

County wise to revisit pot tax

After possible procedural errors in its adoption were pointed out, Grant County officials made the wise decision to look further into the marijuana tax ordinance passed recently.

Although the county may miss out on a small portion of the tax while the issues are resolved, ensuring the ordinance is passed properly will ensure the county is not on the hook to return tax money collected improperly — money that likely would have already been budgeted and spent.

The problem with the ordinance was not that it imposed a tax on marijuana. State law allows cities and counties to levy up to a 3 percent tax on pot products, which is what the county attempted to do.

The problem was that the ordinance did not refer the tax measure to voters for approval, as required by law.

As the Eagle covered the proceedings, the lack of a publicized referral to voters stood out, so we looked into it further.

We contacted county officials to get their thoughts, determined the ordinance was modeled after one in Columbia County and obtained copies of both ordinances. As we read through them, it was easy to see that the section that referred the measure to voters in Columbia County had been replaced in the Grant County version with a clause stating the ordinance was being passed as an emergency to be effective immediately.

It seemed like we were on the right track, so we continued to dig.

We contacted the state Department of Revenue, which all but confirmed what we believed: Local jurisdictions can only tax mar-

ijuana with approval from the voters. The only caveat was that the DOR communications operations manager said she was not sure how the law applied to emergency ordinances.

We felt fairly confident voter referral was required at that point, but we decided to see what we could find through a little legal research.

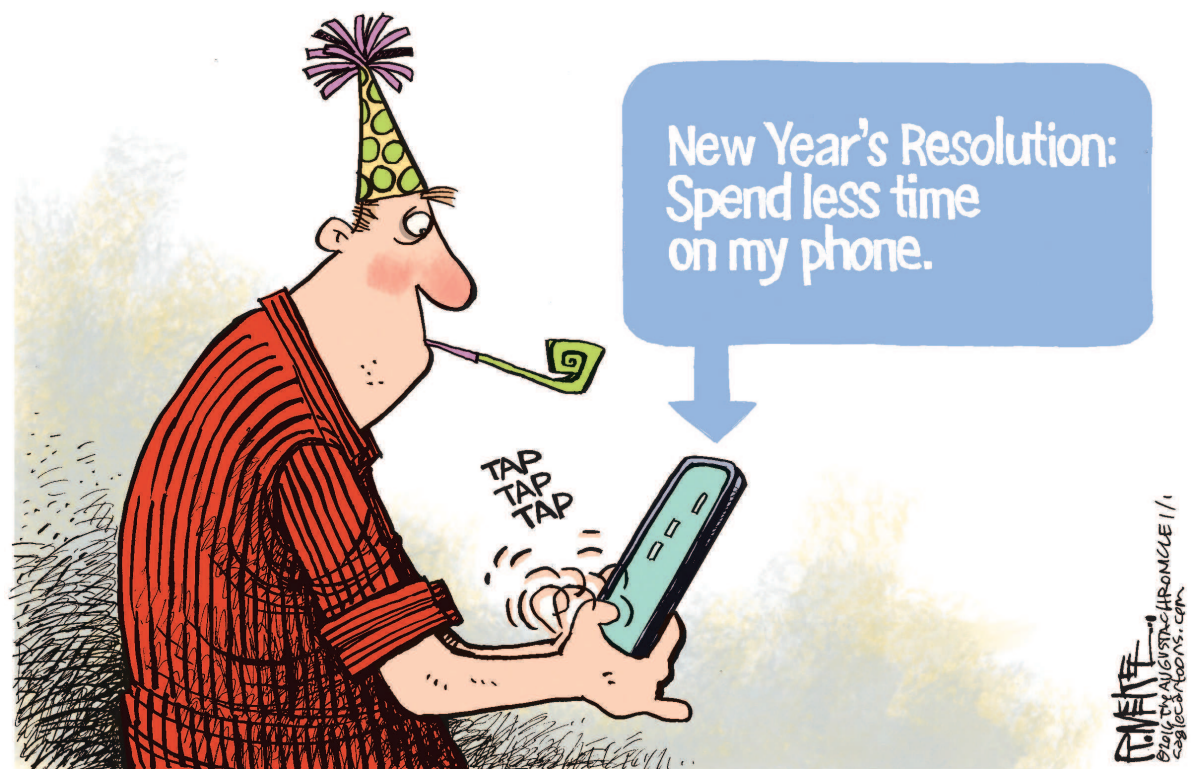
It didn't take long before we found two more state laws that appear to prohibit this type of ordinance: One requires all tax-related county ordinances to be referred to voters, and the other prevents tax-related ordinances from being passed in a single meeting as an emergency.

