

# Newspapers should be included in stimulus efforts

As the world has been divided into essential and nonessential businesses, local newspapers providing credible information in this public health crisis fall firmly into the essential camp.

The industry is facing an unusual paradox, however. Some essential businesses, such as grocery stores, telecommuting software companies and manufacturers of medical masks, have seen increased revenues as demand for their products spikes. But while the appetite for local news is at a high, newspapers across the country have been forced to lay off a significant percentage of their staff and cut salaries, or in some cases close altogether.

From a revenue standpoint, it doesn't matter how many thousands more people are viewing a story on a newspaper's website if the newspaper is removing the payroll from stories with important public health information about COVID-19, and no one is willing to buy advertising to go with it. In a time of canceled events, closed businesses and economic uncertainty, advertising is one of the first line items organizations cut from their budget.

This confluence of the need for credible local news and plunging revenues for the companies reporting that news means Congress must make sure newspapers are included in stimulus efforts.

The Paycheck Protection Program, which received a refill after the president signed a \$484 billion bill Friday, allows chain restaurants to count each individual restaurant as its own "small businesses" for the purpose of qualifying for a forgivable loan to

cover payroll, rent and utilities. Congress should provide affiliation waivers for newspapers, allowing local newspapers owned by larger parent companies, such as Gannett/Gatehouse, to qualify as a "small business" too. Those newspapers may have a larger parent company, but they are still expected to support themselves through local advertising and subscription revenue.

Community members are getting information about COVID-19 testing, local cases, closures, cancellations, resources for the newly unemployed, grants available for businesses, food giveaways and other crucial updates from news outlets, which often have a far greater reach into peoples' homes than a government agency's website. That's a vital public service that needs to continue.

Congress should also look at other grant options that will help newspapers weather this storm. Federal, state and local governments also need to set aside advertising dollars to put out public service announcements through newspapers and other local outlets. If the state of Oregon can pay Facebook and Twitter to put sponsored "Stay Home, Save Lives" posts into your newsfeed, they can pay Oregon businesses that are helping give Oregonians the specific local and statewide information they need to stay safe.

News outlets were already doing "more with less," and now they're being forced to do less with even less. That hurts everyone. Call or email your federal and state elected officials and ask them to provide the rule change, grants and advertising dollars necessary to protect a vital public service.



## GUEST COMMENT

# EOMG forums offer chance to make informed decision

Elections are important. They are the bedrock of our democracy, the foundational element to our political system and are the body politic's way to continue on with a series of lawmakers or make different choices.

That's why I believe the upcoming online candidate forums, sponsored by the EO Media Group, are so important and, if you allow, necessary.

Especially now, an opportunity for voters to connect with candidates is crucial. This isn't a typical election season. That's why the online forums, which will be livestreamed and will not have a live audience because of the COVID-19 virus outbreak, are essential for voters.

The forums are slated on Friday, May 1, for Democratic candidates for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District slot and Saturday, May 2, for Republican candidates. There are 16 candidates running for the congressional positions. The EO Media Group sponsorship of the forums is an important public service. We believe one of our core missions is to inform



Andrew Cutler

readers regarding issues that impact their lives.

Elections — who wins and who does not — make an impact at the local level. The candidate we choose to represent us in Washington, D.C., is crucial to nearly every facet of our lives. That's why we must choose wisely and the forums will allow area voters to gain some perspective on all the candidates.

Normally, as we all know, by this time in an election season there already would have been numerous open debates, fundraisers for candidates and other opportunities to list and ask questions of the candidates. Because that just isn't possible now, the forums will help democracy by furnishing a platform for all of us to hear what the candidates have to say, their goals and their views on specific subjects. Election time is near. Ballots go out April 29 and the primary election is May 19.

So that means time is at a pre-

mium. That's why I hope you all tune in, if you can, and watch.

The forums are being livestreamed by La Grande-based Eastern Oregon Alive TV, a local internet TV station, and on the Blue Mountain Eagle's Facebook page. And if you are unable to watch the events live, the forums will be archived and available for viewing at your convenience on the Eagle's website or on EOAlive.tv following the events.

The forums are being moderated by Chris Rush, the regional publisher of EO Media Group's east side publications, including the Blue Mountain Eagle and East Oregonian. Voters can submit questions to CD2forum@eomediagroup.com in advance of the forums or on Facebook Live during the event.

The only way voters can make an informed decision is to be able to hear what the candidates have to say.

So, if you get the chance, please go online and watch the forums. It isn't only a good way to be informed, but it is important to our democracy.

Andrew Cutler is the editor of the East Oregonian.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Jim Carpenter for circuit court judge

**To the Editor:**  
After a great deal of deliberation on our circuit judge race in the upcoming election, I have chosen to back Jim Carpenter. I was on the grand jury for a short stint, and he kept the discussions on the facts of the case as per the laws involved were concerned, and he was well prepared. At a town meeting here in the area where all three candidates were present, he answered the questions as a judge would, nothing more and nothing less. In today's air of judicial activism, I thought long and hard on the subject and come up backing Mr. Carpenter. Mr. Lamborn, while I am sure is a fine person, answered the questions with a lot of trivial dribble and ended up on a completely different subject. Mr. Raschio had a weakness of "candor" with me personally in one of the Grant County Court meetings about his involvement with the city of John Day being on their budget committee. This set off warning buzzers in my mind. After an individual brought me information on his campaign donations in the past, I cannot as a small-town conservative vote for this person. The candidate made donations to the "Kate Brown Committee" and "The Friends of Jennifer Williamson" organizations. (Jennifer was the House majority leader on the state level from 2015-2019.) For those of us in the battle of politics, that session of the legislature brought forth onerous gun control and cap and trade, the job killer for all of us. "A single lie destroys a whole reputation of integrity" — Baltasar Gracian. Yes, I urge voters to vote for current District Attorney Jim Carpenter in this election cycle. Everyone be safe in your journeys.

