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Letters

Staff members urge retaining Bill Haack

To the Editor:

Dear Mayor and Council Members: We are aware of the three options before you regarding the position of City Administrator. We, as staff, would like to voice our opinion on the matter. We would encourage you all to consider what is currently on the plate of the City and if bringing in someone new...who will have to spend months getting familiar with everything...is the best choice for the City and the community.

We feel that expending money and time on searching for someone that may not exist is not the responsible thing to do. What guarantee do we have that someone else would do a better job? How could this person possibly get acclimated to the huge job of managing this City's current list of projects without losing a lot of time in the process?

We have been through too many administrators over the past few years and things just aren't moving forward. This needs to stop. Every time a change is made, we have to start over.

We currently have a very competent leader who has been involved with the projects either directly or indirectly for the past three years. He has many contacts that a new person won't have. He also has the respect of the staff and a good working relationship with all of us. He also has the respect of many in the community.

With his help, things are finally starting to move in a positive direction. Staff is asking that you choose the option to retain Bill Haack as City Administrator.

Thank you,

**Angie Handegard
 Carole Connell
 Mike Conner
 Shawn Carnahan
 Ginger Westlake
 Jeff Burch
 Marjorie Lowrance
 Joann Glass**

Wants government to stop spending

To the Editor:

Over the last two years, our federal government has lav-

ished borrowed bailout money on selected parts of the private sector to a degree not previously imaginable and enacted two massive spending bills, called stimulus packages, which succeeded only in stimulating the size and growth of government. At \$14 trillion, our federal government now owes more than our entire nation produces in wealth in an entire year.

The United States was once the freest and strongest engine of economic growth in the history of the world. It is now crippled by an enormous national debt which, as a percentage of the economy, is rivaled only by the size of the debt we took on to win World War II. Unlike World War II, however, this debt appears to have no end in sight. Yet our elected representatives are once again planning to raise the debt ceiling without a convincing plan to stop the out-of-control spending.

We stand on the verge of becoming the first generation of Americans not to pay our own debts, but instead to leave to our children the most massive debt in the history of our nation. They deserve better. We must do better, now.

I am asking our elected representatives to find in their hearts and minds the integrity and the discipline to stop this nonsense. Cut federal spend-

ing and reduce the deficit without raising taxes and stifling our fragile economic recovery. Leave our children a future which they can afford, and a legacy in which we can all take pride.

**Robert Speirs
 Columbia City**

Haack should be our city administrator

To the Editor:

We are writing this letter to express our concern over decisions being made by the newly elected city council.

We have attended most of the city council meetings for the last six years. The most important city business at this time is the hiring of a permanent City Administrator (CA).

It appears that our new city council is set to hire someone new. We think they should re-examine their position on this very important decision. The council has spent a considerable amount of council time on this, when we already have a very qualified and very dedicated City Administrator.

We have worked extensively with current CA Bill Haack and think he would be the very best CA for our city. Bill has good working knowledge of the city and has many programs working right now. If we look else-

where and spend more money to find someone new, we will have to begin all over again.

Our city has had seven CAs in the last seven years and is fixing to do it again to make it eight.

There is no reason to believe that another new CA can do any better than the last seven we have had. If it were a guarantee, we might be able to go for it, but unfortunately there are no guarantees on this.

Working with the Airport Committee, Bill Haack has been outstanding and very willing to work for the better of the city, and the Airport Committee.

We highly recommend that as our elected representatives of the City of Vernonia that you do the right thing on this and hire current Pro Tem City Administrator Bill Haack.

**Michael Seager
 Georgeanna Seager**

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.

Salem Scene

*By Representative Brad Witt
 Oregon District 31*



I'd like to take some time this week to review a mechanism that is unique to Oregon and has grown more controversial since its inception in 1979. It's called the "kicker" and it is a device that was placed in the Oregon Constitution

when the state's economy was in a growth spurt in 1979. The increase in tax revenue caused some to insist that any time actual tax receipts exceed the state economist's projections by 2%, the entire amount should be "kicked back" to the taxpayers. Some critics say that the kicker contributes to a roller-coaster budget, while others maintain that it's our money and we should get it back if the state collects too much of it. So, what's the answer...?

First of all, it's important to understand how the kicker works. At the end of each legislative session, state economists make an educated guess about how much money the state will re-

ceive from individual and corporate taxpayers over the following two years. The economists try to shoot for the mid-point and, over time, their estimate of the trend is pretty close. But the economy moves in cycles and when we are above the trend, the kicker goes off and excess revenue is returned rather than put aside. When we are below the trend, the Legislature has to eliminate services due to reduced revenues. With over 90% of our state's budget dedicated to education, social services and public safety, these are the areas that get hammered. They also tend to be the areas that Oregonians hold most dear.

The other issue is timing: Kicker checks are returned at the end of the biennium, which could be when the cycle is turning down and revenue is falling. This happened in 2001 and again in 2007. It may happen again this go round. Currently, corporate income tax revenue is just \$6.9 million below the threshold that will trigger refunds to businesses. As a result, we may end up sending money back to businesses at the same time that we are forced to cut things like the school year, in-home care for senior citizens and police patrols.

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