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adequate tools to perform their life-saving duties. The location of that facility and equipment must be in an area that is secure in order to keep us all safe and revive the community in the event of a disaster.

The current station isn't going away. Its nostalgia and place in the community will remain. There's a unique opportunity to make its function different, but meaningful to the community it has served so well for 60 years. It has done its job. It's time for the Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department to have access to 21st century facilities on high ground. Vote yes on Measure 4-213.

**Lisa Cerveney
Gearhart**

Highlands firehouse site raises red flag

The city of Gearhart's plan to amend their urban growth boundary to allow the construction of a new fire station and subdivision on the Highlands site raises a red flag. The Clatsop County zone designation of rural agriculture-2 acre lot minimum size cannot be changed. Oregon's land-use laws protect agricultural and forest lands.

For starters, an urban growth boundary amendment is a very lengthy process, involving a study to determine the city's future development needs. Only residential and industrial land are considered buildable, whereas agricultural land is not.

The County Comprehensive Plan states that rural agricultural lands are to be preserved. Residential, commercial and industrial development shall be directed away from these areas designated forest lands, rural agricultural lands, conservation and natural. The plan prohibits increases in residential densities through zone changes and density transfers.

The land swap idea discussed in Gearhart is another violation of land-use laws. Rule 660-024-0070, urban growth boundary adjustments specifies the same residential uses and at the same housing density as the land removed from the urban growth boundary. Agricultural land is not covered under this rule.

The more I studied the fire station \$14.5 million bond measure, it was apparent that our Gearhart city officials do not know what they are doing. Please vote no.

**Deanna Mancill
Gearhart**

Delays only increase firehouse cost

We have more than enough factual data to base our vote on Measure 4-213. The impact of delay is fiscal irresponsibility. Review the project budget worksheet on the city of Gearhart website. As you can see time is money. Cost estimates between August 2021 to January 2022 have increased between 7% and 9%. What does this tell us? Time is money.

Gearhart is incredibly fortunate to have its dunes. The State of Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries has done a thorough Map of Earthquake and Tsunami Damage Potential for the entire State. So please, since our tax dollars funded their research and they are experts, I will defer to them www.Oregon.gov. Please note, the Highlands location is outside of all tsunami levels S thru XXL. It also important to note that Gearhart implemented Ordinance 924 which prohibits critical infrastructure being built in a tsunami inundation zone. A safe and smart move. Building a new station downtown is not an option.

We have our own water and treatment facility. We are not reliant on a single water source. This has

allowed us greater control over our water. Additionally, having multiple sources of water is a smart move.

The city of Gearhart has been at the forefront of keeping our community livable and safe. We are fortunate dedicated volunteers have committed to enriching our community. We do not need to abandon our emotion and humanity. Vote with your head and your heart. Vote yes on 4-213.

**Wilson Mark
Gearhart**

You can empower firefighters

I find it ironic that many of the vocal minority opposed to approving Measure 4-213 are among our community's most vulnerable citizens. Will it take the voters of Gearhart having to place a 911 call to acknowledge the necessity of supporting Measure 4-213? I hope not, because I have had to call 911 for both family and strangers.

If you haven't had to make that call, it doesn't mean it won't ever happen. When the world is crumbling in front of you and you have the support of our first responders arriving, the relief and gratitude is overwhelming. The professionalism, dedication and support they bring to our community is to be commended.

Look in the mirror — we are all vulnerable. I know firsthand how quickly lives can be impacted in an emergency. Car accidents, heart attacks, strokes, suicide attempts, drug overdose, vehicle vs pedestrian, falls, on-the-job accidents, drowning, gas leaks, burglar alarms, car theft. Who do you call? 911. Who are our first responders? Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department and Gearhart Police Department. They do not have the facilities to do their jobs effectively and safely. Only you the voter have the power to empower them.

Our first responders are always there for us, whether you know it or not. Our community should support our first responders in providing them with a safe, well equipped, fire/police station our community can be proud of. I urge you, be there for them. Support our fire/police by voting yes on Measure 4-213.

**Sheila Nolan
Gearhart**

Delay will only increase costs

It's fair to say there is unanimous agreement in Gearhart that we actually need to have a fire station. So, that's good. And it seems that everyone agrees that the current, crumbling, earthquake-prone cinder block building needs to be replaced. And we agree that we all appreciate the dedication and selflessness of our volunteer firefighters.

