy Morgan
Long Creek

County court made hurried broadband decision

To the Editor:

After reading your article "Court signs on for broadband," I have come to the conclusion that our county court just got rolled over by the ever-aggressive city of John Day.

The statement for passing was "Improve the lives of residents in the county."

This was a hurried decision

by the county court to appease a special interest, and the two voting members need to reconsider and take all of the residents of this county into consideration. In the past couple years, they seem to put special interest groups ahead of the citizens.

We all will be paying for this, and if we pay 60 percent of the liability, then the county should be the leading figure.

What you did was create yet another government entity accountable to no one.

There was no cost figured into it, antiquated method of delivery and, last but not least, the county should not be in competition in a private-run utility.

Satellite delivery is going to be the future in internet and cell-phones. Overhead lines are a thing of the past.

The city of John Day has taken action to get every grant, bond and community funding possible to fund its Seattle agenda. Not once, other than public safety, have I heard them cut funding to balance a budget.

Like the county, I still haven't seen any actual business model for this "Schumer" gateway project to be successful, and with all these grants only come more unfunded mandates.

This, in turn, is their own whining reason for a budget-control issue. Like the 911 levy attempt, they went another route on the internet and were successful.

Maybe it is time to get a county political action committee to oversee a way to guide the county court.

This way the rest of the county will have a say in decisions. And as a person who has voted to elect both court members who voted yes, I will not vote for them this fall, and I hope this encourages others to vote Judge Myers out. Maybe we can reverse this action, as we can leave this intergovernmental "agreement."

Robert Pereira
John Day

Ogden for BOLI commissioner

To the Editor:

Oregon voters should pay close attention to the May primary

election for commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries. A very important choice will be made in this non-partisan race. I hope voters will support Lou Ogden.

Lou has been mayor of the city of Tualatin for the last 24 years. His balanced and fair leadership has brought business and industrial development providing thousands of jobs and over a billion dollars of investment by the private sector.

He wants to lead BOLI as the driver for skills training and apprenticeship programs that will put employees into living-wage jobs and provide high school graduates an alternative to college.

Lou is an insurance broker, farmer, husband and father. He has the vision, experience and proven record of leadership necessary for the job.

Gary Wilhelms
Portland

Free trade

To the Editor:

Free trade has been our policy goal since World War II. To achieve this goal, the United States made favorable trade deals first with Europeans and Japanese, then with "third world" countries. We held most of the world's gold reserves and most of the intact industry.

Over time, we exchanged gold for Arab oil; purchased low-tariff cheap foreign goods instead of our own highly regulated and union-priced products; and invested in multi-national corporations while closing our manufacturing.

Nearly \$1 trillion more is going out than coming in. The elites who own these multi-nationals also own our national debt and benefit from government tax, spending and borrowing. Who owns the cable news networks?

The same elites who own these multi-nationals gave \$33 billion to the Clinton Foundation and dictate fake news! They would control world economies, societies and governments! Trump is challenging these powers that be!

Michael F. McCarthy
Hayward, California



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Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

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1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES
 (including online access)

Grant County\$40
 Everywhere else in U.S.....\$51
 Outside Continental U.S.....\$60

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER
 send address changes to:
 Blue Mountain Eagle
 195 N. Canyon Blvd.
 John Day, OR 97845-1187

USPS 226-340

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