

Hermiston HERALD OPINION & READER'S FORUM

Founded in 1906

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022

A4

OUR VIEW

We deserve better than bad water

Above all else, water should be trusted to sustain us and give us health, but this is not the case for us. Not anymore. We are learning that local nitrate levels are high and the Port of Morrow is adding to the problem with excess disposal.

Our polluted drinking water is increasing our risks of cancer and causing many of us in Morrow and Umatilla counties to pause before

going to faucets.

Suddenly, a problem that we associated with far-off places is now our trouble, too. We become like Haiti, a place suffering from a lack of potable water, or like Flint, Michigan, a place whose fame was acquired through its polluted water.

Note that Flint has maintained its association with contaminated water, even after its crisis ended. Such reputations are hard to shake. It could be

that our region, beautiful for its rivers and farmland, will suffer a similar fate.

Will we be known as a dirty place, an ugly place? Will travelers pass through our charming towns but avoid drinking from our taps? Will prospective employees reject our jobs because they are worried for their children?

It is heartening to hear concern from leaders in government. Hopefully, they are as troubled as they

appear and they will act as they say. If they are to make progress in bettering our situation, they will need to hold people, organizations and possibly entire industries accountable.

This will not be an easy task, as the responsible parties are also powerful, but our leaders will need to show courage. And the public will need to discover which of our leaders stand for us; those are the people who deserve our support.

COLUMN

Be on the lookout for a new Hermiston Herald

There are some new and exciting changes coming for the Hermiston Herald.

We will still offer the print edition of the Hermiston Herald free to the community. However, the distribution method will change from mailed to free print copies of the paper offered throughout Hermiston and the local area to high-traffic areas on Thursday to single copy, newspaper rack locations.

In the next few months, we will also offer a new digital and print mailed subscription platform. The mailed subscriptions will be delivered on Wednesday. The digital subscription offers 24-7 access to your local news online at hermistonherald.com, plus the weekly e-edition of the newspaper on Wednesday mornings.

June 1, we plan to launch a re-designed Hermiston Herald



ANDREW CUTLER
FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

print product that will include additional features that includes more puzzles, a community calendar, special sections and the popular Go! Magazine.

The redesigned newspaper will also include unique advertising contracts for weekly sponsorships and set ad spaces for weekly advertisers. At the same time, we plan to market new print-digital subscriptions to former subscribers, major employers and area chambers of commerce.

We also plan to seek grants and other sponsorships to beef up our reporting staff.

Obviously, there are probably some questions from readers about our planned changes. A key one is most likely: Why are you changing the distribution format of the newspaper again?

The answer is simple. The cost of mailing the Herald to every home in Hermiston is simply not sustainable and postal rates are scheduled to increase again. While we can and do absorb rising costs on a regular basis, the price hike for postage is a challenge we can't embrace without great difficulty. Readers, though, can continue to receive the Herald mailed to their home, plus a digital subscription, for \$51 a year – which is less than \$1 a week – which pays mail delivery costs. The subscription also includes full access to the hermistonherald.com, e-edition and website.

Digital only subscriptions are

only \$4 and includes 24-7 access to Hermiston, regional and state news and the e-edition copy of the newspaper. The digital edition has an audio player to listen to stories in English, Spanish, German, French, Chinese or Italian, online puzzles and an area guide to businesses.

The Hermiston Herald will also continue to print and distribute 9,000 copies every week through free rack copies on Thursday so that the community has access to the newspaper at no charge.

These changes are being made based on a survey of Hermiston residents conducted by the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communications earlier this year. The survey demonstrated the Herald was far and away the No. 1 traditional media source for information and the most trusted, followed by the

East Oregonian. Top interests by Hermiston residents surveyed included education, business, housing, health and public safety. We plan to follow the results of the survey and to add new features in our new design, including a puzzle page, a community calendar and add our regional arts and entertainment magazine, Go! Eastern Oregon.

I believe these changes accomplish a number of different goals at once. First, the changes allow us to continue to be viable and, at the same time, create a stronger platform of news and other products for our readers. We are not in any way slicing into our product but, instead, investing in the future with a stronger, more diverse selection and distribution for our readers.

■ Andrew Cutler is the publisher of the Hermiston Herald.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time for updates to schools in Morrow County

As a mother of children attending Morrow County schools and a local realtor, I am voting "yes" on Bond Measure 25-87.

In 2015, my family moved to Oregon for a career in Boardman, when the total number of homes sold was six. Like 70% of employees, we commuted until purchasing a home here. Since becoming a realtor, I have helped dozens of families do the same.

