

Legislature has no time to waste in special session

There is a growing probability that Gov. Kate Brown will call a special session of the Oregon Legislature within the next few weeks to deal with expected budget shortfalls created by the COVID-19 virus outbreak.

Brown should call the special session and shouldn't wait very long to do so.

That's because the state is beginning to stagger after weeks of closed businesses and high unemployment. Already, Brown has asked state agencies to create a plan to slash their budgets by 17%. We will all find out more May 20 when the latest report from the Office of Economic Analysis is revealed, but not even the most optimistic pundit should expect anything other than very bad news.

Oregon faces another challenge — the state constitution demands a balanced budget.

Unlike the federal government, Oregon can't put everything on a virtual credit card and let the future take care of itself.

That creates steep challenges for lawmakers, and their jobs during the special session will be crucial. What simply cannot happen is a divergence away from the budget woes and how to deal with COVID-19 into yet another series of legislative battles over issues tied to party dogma.

We don't have the time now

to watch the special session descend into chaos because a group of lawmakers suddenly decide to resurrect some flash-point issue from the past. The only goal must be to face the budget shortfall and balance the budget, and then get back to dealing with the virus outbreak.

Anything less will be a betrayal of voters. Party leaders and the governor need to meet before the special session and craft an agreement that narrowly defines what the special session will tackle. That agreement must be clear and precise and include provisions that there will be no deviation from the pressing matter — the state budget — at hand.

Oregon lawmakers no longer have the privilege of wasting away days on the legislative time clock fighting over pie-in-the-sky, New Age political initiatives. Lawmakers can do that later. Policy issues that are not related to the state budget and the COVID-19 outbreak should be jettisoned.

As is always the case, elected leaders from both parties will have an opportunity to do some good work if a special session is called. They will be presented with an opportunity to face a serious set of problems, work on them together and solve them.

Wasting time in any other fashion is simply that — wasting time. That's time the state does not have.



GUEST COMMENT

Remember those who sacrificed lives while serving others

By the American Legion with National Commander Bill Oxford

Every crisis has new heroes. During the 9/11 attacks, they were the first responders running into burning and crumbling buildings as others ran out. Now, during the coronavirus pandemic, the most visible heroes are the health care professionals, who are saving others and risking their own lives while doing so.

These heroes have much in common with the people that we honor today — America's fallen veterans. They are men and women who have sacrificed their own lives so others could live. They are both elite and ordinary. They are elite in the sense of character. Giving your life so others could live is the ultimate definition of selfless.

They are ordinary in the fact that they represent the diverse fabric of our country. They are rich and poor, black and white, male and female. They come from every ethnicity and background. In short, they looked like anyone of us.

As we celebrate the selfless and untiring performances of the health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, it brings to mind the military medics, doctors and nurses who sacrificed their lives while treating others on the battlefield.

One such hero was Pharmacist Mate Third Class Jack Williams. The Navy Reserve corpsman was only 20 years old when he landed on Iwo Jima 75 years ago.

On March 3, 1945, James Naughton, a Marine in Williams' unit, was wounded by a grenade. While under intense enemy fire, Williams dragged Naughton to a shallow depression and treated his wounds. Williams used his own body as a screen and was shot four times. Yet he continued.

After he treated Naughton, Williams dressed his own wounds. He then proceeded to treat another Marine, despite his own immense pain. While heading to the rear, he was hit by a sniper's bullet and killed. For his actions, Petty Officer Williams was awarded the Medal of Honor.

We also remember Army veterans like Lieutenant Sharon Lane.

According to her biographer, Philip Bigler, Lt. Lane threw herself into her work as a nurse. While serving in Colorado, she requested a trans-

fer to Vietnam.

"There, at least, you are busy 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week," she said in a 1968 letter to her parents.

Her dedication was obvious, even as she treated enemy Viet Cong soldiers who would return the favor by kicking, cursing and spitting at their American captors.

In the early morning of June 8, 1969, Sharon's tour of duty ended. A Soviet-built rocket struck the hospital. Lieutenant Sharon A. Lane was killed in action at age 25.

If she were still here, her skills as a nurse might still be benefiting us during the current crisis. But not all of the heroes working during the COVID-19 pandemic are in the healthcare industry. Grocers, first responders, delivery workers and drive-through restaurant employees are just a few of the many people that we rely on to provide vital services for society while risking their own safety.

The military also has heroes in every occupational field. Truck drivers, cooks and administrative clerks have all paid the ultimate price. At sea, on land or in the air — military service requires great risk.

