

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Use a little common sense and enjoy the coming Jamboree

Jamboree is always fun, but it can easily be ruined when folks forget that the purpose is to enjoy the events and the other people. Jamboree was started as a mechanism to bring people together after circumstances closed Oregon-American Mill and economic necessity had forced many people to leave Vernonia. Jamboree was meant to be a big get-together, just a happy event with some good-natured competition, a parade and lots of laughter.

Times have changed sufficiently so that a lot of people now "get together" via the phone or e-mail, which is great with family and friends, but it really changes the dynamics of group interaction. Sometimes, it seems, we forget how to act with consideration for strangers, not because they're bad, but because we haven't met them. Of course, that is why we call them strangers.

So relax, be considerate, even to people you don't know, and above all, smile.

If you aren't involved, but would like to be, call the numbers at the bottom of this column – Randy Parrow or Glen Purvee – they will almost certainly find a way for you to be part of Jamboree.

If you prefer being a spectator, it will take the whole weekend just to get around to the various events – fishing derby, softball, parade, horse gaming, music, dancing, eating, the car cruise-in on Saturday followed by a Harley show on Sunday and, of course, the logging show. Even if you think logging shows are passe, you will enjoy the good-natured competition – they try hard to win, but cheer each other on to do their best.

So relax, talk to that stranger next to you, smile at that teenager – we all needed time to grow up – and some of us will never make it.

Enjoy Jamboree, please don't drink and drive because there are no Jamboree events going on in the county jail. Have fun and, remember, smile!

The Jamboree Committee is seeking three non-profit groups to pick up garbage during Jamboree.

For more information, call Randy Parrow at 503-429-1093 or Glen Purvee at 503-429-9400.



Opinion

Representative Mark Hass
District 27

How is it the Oregon legislature is passing tax breaks for Enron before passing out an education budget?

Let's start at the beginning.

In 1967, the Oregon legislature passed a tax incentive designed to help timber mills and other manufacturers comply with the newly passed federal Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. This incentive allowed businesses to lower their state tax bill to compensate for costs of the new equipment these laws required.

During the 1990s, critics wondered whether taxpayers should continue paying for this ever-growing subsidy. After all, the new environmental regulations were a quarter-century old. Many questioned whether taxpayers should continue to pay businesses for simply doing what the law required.

In 2001, Gov. John Kitzhaber said the time had come to let this subsidy expire. But the leaders of the Legislature wanted to extend it. In a rare spirit of bipartisanship, the two sides agreed to a compromise that called for higher standards and a gradual phase-out of this credit by 2007.

I supported the compromise.

That's why I so strongly oppose the new measure that some House members forced through this week, without debate – a measure that would relax the environmental standards and extend this expensive tax break another 11 years to 2014. The fact that this bill passed the House before the legislature has addressed education funding is a slap in the face to every person in Oregon.

Taxpayers should be alarmed for another, even more compelling reason, however. We all know that Enron managed to escape Oregon taxes last year, paying only the minimum payment of \$10. What many people don't know is that Enron received a tax break of \$1.1 million because of the Pollution Control Tax Credit.

Even worse, Enron has applied for \$18 million in similar tax credits next year for work associated with the decommissioning of the Trojan nuclear plant \$18 million!

In addition to padding the bottom line for huge multi-nationals like Enron, the Pollution Control Tax Credit enables individuals to take a credit for buying wood chippers. *Wood chippers?* Yes. More than 500 state certificates last year went to people who bought wood chippers, because chipping wood creates less pollution than burning wood to dispose of it.

That may be true, but in most instances the law already prohibits open burning. Whether this is a valid application of the tax break misses the point: Does anyone really believe that buying a wood chipper creates new jobs in Oregon? Does anyone believe we should cut school days while subsidizing wood chippers?

Oregon needs to be smart in crafting strategies for the new century. We need to build our economy on real products and services that pull their weight in the world's markets – not on wood chippers and disgraced corporations like Enron.

Let's do what Oregonians do best when managing environmental standards against economics: Let's recycle this 30-year-old law and turn it into something that actually helps us move forward.