

EDITOR'S DESK

The election's over — now what?

By the time you read this, voting deadlines for the Nov. 3 election will be over in Oregon and preliminary results will have been announced.

Due to the quirks of a 5 p.m. Tuesday night print deadline for the *Hermiston Herald*, however, I am writing this before all of that takes place and am therefore in the dark about how the rest of election night will play out.

After a decade of covering elections, however, I do know a lot about what will happen next.

First, it's important to know that while people talk in terms of who "won" on election night, nobody has actually won their seat yet. Election results must first be certified.

Certification processes vary by state. Some certify their results one week after an election, others don't certify until December. In Oregon, results are certified 14 days after the election.

While Oregonians must submit their ballot before 8 p.m. on election night to be counted, there are often small fluctuations in numbers between those released by a county on election night and those certified two weeks later. People might have turned in their ballot in a drop box in a different Oregon county than where they're registered, for example, and that county won't send over that bal-



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Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
A strip of "I voted" stickers await voters at the Umatilla County Elections Office ballot drop box in Hermiston on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020.

lot until the next day. Others whose signature on their ballot was challenged will have 14 days to provide the proof needed to make their vote count.

Usually, these minor adjustments make no difference to the outcome of a race, but in small local races that come down to a handful of votes, someone can be ahead by a couple of votes on election night but end up losing.

The other thing that I know without seeing the results is that for the vast majority of voters, some of the candidates you voted for will lose, and some of the candidates you really don't like will win.

So what can you do about that? The good news is, in my experience, elected officials who are coming into their first term often learn a lot on the job in the early days of their term, particularly when they're new to politics altogether. It isn't unusual for some of their opinions or areas of focus to change. A stray opinion expressed in a candidate forum isn't necessarily set in stone. If you're concerned about a new county commissioner, city councilor or other elected official coming in, talk with them about your concerns. They're going to be getting an education over the next few months — make sure that education includes

insights on matters important to you. Even for incumbents who are returning for another term after you were unhappy with their previous performance, it can still help to share your point of view. You can be particularly influential by volunteering to sit on the committees that advise our public bodies in an official capacity. When the Hermiston City Council recently set down rules for homeless shelters in the city, for example, they did so by adopting an ordinance that was drafted and recommended by the city's planning commission, made up of ordinary citizens who volunteered for the position.

At a state and federal level, you can donate to or volunteer for groups that lobby lawmakers, help craft legislation and challenge laws in court. Someone worried about their representatives' stance on gun control could donate to the NRA, for example.

If you're dissatisfied with the government's performance on an issue, you can also look to the private sector or nonprofits to fill in those gaps. If you're frustrated the city isn't doing more to address homelessness, you could donate or volunteer your time to the Hermiston Warming Station or Agape House.

Voting may be the most powerful and direct way for citizens to exert control over government, but you don't have to wait around for the next election to have a voice.

COLUMN

From the publisher's desk: A difficult, but necessary, decision

Albert Einstein once said that the world as we have created it is a process of our thinking and that it cannot be changed without changing our thinking.

Changing the way we think and do business has been key topics for the *East Oregonian*, *Hermiston Herald* and the rest of EO Media Group in 2020 as we navigate a COVID-19 world.

The latest change is in the very product that you hold in your hands right now. Today's edition of the *Hermiston Herald* is the final version that will be printed in-house here in Pendleton. Starting with the Thursday, Nov. 5, issue of the *EO*, the printing of the *EO*, *Herald*, *La Grande Observer*, *Baker City Herald* and *Wallowa County Chieftain*, will temporarily be moved to the Seattle Times Company-owned *Yakima Herald-Republic*.

Our move to Yakima will be short-lived, however. The Ten-

sor/Goss press that the *East Oregonian* installed in 2013 will be moved to a new home at the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, where it will serve as the press for a printing hub that will operate in a larger geographic region. The *East Oregonian* and its sister publications will then all be printed out of that facility.

It was a tough decision to move the printing to another facility, but, honestly, not making these tough decisions is what leads to news deserts popping up at an alarming rate around the country. That was something that we weren't going to allow to happen.

As we move forward, our bedrock values that focus on the reader will not change with this move. The press — an icon in the newspaper industry — doesn't represent the soul of any paper. It is an important piece, surely, as it is used to print the newspaper. What is more valuable, and what I think will linger, is the dedication and determination of our entire staff to bring you credible, relevant stories about our community and quality advertising that helps local businesses.

That, I can assure you will never change. For the reader, printing in Yakima and Walla Walla should not bring any noticeable changes. The paper will still be printed and still arrive to our subscribers through same-day mail delivery. It just will not be printed in Pendleton. Our dedication to covering local news and having a product that local advertisers find value in will not be affected. Our commitment to producing a quality product will not be diminished.

As a longtime veteran of this business, I can easily admit that 2020 — a year of flooding locally, a worldwide pandemic, divisive election rhetoric and riots/protests — has been the most challenging of my career. As the virus continues to seep into the enclaves of our nation, the impact economically continues to mount. We believe we have a solid path going forward, a path where we will be able to weather any future economic challenges produced by the pandemic, but it will not be easy, and it does not come without cost.

The decision was made even more difficult because the loss

of the press will mean a certain number of jobs will be gone as well. Pressmen and employees of our mail room will be laid off.

The layoffs are, of course, not a reflection on the work these employees completed for the *East Oregonian* on a daily basis. Their dedication was consistent, their goals to help the paper always at the forefront. The truth is, though, that the COVID-19 epidemic has created a business paradigm in our industry that is one of the most difficult ever experienced since the first drop of ink was laid down on a section of newspaper.

There was no joy in making this decision, but the truth of the matter is that the difficult decision will go a long way toward ensuring our parent company — EO Media Group — withstands the challenging times we are now faced with, and continues to deliver daily local news to you online as we grow toward more digital content in our future.

Andrew Cutler is the managing editor of the East Oregonian and regional publisher for several newspapers, including the Hermiston Herald.



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CORRECTIONS

It is the policy of the Hermiston Herald to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories.

Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for the Hermiston Herald readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters should be kept to 250 words.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

OBITUARY POLICY

The Hermiston Herald publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, x221.