

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Thursdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410, e-mail: noni@vernonia.com

Opinion

Budgets are bleeding band-aids won't work

Most of our state legislators don't seem to have noticed, but there is a recession and it isn't going away in the next six or twelve months. Their response to a disastrous reduction in income taxes is to pretend that everything will be just fine in January—after they've been re-elected—when the new biennium starts.

Well, the economy isn't going to recover that rapidly, and their bandaid approach to a hemorrhaging budget won't work.

The Sept. 17 Special Election has two money measures on the ballot.

Ballot Measure 19 is a retread of the ballot measure voters defeated in May, when the legislature referred a measure to raid the education endowment fund by \$220 million. Money for the endowment comes from the state lottery. As an endowment, the principal is invested and the interest can be spent to pay interest on school construction bonds and college scholarships.

Approval of Measure 19 would take \$150 million from the fund in May, 2003, leaving only \$128 million. That's bad, but worse is that the endowment is wiped out and the money becomes a "stability fund," which can be raided for any educational use whenever employment drops for two consecutive quarters OR state revenues drop two percent or more below the quarterly state revenue forecast. The drop in revenue this year has been 18 percent since the budget was approved last year. A three-fifths majority of both houses of the legislature would be required to spend the remaining capital but, with another short-sighted legislature like the current one, the fund not only wouldn't be "stable," it would become just another regular part of school funding. There would be no help with school construction costs, college scholarships for low income students would be mostly wiped out, and it would help prevent any real effort to develop stability in funding for education.

In spite of the very real need for school funding, we recommend a NO vote on Measure 19.

Ballot Measure 20 is for an increase in cigarette tax. This is a reasonable increase, considering the higher taxes in Washington and California. Whether it would raise the amount estimated is a different question.

Oregon desperately needs a complete tax overhaul!



The Says...

By Dale Webb, member



Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League

Hunting season is finally upon us. Bow season is currently underway, but places to hunt locally are limited due to high fire danger. This seems to be a serious problem for bow hunters, yet they manage to harvest a fair amount of animals, in spite of all the land closed to them. If the fire danger persists, I suspect that opening day for rifle deer season will be limited to public lands. This has started to become a common event; luckily, buck hunting doesn't usually get good till the end of the season.

Make sure you sight in your rifle. Again, finding a safe place for this is becoming a problem, due to land closures. Make sure, if you have a variable power scope, to change the power setting and see if the scope is shifting point of impact. I had this happen to me last year. I had a good group in the bull's-eye, then increased the power setting to look at the bullet holes from the bench. Then I decided to shoot another group and turned the scope power down, but not back to the setting that the first group was shot with. After three rounds I had a nice group two inches to the left and high...it was time to retire the old Weaver I had used since getting my rifle in 1968.

Also make sure all the mounting screws are tight before you sight in your rifle; it's a lot easier to do this before you discover your gun is throwing bullets all over the place.

If you have read previous columns, you know that I feel that the local deer population is experiencing a dramatic population decline. Buck hunters should not expect very many young bucks this year. Like last year, the harvest will be made up of older bucks, but they will be few and far between. I feel this will be the last decent year for Blacktails in our area. Last year's buck harvest was under 600, which is a major drop compared to the old days and even a couple of years ago. Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife is currently trying to make the case that Black-tailed deer are declining on the west side of the state because of declining habitat. That argument, though, does not hold water up here in the Northwest corner of the state. The last time I looked, there were plenty of clear cuts and deer feed. Besides, the buck harvest in the Saddle Mountain unit has declined by 33 percent in just three years and the results of declining habitat usually do not appear so quickly. Just remember, when this thing comes all unhinged, who allowed antlerless deer hunting on top of the hair disease losses.

Speaking of disease, hunters traveling out of state have new rules to follow. Because of Chronic Wasting Disease, sportsmen cannot bring back into the State of Oregon any part of a game animal that has the spinal cord or brain matter attached. (ODF&W is putting out a list of species this applies to.) This means that you cannot quarter an animal by splitting it down the back bone and then bring it back home. It is legal to bring back the horns attached to the skull plate, but it must be cleaned of any brain matter. The definition of "clean" is not very clear. The

Please see page 17