Roy Knight Jr. was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. On May 19, 1967, he was shot down while attacking a target on the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. He was posthumously promoted to colonel. Last year, a joint team from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency discovered and later identified Col. Knight's remains.

When his remains arrived at Dallas's Love Field, a crowd had gathered to witness the dignified transfer of the flag-draped casket from the Southwest Airlines jet into the receptive arms of the military honor guard. One observer reported that the entire crowd fell silent.

The Southwest flight was piloted by another Air Force veteran, Col. Knight's son, Bryan. Bryan Knight was only 5 years old when he said goodbye to his father as the elder Knight left for Vietnam.

This is yet another legacy that these heroes leave behind. A legacy that includes their sons, daughters, grieving parents, grandparents and friends.

Their heroic acts are sometimes performed to protect those with whom they serve. Corporal Jason Dunham

was a squad leader with the Third Battalion, 7th Marines in Iraq.

On April 14, 2004, his squad approached a Toyota Land Cruiser. After his squad discovered AK-47s in the vehicle, the enemy insurgent exited and engaged in hand-to-hand fighting with the unit. The driver dropped a grenade.

To save his fellow Marines, Corporal Dunham made the ultimate sacrifice. He threw himself on the grenade and tried to use his helmet to shield the blast. Severely wounded by the grenade's fragments, Cpl. Dunham was taken off life-support eight days later.

Corporal Dunham died so other Marines could live. He, too, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his gallantry.

Approximately one million men and women of the U.S. military have lost their lives in defense of our nation since the founding of this great republic.

Not all have died from enemy fire. Some have died from diseases that have too often festered around war zones. Often times, deaths from disease and accidents outnumbered casualties caused by enemy weapons.

During the Spanish American War, 60 soldiers of the all-black 24th Infantry Regiment volunteered to serve as nurses. Thirty-six of them would later die of yellow fever or malaria.

A generation later, the flu would kill nearly 16,000 U.S. soldiers in France during World War I. Another 30,000 American servicemembers died in stateside camps. These men and women could have isolated safely in their homes. But they knew they had an important job to do. A mission to accomplish. They were all on a mission to serve.

Even when the enemy is an invisible virus or a microscopic germ, the sacrifices made are just as meaningful. The U.S. military has already lost servicemembers to COVID-19.

This Memorial Day, as we continue to honor those who fell for us in battle, let's also pause to remember those who have also sacrificed their lives while serving others.

May God bless them, and may God bless you for remembering them here today.

The American Legion with National Commander Bill Oxford, legion.org.



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GUEST COMMENT

Marketing during COVID-19

There is not a single person who has not been affected in some way by the fact many businesses have been forced to temporarily close. However, don't assume you should not continue to market your business, especially as the economy begins to open. Here are some tips to consider:

- Stay connected with your customers. If you do not have a website or social media presence, create one now. Offer a sign-up portal and send emails about products available, changes you anticipate making to your business once the economy opens and let them know you care about them and their families.
- Offer ways people can continue to purchase your products or services online, including gift certificates. Social media ads to boost awareness are effective and affordable.
- Fortunately, not all customers have lost their jobs and want to support their favorite hometown businesses. Consider having some T-shirts or hats designed and offer them online. You may be surprised how quickly they sell and are a great



Greg Smith

way to advertise. • Come up with a fun contest or way to interact with your customers. This might include a photo contest in which people upload candid shots

to your Facebook page of their pets or children. One business encouraged clients to share their favorite recipes online. Perhaps a prize might include a gift card or discount to be used when your business reopens.

• This is a great opportunity to find ways to help support your community. There are many avenues available to assist others, and if you are not in a financial position to do so, initiate a food drive or encourage people to donate blood. There are many needs.

• Spiff up your store. Take this opportunity to consider painting, rearranging and updating displays and planting flowers. Wash windows and even the outside of your building. This will provide an inviting, fresh look for your customers

when they return.

• Consider joining other businesses in sharing the cost of buying radio or newspaper ads.

Marketing really is about developing long-term relationships. Offering products and services customers want to buy, providing outstanding service and being personable are all part of an effective marketing plan. Top of the mind awareness has never been more important, so being resourceful and creative will help you be resilient and among those standing after this crisis is over.

Finally, it is imperative to learn from this instantaneous and dramatic economic downturn. Be determined to get a handle on your finances, better manage your cash flow, update or create your business plan and, most importantly, create a rainy-day fund as anything can happen at any time.

Greg Smith is the director of the Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center. For free, confidential business advising, call 541-962-1532 or email eousbdc@gmail.com.