With that information, it certainly appeared that this ordinance did not pass legal muster.

We reached out again to county officials, letting them know we believed the ordinance was passed improperly, and provided them all of our research. Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter, who is transitioning to also serve as county counsel, replied within a couple hours, stating the county would be looking into it to determine if it was passed properly and what the options would be moving forward.

Ultimately, we believe the county should pass an ordinance to enact the 3 percent tax upon voter approval. And when it does come before voters, we encourage everyone to approve the tax to provide another small stream of discretionary income to the county coffers.

But the county must ensure that it follows the correct procedures to prevent this tax windfall from becoming a liability to taxpayers.



Shooting the Breeze: Road trippin'

By Rod Carpenter
For the Blue Mountain Eagle

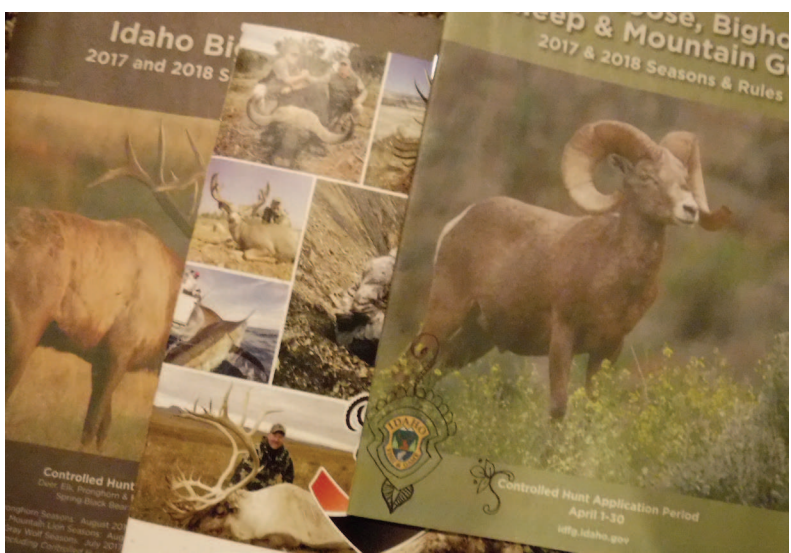
This time of year finds most of us snug on the couch watching football or out on snowmobiles enjoying the snow. But if you dream of taking an out-of-state trip to hunt some day, you need to start planning now. Hunting in other states does take some planning, but it really isn't very difficult. Many people think out-of-state hunts are only for that once-in-a-lifetime trophy, but that doesn't have to be the case. Quality hunts for mature animals aren't difficult to find and participate in every couple of years if you play your cards right. They can also be a great way to extend your season.



Rod Carpenter

For example, Idaho has over-the-counter deer and elk hunts available. Out-of-state kids can hunt there almost as cheaply as hunting here. You could go there every year. If you faithfully buy preference points in Wyoming, you could hunt deer, elk or antelope there every four or five years. Montana is on the spendy side but offers good hunting opportunities. It takes some time to build up the points to hunt deer in Colorado, but not long to have enough points to hunt elk. Also, buying points in Colorado is pretty cheap.

If you do dream of that monster bull or buck and keep telling yourself, "Someday," you need to start working toward it now. Many of the trophy units in Utah,



Contributed photo

Out-of-state hunting can extend the season, but planning ahead is important to acquire preference points.

Wyoming or Colorado take 15 or more points to draw. Start building our points now while you're saving your money for the trip. If you have a kid that loves to hunt, start building points for them now. Most states offer deep discounts for kids, making it easy to build up their preference points.

