

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

## Oregon DA association says no to HB 3194

### Opposition to HB 3194

ODAA supports a substantial number of the proposed changes listed in HB 3194, but cannot support HB 3194 because of fundamental opposition to the following critical areas of the bill:

-ODAA opposes all changes to BM 11. The measure was passed by the voters and later maintained by a vote of 75 percent of the electorate. It has made Oregon the most successful state in violent crime reduction in the nation.

-ODAA opposes all changes to BM 57. Oregon has a significant property crime problem. Large cities in this state have some of the highest property crime rates in the nation. Portland's property crime rate is three times the rate of NYC and is even the same as the rate in Detroit. Property crime rates rose in Oregon after HB 3508 suspended BM 57, and ODAA does not support weakening that measure once again.

-ODAA opposes changes that will prevent trial court judges from controlling probation conditions for convicted offenders and will prevent judges from revoking probation if an offender violates probation. HB 3194 transfers the power to determine conditions of probation and sanctions from judges to probation officers, and removes all input on probation supervision from victims and district attorneys.

-ODAA opposes changes to earned time, transitional leave and alternative incarceration programs. ODAA opposes these changes for the following reasons:

These changes degrade truth-in-sentencing provisions of Oregon law which were implemented as victims' rights measures. These proposals would allow the Department of Corrections or local community corrections departments to shorten offender's sentences by up to half with no input from victims or district attorneys.

Studies from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy demonstrate that increased earned time in that state resulted in greater property crime. Earned time reductions of two months resulted in the average inmate committing five additional thefts and burglaries during that period of time, in addition to committing additional car thefts, which were estimated separately.

### ODAA Proposals

Oregon's District Attorneys strongly disagree with the claim that Oregon's Criminal Justice System is facing a crisis. Rather, the ODAA recognizes that Oregon's overall state budget faces fiscal challenges and offers reasonable measures to assist in facing those challenges in the criminal justice system.

The following proposals constitute a comprehensive plan to reduce or eliminate prison growth without changing core criminal justice concepts in Oregon. These proposals address the Governor's inmate population target of 14,600 inmates by 2015. They would not only save up to 650 beds by the end of the next biennium, almost twice the Governor's goal, but would independently save over \$40 million.

The following proposals constitute HB 3195, with the complete support of ODAA:

-Establishes inmate re-entry programs. Oregon pilot re-entry programs have been proven to reduce felony recidivism by 29 percent. In Michigan, a prisoner re-entry program reduced inmate readmissions by 38 percent. If just 20 less of the approximately 400 inmates released each month are returned to prison for new crimes or violations, close to 400 beds would be saved.

-Reduces all marijuana felonies to presumptive probation. Will save 201 beds.

-Reduces Felony Driving While Suspended/Revoked to presumptive probation. Will save 52 beds.

-Requires DOC bed cost reductions of 5 percent. Oregon prisons have been determined to have the most expensive daily inmate costs in the nation. Reducing daily costs by 5 percent would result in \$45 million in savings.

-Establishes a DOC cost reduction task force

-Requires the use of a risk and needs assessment for all offenders on probation

-Require the adoption of rules for procedures and programs in Oregon specialty courts

-Requires LFO to administer evaluations of all government funded criminal offender program, with ability to cancel funding for programs that do not work

-Alters the definition of "recidivism" to conform with the federal standard

-Requires prison forecasts to state a margin of error and to specify what portion of prison growth will be produced by policy reasons as opposed to state population growth

-Requires an LFO 10-year fiscal impact statement for public safety laws

-Establishes task force to evaluate the implementation of criminal legislation

In addition to meeting the targets set by the Governor for prison growth, these proposals represent significant, positive changes for Oregon criminal justice policy.

Justin Nelson, Morrow County DA, on behalf of the Oregon District Attorneys Association

## Ranchers need lethal options for dispatching wolves

Those of us who live and work in Eastern Oregon know natural resources are the economic engine of our area. Much of what I have been doing legislatively is to sponsor or support bills that assist us and work to defeat bills that do not. To get our message across and build consensus, we need to educate and work together with our urban legislators as to the issues that affect our way of life in District 29.

With that in mind I invited Oregon State Senator Jackie Dingfelder, chair of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, to travel to Wallowa County with me to have a discussion on wolves. I serve with Sen. Dingfelder on this committee, whose support for modifying the existing plan will be critical. Sen. Dingfelder agreed to be my guest and she spent the weekend with Margaret and I in Eastern Oregon.

By way of background, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is responsible for managing the wolves in Oregon. Previous to 2011, they had both lethal and non-lethal options available to use if there has been proof of predation from a problem wolf. However, environmental groups sued ODFW in state circuit court in Multnomah County, alleging that ODFW violated the state Endangered Species Act. This lawsuit stopped them from legally being able to manage wolves in a lethal manner, exacerbating the current wolf-livestock conflict.

The legislation we are working on is an attempt to give ODFW and ranchers the ability to manage these wolves in a manner consistent with previous policy. As a side note: federal law has de-listed wolves in numerous states from the endangered species list; however, Oregon law still lists them as "threatened."

On the way to Wallowa with Sen. Dingfelder, we visited the water projects on our Hansell family farm in Hermiston, met with local Tribal leaders, and were hosted for a wonderful dinner sponsored by the Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition led by Bobby Levy.

In Wallowa County, Representative Bob Jenson and staff from both the governor's office and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife joined us.

