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Ike Says . . .

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 off this year due to poor brood recruitment. Big game species should benefit from all this rain, however. Extending the time that vegetation remains green adds time for ungulates to capitalize on the high nutrition from this forage. Simply put, when forage flourishes, so will the animals that feed on it. Eastern Oregon, especially, has seen a major difference this year. With better forage conditions come better fawn and calf survival, and better body conditioning of the adults, which will result in better next-year fawn and calf production and, for the trophy hunters, bigger antlers.
 So you can see, rain isn't always a bad thing.

Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call 503-429-7193 for location.

Letters

Library needs help to maintain services

To the Editor:
 As most of you have probably heard our city is in a financial pinch, with all departments making deep cuts, one of those is the library.

We are fortunate to have such a great facility and a librarian and staff dedicated to providing so many services, such as a book discussion group, pre-school story hour, the summer reading program, after school crafts, adult and children movies, guest programs, and free internet use.

The library budget was cut over \$4,000 dollars, \$1,000 of that is for purchasing new books.

I would like to encourage all library patrons to donate towards a fund to ensure the purchasing of new books. If you read as many books as my husband and I, you know how much money you save by using the library.

If you are not a user of our library, preferring to buy your books, I invite you to support our local library. I have been using the library for 56 years and always find something to my liking.

If you have books you no longer have any use for, please donate them to the Friends of The Library for their annual book sale in August.

I'm sure if we all pitch in we can easily make up that \$1,000 dollars or more.

If you wish to donate, please make your checks to the Friends of The Library, that money will then go directly to the library fund.

We will be making the first donation and hopefully many of you will do the same, and make our goal a reality.

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Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.

We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.

— Justice Louis D. Brandeis(1856-1941) US Supreme Court Justice

Recession triggers state budget review and “reset”

Governor Ted Kulongoski recently released the official report from the Reset Cabinet that he created last September to develop options for restructuring state government. Triggered by the recession, the governor's goal is to preserve and improve critical services for Oregonians while controlling costs.

The Reset Cabinet's charge was to undertake a comprehensive review of state government functions, how those functions are delivered and identify policy changes that would create greater stability, improve outcomes or control costs in the three major areas of government: education, human services and public safety.

Because the fiscal changes will affect many Oregonians, following is a summary of some of the recommendations. (For the full report, go to <http://www.oregon.gov>)

EDUCATION – K-12

Develop “shared services” across school districts. Establish a statutory minimum list of “shared services” that includes consolidating business, transportation, and other functions for which a school district is required to contract with its regional Education Service District, with all districts participating by July 1, 2012.

Benefit: Functions such as accounting, human resources, transportation, information technology, and special education instruction can be provided much more efficiently when districts consolidate these operations into a single regional Education Service District.

Replace Education Service Districts with a new system of fewer regional service providers. Consolidate “shared services”

among school districts further by reducing the number of independent regional service providers, with transition complete by July 1, 2014.

Benefit: Further consolidation of shared services among school districts will produce even greater cost-savings.

Create a statewide virtual learning system for all public school students. Require every district to provide access to online learning options if the district does not have its own internal program.

Benefit: The availability of online courses can significantly expand coursework options and reduce the cost of providing high-quality education. The cost of online teaching options are calculated at 70-80% of providing the same quality of education in a traditional bricks-and-mortar setting.

Expand offerings of “dual-credit” courses, allowing high school students to earn college credits while also meeting graduation requirements.

Benefit: In addition to providing increased educational opportunities for students, dual credit courses permit considerable monetary saving for students and parents, since state support typically reduces the cost of the courses to a fee that is well below the actual cost of college tuition.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Short Term Options

Continue to suspend the implementation of Ballot Measure 57 (temporary).

Benefit: Continuing to suspend implementation of M57 will save \$5 million for the 2011-2013 biennium; \$44 million for the 2013-2015 biennium; \$65 million for the 2015-2017 biennium. Provide Depart-

ment of Corrections (DOC) with the ability to allow offenders in custody to serve the final year of sentence under county jurisdiction in jails, using electronic detention, halfway house placement, and day reporting, among other innovative practices.

Benefit: The cost of using halfway house placement and electronic detention is an average of \$35/day compared to \$84/day for state prisons.

Long Term Options

Create a system of sentencing guidelines that incorporates the intent of mandatory minimums, within the state's current bed capacity (14,000).

Benefit: The state is unable to fund the 2,000 additional beds needed to meet the projected growth in prison population. Creating a modern sentencing guidelines system will ensure that DOC lives within its means (current capacity) and save \$580 million over the next ten years. The state could continue to hold on construction of the new Junction City minimum security prison, which will save \$153 million in projected future construction costs.

Adopt the federal earned time system with consideration of federal policies on the use of halfway house and electronic monitoring during the final year of sentencing on appropriately screened offenders.

Benefit: Increasing offender accountability by reducing earned time in prison, coupled with increased flexibility to have offenders serve their last year in other ways, estimates savings of \$2 million for the 2011-13 biennium; in 2013-15 would be \$35 million and in 2015-17 would be \$65 million.