

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

City Waste Water Project

The following statement was read by Vernonia Mayor Sally Harrison at the August 7, 2006, meeting of the Vernonia City Council so local citizens would know the status of the project to upgrade the City's waste water treatment facility. The INDEPENDENT has made no changes.

I wish to set the record straight concerning the Waste Water Project and the City of Vernonia. Misinformation, partial information, and rumors have been generated of late and need to be addressed.

First off, some concerned citizens have come forward with suggestions and questions. They are well intentioned and they are entering this game during the fourth quarter. The City has explored and had to rule out options that are being suggested now. The City has been, and will continue to do its best for the citizens, present and future. We have not been sitting on our hands waiting for the citizens to come forward to save us. We don't like the prospect of having to raise sewer rates astronomically or if a General Obligation Bond (GO Bond) were to pass, raising our taxes.

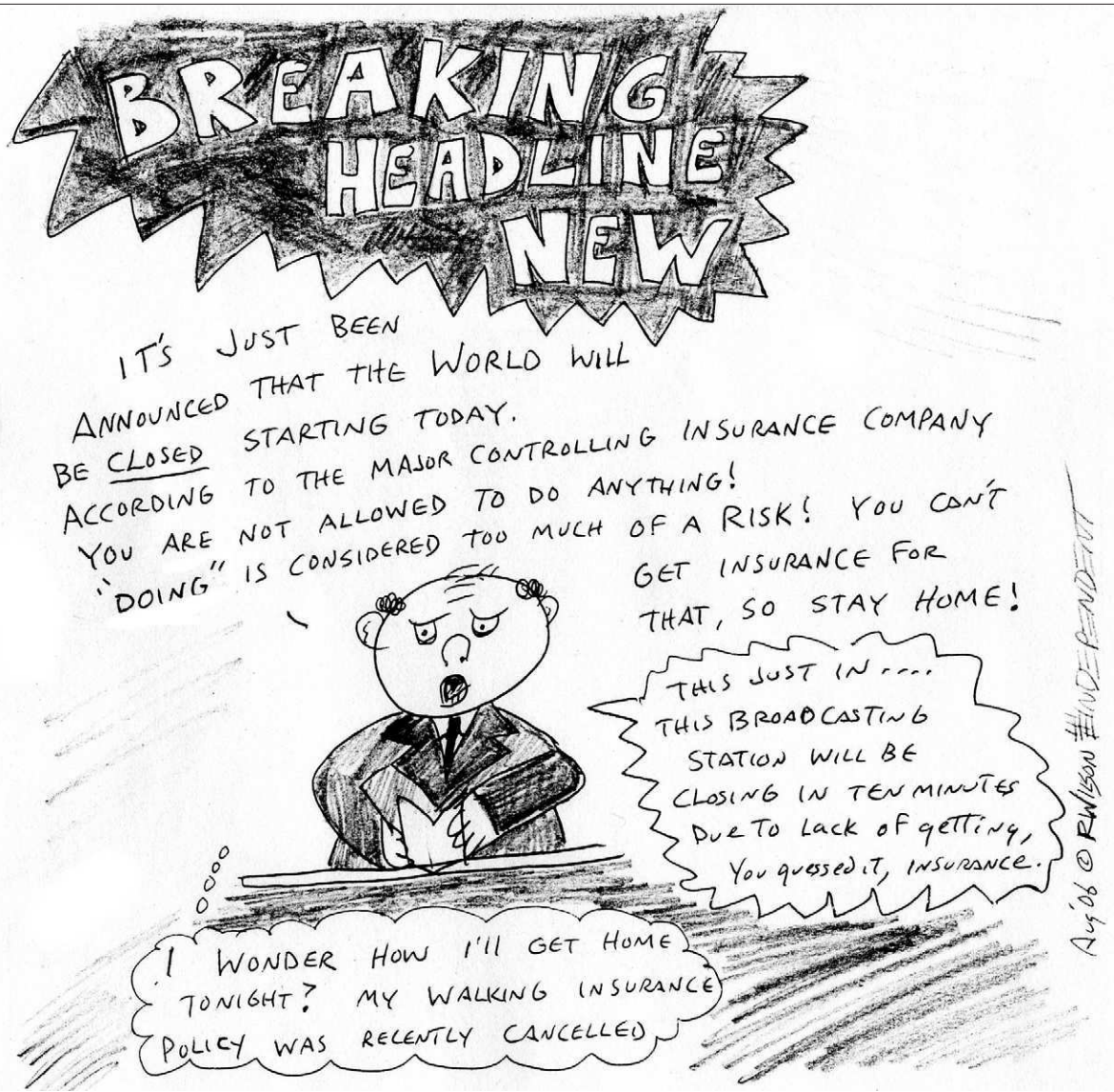
But, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is where the rubber hits the road. We *have* to comply with the Clean Water Act. It has been hanging over our heads now for 13 years. It is our duty and our obligation to our rivers, our citizens and ultimately our children that we provide a safe environment in this valley.