Between 2017 and 2021, home sales in Boardman increased 132%. Based on data and construction developments underway, we are on track in 2022 to meet or exceed the 65 homes sold in 2021. This growth will directly affect our schools and demands immediate attention.

We must help the schools catch up and get ahead of the curve. It has been 20 years since the district last requested our support and, in that time, structural functionality has deteriorated making utility upgrades necessary. Security issues have dramatically changed, requiring critical updates for student and staff safety. Outdated classrooms need to become functional with improved and modern learning opportunities.

Countywide, our schools are the hearts of our communities that need our support to provide safe and adequate spaces for students and teachers to thrive. When they thrive, our communities do, too. In addition, improvements this bond supports will foster a sense of pride in our towns, energize students, increase teacher retention rates and attract more families to call our county home.

Look for Bond Measure 25-87 on the May ballot. Learn more at www.yesformorrowcountyschools.org and vote "yes."

Leslie Pierson
Boardman

David McCarthy will speak for Hermiston residents

I support David McCarthy for Hermiston City Council. I have known David for eight years.

He is a fine family man, who is not a just-get-along guy. He will speak up for the residents of Hermiston. He has a heart for Hermiston. He was on the city council for a short term. It's time now for a full four years. Support David.

Mark F. Gomolski
Hermiston

Join me in voting for Alvin Young

I am endorsing Alvin Young for Umatilla County commissioner because I have known him for more than 40 years and he is a very caring and driven person.

He puts so much energy into everything he does. He never does half measures. He gives 110% of himself to his goals. He will do the same as our county commissioner. He is someone who will listen to the people he serves and he will act. I never met a person who doesn't slow down. He takes everything he does seriously.

Alvin Young will be an excellent county commissioner. Please join me in voting for Alvin Young on May 17, 2022.

Jack McWhinnie
Umatilla

I support Jeff Wenholz

Morrow County residents should feel fortunate to have such a qualified county commissioner candidate in Jeff Wenholz. He has lived in Morrow County for nearly 50 years. He attended schools in Irrigon and Boardman and essentially lived only outside of the county during his time at Portland State University where he majored in accounting. Since returning he has served on a number of important committees to further his understanding of the needs and concerns of Morrow County cities and citizens.

For the past 20 years, he has served on the Morrow County Solid Waste Advisory Committee and Morrow County's Planning Commission. Additionally, he served on the Morrow County Umatilla Chemical Depot Citizens Advisory Commission for 11 years. He has also served for the past five years on the Morrow County Budget Committee, and since 2019, on the Good Shepherd Hospital Board of Trustees.

Jeff also currently serves on Umatilla Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and has since 2004. I met Jeff four years ago when I was elected to UEC's Board. During these years I have come to appreciate his careful attention to details, his far better than average understanding of budget sheets, and his innovative and thoughtful decision-making process.

Because of his experiences within the county, he understands the importance of agriculture, manufactur-

ing, processing etc. to the region. He also knows and understands how to help and encourage planned growth throughout the county.

Jeff is a local businessman, probably knows and understands the needs and concerns within all of Morrow County better than anyone. I believe Jeff will bring to Morrow County thoughtful and innovative leadership to help navigate Morrow County through current and future issues and for that reason I fully support his election to Morrow County commissioner Position 2.

Philip Hamm
Hermiston

Morrow County has a winner in Commissioner Lindsay

I am writing to offer a strong endorsement for Melissa Lindsay as a candidate for reelection to the Morrow County Board of Commissioners.

I first met Melissa during her 15-year tenure as a vice president and manager of the mortgage division of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, before she stepped down to become an integral part of a growing family farming operation.

Counties do many things, but a keen awareness of fiscal issues is vital in the management of county budgets. She brings a wealth of experience to the job and that has not gone unnoticed. She is now finishing a term as treasurer of the Association of Oregon Counties, having been selected by her peers. As president of that organization, I work closely with Commissioner Lindsay on a regular basis.

Umatilla and Morrow counties have forged a strong partnership, and we work together often on matters of mutual interest. Commissioner Lindsay has been a strong supporter of that effort that has proven beneficial for both counties as a way of developing a stronger voice for our portion of Eastern Oregon.

She is energetic, has roots deep in Morrow County, and is a delight to work with. From my vantage point, Morrow County has a winner in commissioner Lindsay and the voters would be wise to return her to office.

George Murdock, Umatilla County commissioner
Pendleton

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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 A2. 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 541-278-2673 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; death notices and information about services are published at no charge. Obituaries can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, placed via the funeral home or in person at the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 800-522-0255, ext. 2211.

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