So let's agree to build a new station. And let's agree to allow our duly elected, appointed, and hired city leaders to make the appropriate decisions to get the job done. That's what we either elected, or hired them, to do.

It is all well and good to monitor our city leaders, to make sure they are transparent and accountable in their actions, and that they are acting in the community's best interest. Our current mayor, city councilors and city manager have met that standard.

But I see people opposed to this station self-appointing themselves as experts in everything from geology to land use to fire station building design. They complain about the cost of a new station, yet their past, and potentially future delay tactics do nothing but cause the costs to increase.

Passing this bond allows our reasonable city leaders to hire actual experts to plan, design and build an earthquake and tsunami resistant station. Let's pass this bond and let them do their job.

We have our own water and treatment facility. We are not reliant on a single water source. This has

Time to collect child-care credit

With the pandemic stretching into its third year, our economy is showing many signs of distress, with prices skyrocketing and financial pressures mounting on families across Oregon and the nation. Thankfully, the American Rescue Plan provides many families with money derived from their expanded child tax credit for the filing year of 2021.

Although the child tax credit is not a new government program, the American Rescue Plan made some significant changes that allowed families to receive more money than ever before.

Under the plan's expanded child tax credit, the credit amount was increased to \$3,600 per child ages 0-6 and \$3,000 per child ages 7-17; in contrast, the general CTC has historically had a \$2,000 limit for all children ages 0-17. In addition to these expansions, families also had the option to get half of their credit amount through advanced monthly payments from July through December of 2021. Using child tax credit funds, parents and caregivers across the nation can pay for general expenses — including groceries, gas, utility bills, school supplies, and clothes — easing their financial burden and aiding in their economic, mental, and physical well-being.

As prices rise across nearly all sectors of our society, the child tax credit is an invaluable source for families to obtain additional help to offset the instability of our current economy.

Parents and guardians who received advanced monthly payments in 2021 can still receive the second half of their total credit this tax season. Meanwhile, families who have not yet received any child tax credit payments can claim the full amount.

The U.S. government has made resources available to families to help

GUEST COLUMN

PAOLA VELAZQUEZ



THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN MADE SOME SIGNIFICANT CHANGES THAT ALLOWED FAMILIES TO RECEIVE MORE MONEY THAN EVER BEFORE.

them claim their credit in a fast and accessible manner: getctc.org. Advocacy organizations in Oregon have supported awareness building and claiming of the child tax credit by providing information through educational webinars, tax aides, and tax navigators for families.

Apart from this, getctc.org will be launching a simplified filing form in May 2022, allowing parents and guardians to receive their child tax credit even after this year's tax deadline. If families need a longer time to prepare and collect their tax documents, the IRS also allows tax filers to submit their taxes up to three years later.

According to findings from a November 2021 report from the Urban Institute, Latinx families have received their CTC funds at lower rates compared to their Indigenous, white, Asian, and Black counterparts; as well, across racial and ethnic groups, only 44-54% of adults with incomes below \$25,000 reported receiving an advance CTC payment.

This disparity is mainly due to var-

ious limitations that our tax system upholds, including documentation status, verifiable income, and broader insecurity.

Latinx families surveyed over the last two years have shared how they did not receive the general child tax credit due to their documentation status or to being unable to provide proof of citizenship; the credit has historically not been available for ITIN filers without a Social Security Number. Regarding the restriction of verified income, many Latinx families are self-employed and cannot always show proof of earnings. Because American banks require proof of citizenship to open accounts, Latinx families often keep their money outside of the bank system and therefore cannot provide their proof of income. Lastly, the most significant barrier Latinx families have faced through this pandemic is overcoming long-standing and generational fears and insecurities surrounding US governmental programs and services. These sentiments come from valid experiences we have faced within our society. To trust that no retaliation will occur after claiming the credit, or any tax credit, for that matter, is a significant issue for the community.

I urge families, especially those who have not claimed any part of their child tax credit, to do so. For families who are not eligible for the credit, I encourage you to resist. For our senators and legislators, I plead that you consider all families in the process when it comes to decisions of eligibility.

Paola Velazquez serves as the community engagement and coalition building intern for Our Children Oregon. Our Children Oregon is a statewide nonprofit advocacy and child abuse prevention organization.

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