It has come down to "Pay Me Now" or "Pay Me A lot More Later" and later will come. The task before us is to find the most economical way to get the job done. You can say it's unfair for the Federal and State Governments to make rules we must follow and then not help us pay for it. I have faith that the pressures that will be brought to bear by the political forces that Commissioner Hyde has rallied on our behalf will bring forth fruit in the form of Fed and State financial help.

60% - 40%

Commissioner Hyde felt this was still an option. We can use Rainier as a classic example. Rainier received a federal earmark from the Clean Water Act for \$700,000. It took two years for the process. In addition, they paid a consultant approximately \$30,000 over a year to acquire the earmark. They are going out for a GO Bond in November for \$7 million which could effect their taxes at \$2.80 per thousand. If it fails, their sewer rates could increase to \$80.00 per month. They do have a water shed to log and an urban renewal fund to help bring down the cost.

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Letters

Voter disagrees with Republican complaint

To the Editor:

Mr. Yauney's letter to Ms. Courtney during county fair bothers me. Mr. Yauney's letter accuses State Senator Betsy Johnson of abusing her power and that the fair board and Ms. Courtney knowingly allowed it to happen.

The questions I have for Mr. Yauney and "his" candidates are: if elected and invited to speak at the Athletic Booster Fundraising Dinner, would they decline? If invited to a ground breaking ceremony for a private company, would they decline from attending and having their picture on the front page of the paper for everyone to see?

My guess is that they would not, and if not, would that not be the same action that they are accusing State Senator Johnson of? The reason that Betsy was at the fair and rodeo, is because she supports the county fair and the youth programs that are a large part of the fair. I would put money on

the fact that she would be there even if she was not an elected official.

Mr. Yauney would know, if he was at the rodeo, that she was announced as Betty Johnson, she did not correct Scott Allen, the rodeo announcer. Why, because she was there for the "Save Our Seats" project and not name recognition. Her purpose that evening was to ask people to put their money where their "butts" were and fund new seating for the rodeo arena.

State Senator Johnson understands the importance of the county fair for the youth and the residents of the county. Along with that, she understands that the rodeo is a big reason people come to the fair, the rodeo brings them out and they spend money. To not have new seating, may mean that there will be no rodeo and the spiral of declining money begins.

State Senator Johnson did nothing wrong, unless Mr. Yauney and "his" group believe that supporting the community is wrong. She did not ask for

money for her campaign, or for anything that would benefit her or her position. All she did was show her support for youth and families in Columbia County and attempt to assure that youth and county residents have a venue to exhibit their projects at county fair.

She continued her belief in the fair by coming to the Jr. Livestock Auction and opened her personal checkbook, purchased animals and then donated them to the Women's Resource Center, again this does not seem like abuse of power. Should Ms. Courtney be requested to not allow Senator Johnson to participate in the Jr. Livestock auction either and where were Mr. Yauney and "his" candidates at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday of county fair?

I am a staunch, conservative Republican and have been from the day I registered. To this day I have never voted a straight ticket. Voting for the "person" is far more important to society than voting for the party.

Thank you, Betsy, for your
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