It was a cold, crisp, sunny day with bone-chilling wind keeping us on our toes as we interacted with livestock producers and learned firsthand about wolves. We traveled back roads, saw some awe-inspiring country and had several sit-down meetings with local officials and producers who deal day-in and day-out with the results of our current inadequate wolf policy. We met with both the Wallowa County wolf compensation committee and we heard from a group of citizen wolf advocates to hear their perspective on the issue.

The trip concluded Sunday morning with a look at the Wallowa Lake Dam and the possibility of additional water for the Umatilla Basin. I certainly came away with a deeper understanding of what we need to accomplish—a management program that includes both lethal and non-lethal components. To that end I am working with Rep. Jenson on House Bill 3452, which should help provide these management tools.

Lastly, I appreciate Sen. Dingfelder for coming to Eastern Oregon and meeting with us. She has expressed how much she enjoyed the trip, and her willingness to consider wolf management options that will make a positive difference in District 29. Stay tuned.

Bill Hansell, Hermiston  
Oregon Senator, District 29

## Prepare for community events

It is time to get Heppner ready for our next two community events, Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-27, and Celebrate Heppner, June 14.

Heppner is very fortunate to have a town which is very clean and litter free. It is nice for the people who live here and it is nice for our visitors. This good appearance is the result of a lot of citizens pitching in and helping.

Advance thanks is extended to everyone.  
John Edmundson, Heppner

## SURE 2011 Disaster Program sign-up ends June 7

Coverage available for some 2011 losses

Farm Service Agency County Executive Director Kyle Carnine announced the sign-up period for the 2011 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program ends on June 7.

This disaster assistance program opened on Oct. 22, 2012 and authorizes assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011.

"Producers who suffered losses during the 2011 crop year are encouraged to visit the FSA office to learn more about the SURE program and how to apply," said Carnine.

Production losses due

to disasters occurring after Sept. 30, 2011, are not eligible for disaster program coverage.

Note the following requirements for SURE eligibility on a farm or ranch:

1) At least a 10-percent production loss on a crop of economic significance due to disaster;

2) A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops;

3) Be physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous disaster county under a USDA Secretarial Disaster

## NEW MCHD CEO

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While Grigg's background is in larger hospitals and health care systems—certainly larger than Morrow County—he said he had always been interested in a different environment.

"I'd always, in the back of my mind, had an interest in working in smaller hospitals, but never had the opportunity," Grigg said.

Then, an opportunity presented itself in the form of cyber communication.

Grigg was a member of LinkedIn, an online professional networking site. In his network was a health district CEO named Michael Blauer. Though Grigg and Blauer had never met, Grigg paid attention when Blauer posted that he was leaving Morrow County and that his position was becoming available. After inquiring more and talking to his wife about a possible move, Grigg decided to pursue the position. He was hired last month and he, Andrea and five of their seven children (the other two are out of the house) moved across the state to adjust to small-town living.

"So far it's great; everybody here is so friendly," said Grigg. "It's gonna be a nice place to be."

As an example, he shared an anecdote of when, before he interviewed, he and his wife drove to Heppner to scope out the area. "We were only here two or three hours," he remembered. "In that time, we already got invited to go golfing and play poker."

Grigg said he's excited to get involved in the community here, adding that having five kids in the Heppner school system should help his family integrate into community life. One of their older daughters is also home from college for the summer.

Added to the excitement of the move is the fact that the Griggs are also expecting their first grandchild later this year.

When he has down time, Grigg said he wants to spend as much time with

his family as possible, as well as pursuing other hobbies of watching baseball (Giants fan) and college football (BYU all the way) and spending time in the outdoors, camping, hiking, fishing and diving... Grigg, along with two of his children, is a certified scuba diver.

As far as his new role with the health district, Grigg said his first priority is to get to know everybody, including community leaders and people in the health district. He said he's impressed with those he has already met, from board members to EMTs.

"We had our first board meeting," he said. "We have five elected board members. Every single one is engaged and cares greatly about the health district. The community can be proud of who they elected."

He said he was also impressed with the doctors and staff.

"It's a blessing even to have a hospital in a town the size of Heppner," he said. "What I see is dedicated, caring professionals; that (residents) can get as good a care here as they can anywhere."

Grigg said he wants to use his background in care quality to work with physicians and staff to quantify and demonstrate the quality of care available in the district.

"Anyone in this role is a representative of the health district to the community," he said. "I want to make sure we give the services needed to the people who live here and help demonstrate it's a place they can get great care close to home."

Grigg finished by saying he wants to encourage a tendency he already sees.

"One of the things I've seen here is a desire to help develop our own," Grigg said, citing local scholarships and grants made available to area students.

"I would love to see that continue and strengthen. People get their health degrees and gravitate toward larger cities, but there's a need for them here, too."

## Greenup wins beef raffle

The Morrow County Livestock Growers has announced that Greg Greenup of Heppner was the winner of the recent beef benefit raffle for Beth Dickenson and Rena Henry.

All funds raised helped to assist and offset medical costs incurred for two local women fighting the battle against cancer. Greenup will receive half a beef cut and wrapped, donated by VanSchoiack Ranch.

Feed was donated by the Lindsay Ranch Feedlot, and the cut and wrap of the beef will be donated by Mike's Mobile Slaughter. Printing of tickets and flyers was made possible by a donation from the Heppner Gazette-Times.

Darcy Robinson, Morrow County Green & Feed Store, and Murray's Drug also did an outstanding job of selling tickets to the public.



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