Going about it can be a little tricky. The Oregon regulations make me feel like I need a lawyer to interpret them. Other states aren't any easier, and each has its own unique quirks. But with some time and effort, it can be done. There are services like Cabela's TAG service that can do it for you. For a fee, of course. Two magazines I know of that offer good advice and walk you through the application process are Eastman's Hunting Journal and Huntin' Fool.

Neither are cheap, but they both have great information on each of the Western states' drawing systems. You actually have to subscribe to the magazines to get the info. Newsstand copies don't have it.

However you do it, now is the time to start. Wyoming, Arizona, Utah and Montana all have deadlines in the first three months of the year. Start building your points now. I can't afford a Utah elk hunt now but hope to be able when I've accumulated my 20 points. In 10 years, you may have the money, but if you don't have the points to get the tag, it isn't going to matter.

Email your comments to shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com.

Rod Carpenter is a husband, father and hunting fool.

How to make easy resolutions

By Green Shoot Media

Tired of making resolutions that you're never able to keep? Next time around, pick a few easy goals that only take a few minutes a day and are easy to work into your routine and may be fun to do.

Here are some suggestions.

- Meditate for a few minutes. Livestrong suggests five to 20 minutes a day of meditation — sit quietly, breathe deeply, get rid of distractions, allow yourself to stop worrying about tasks. If you have an office at work, shut your door and take a mid-afternoon break. You don't have to empty your mind, just allow yourself a few minutes of calm.
- Floss daily. According to USA Today, flossing every day is a 90-second task that can help reduce gum disease and tooth loss, which can make your semiannual visit to the dentist a much less painful or stressful experience. Keep your floss next to your toothbrush as an easy reminder.
- Go to bed earlier. Depending on how busy you are (or how young your kids are), this suggestion from Livestrong may not be easy, but it's well worth the investment. Even an extra 15-30 minutes a night can help your immune system, memory, mood and so much more. Schedule your bedtime, and stick as close as possible to it.



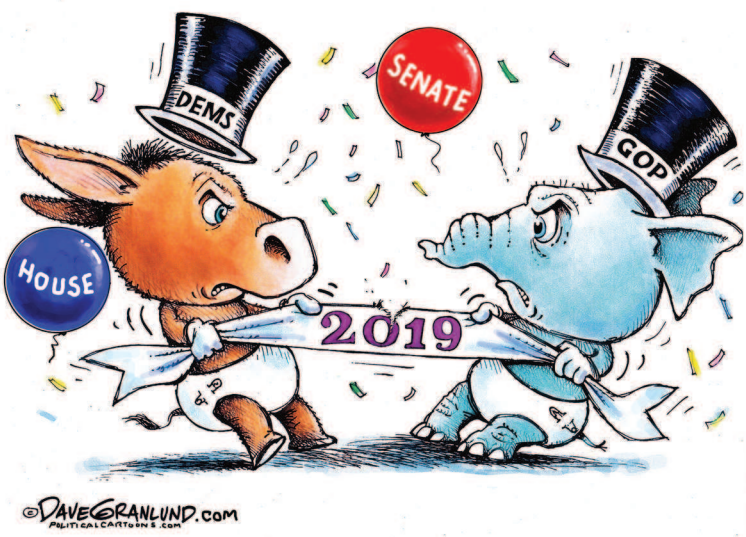
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Meditation is an easy resolution that can provide health benefits.

- Schedule all your doctor's appointments for the year. Good Housekeeping suggests setting up appointments for screenings, eye appointments, dental cleanings and anything else you know is coming up. You can schedule appointments for kids and pets too while you're at it. Put the appointments in your calendar online and don't worry about it.
- Get a houseplant. According to Good Housekeeping, indoor plants can lower stress levels, and caring for a plant helps calm the nervous system and lowers blood pressure.

Find a plant that fits your lifestyle. There are plenty that don't need a lot of water.

- Take the dog for a walk. Even a quick walk around the block is good for you and Fido, according to Livestrong. Take the time for a solitary ramble, alone with your thoughts, or invite your partner or children.
- Turn your phone off. Take a few minutes of quiet time, check out from social media and otherwise focus fully on the task at hand, your book, the person you're spending time with or just enjoying the silence.



WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
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- Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
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