Bob Pereira  
John Day

### Sheriff's office should comply with state law

**To the Editor:**  
This letter addresses the same issue described in the Feb. 19 Blue Mountain Eagle: request for viewing/inspection of a clearly defined set of public documents. I was advised by Grant County Sheriff's Office that a CD has been prepared in response to my public records request, which I can purchase. But I wish to see the originals. Oregon law gives me a right to do so (ORS 192.314).

Then I was informed that I may indeed view the original documents, contained in files and other formats — after paying \$288 for time spent to research, compile, organize and other office related chores, plus time for someone to supervise my inspection of said records. At \$36 per hour, that's eight hours total. They're allowed to charge for extra time related to document viewing, but how much additional time is needed on top of the time they have to spend to categorize and file complaints on a running basis? It seems rather subjective and a "punishment" for a legitimate request. (The Eagle's \$1,200 bill, cited in the Feb. 19 issue, breaks down to 33.33 hours. A week's workload.)

I therefore requested to view the 19 files only. Referred to as "files," I assumed them ready for viewing. I have yet to be advised of a date.

Point is: State law requires compliance with lawfully and officially designated duties. Keeping records and making them available to the public is one of those duties. This falls mainly to the undersheriff and office staff. In putting a price on compliance, the public is asked to pay again for services already paid for through taxation.

Vega Nunez  
Ritter

### Support current OTEC directors

**To the Editor:**  
There are three members of the current OTEC board of directors up for re-election this year. Many of our electric cooperatives are facing challenging and demanding decisions in the coming few years, and this will impact the membership's ability to benefit from the affordable power that OTEC provides.

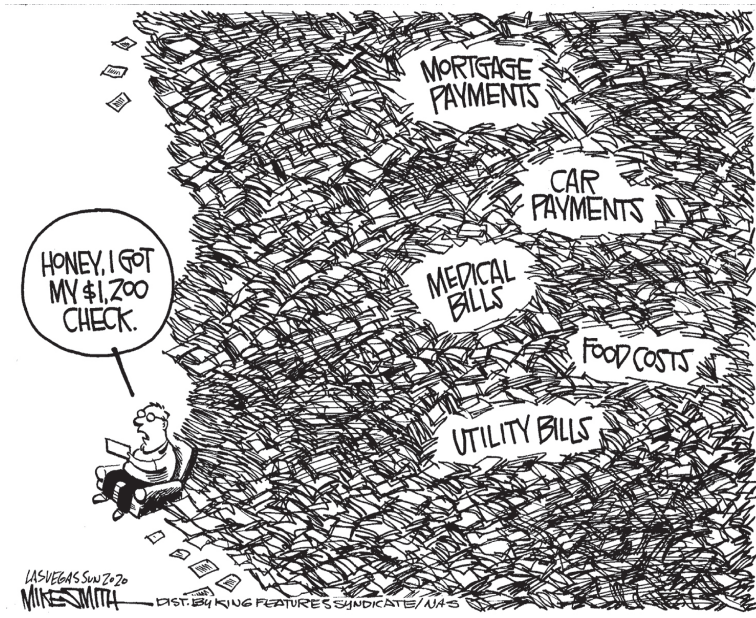
Key issues relating to federal and state legislative actions could have major damaging effects on OTEC members, while still providing reliable and constant power needs to meet demands. Ongoing infrastructure issues and the effects of the recent pandemic flu are creating, for the first time in years, many challenges that the board of directors are managing in conjunction with the leadership of the OTEC organization.

Typically it can take up to two years for each new board member to complete training, to get certified and to gain the knowledge needed to address the current critical issues facing the OTEC leadership. Can we afford this training time given the current circumstances?

Therefore, I ask you to take time to carefully consider your choice in selecting which individuals you think can provide our cooperative with strong, consistent and experienced leadership in the years ahead by casting your vote to re-elect board members.

The investments we have made as members of this cooperative in trusting and depending on these individuals to continue to provide our community with reliable power will be achieved if we choose to maintain the board's current level of knowledge and expertise.

Julie Riel  
Hines



## WHERE TO WRITE

- GRANT COUNTY**
- **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: toccc1862@centurylink.net.
  - **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
  - **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
  - **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
  - **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone
- and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
  - **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
  - **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.
- SALEM**
- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
  - **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).



### Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

- Publisher.....Chris Rush, crush@eomediagroup.com
- Editor & General Manager.....Sean Hart, editor@bmeagle.com
- Reporter.....Rudy Diaz, rudy@bmeagle.com
- Reporter.....Steven Mitchell, steven@bmeagle.com
- Sports.....sports@bmeagle.com
- Marketing Rep.....Kim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com
- Office Assistant.....Alexandra Hand, office@bmeagle.com

**1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES (including online access)**

Grant County .....	\$45
Everywhere else in U.S.....	\$57

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

Copyright © 2020 Blue Mountain Eagle All rights reserved. No part of this publication covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means — graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, taping or information storage and retrieval systems — without written permission of the publisher.