

Dance, dance, dance



The Enterprise/Kristine de Leon

Nyssa kids dance to oldies and funk music during halftime of the Nyssa varsity girls basketball game against Umatilla on Feb. 1. The Nyssa girls play Vale Wednesday night for the first round of the district playoffs.

STATE NEWS

Richardson floats new party for unaffiliateds

By Claire Withycombe
Oregon Capitol Bureau

SALEM — The growing bloc of Oregonians who don't belong to any political party could have more say in elections under a new proposal from Secretary of State Dennis Richardson.

Richardson got the idea from a former rival: Alan Zundel, the Pacific Green Party's candidate for secretary of state in 2016.

Since the election, Richardson, a Republican, and Zundel have formed what, on its face, is an unlikely alliance between people with disparate political views.

Two years ago, Richardson tapped the retired political science professor to lead a task force studying how the state draws legislative and congressional districts.

And now Richardson's office is advocating for Senate Bill 225, which is based on a concept Zundel suggested to him last year. It would allow nonaffiliated voters to participate in their own primary.

"I've been interested in how our electoral process works for a long time, particularly in how the two-party system limits competition and keeps the voting

public from exposure to more than just two points of view on issues," Zundel said.

Under current law, non-affiliated Oregonians can vote in primary elections only for nonpartisan positions such as for judge.

They have no primary vote in races set up by party, such as state representative or governor.

Richardson and Zundel want the state's 880,000 nonaffiliated voters — who now outnumber registered Republicans — to be able to choose nonaffiliated candidates for those partisan offices.

"Although nearly one-third of Oregon voters are not affiliated with any political party, those non-affiliated voters often feel left out of the primary process in the current system," Steve Elzinga, Richardson's governmental and legal affairs director, told lawmakers recently.

Under the proposal, non-affiliated candidates could enter a state-run primary where nonaffiliated voters could cast a ballot for the nonaffiliated candidate they preferred.

The winning nonaffiliated candidate would go to the general election in No-

vember and be an option for all voters in that contest.

Officials from Richardson's office shared the proposal with senators at a meeting of a committee focused on campaign finance laws.

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, expressed concerns about allowing nonaffiliated voters to participate in a major party primary and potentially "sabotage" the outcome.

The bill wouldn't do that, though, Elzinga clarified.

"It creates a new, effectively, a new party for non-affiliated voters," Elzinga responded. "They have their own separate primary for voting on nonaffiliated candidates, and the top non-affiliated candidate goes to the general election as the nonaffiliated nominee."

Major party candidates would be ineligible to win the nonaffiliated primary election "so it doesn't create a proxy battle," Elzinga said.

Major parties have the option of opening their primaries to all voters.

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration of EO Media Group, Pamplin Media Group, and Salem Reporter.

Our View

College report offers opportunity for action

With the help of outside experts, Treasure Valley Community College has great potential to do even better serving students. That potential, though, requires a focus that hasn't always been evident at the college. The experts mapped the way forward, and their advice ought to be heeded.

Those who run Treasure Valley were excited about the recent accreditation report. That's essentially a report card for colleges, and the Chukars got a passing grade. Other recent evaluations haven't been as positive, so in a broad way this recent report was good news for our local community college.

But the challenges of recent years are clearly wearing on the college. As the economy improved and jobs proved plentiful, enrollment nosed down. At the same time, costs have gone up for just about everything the college buys or for the people it pays.

There has been turnover in executive ranks, which might not seem too important. But it is. You need a strong bench of leaders to tackle these challenges. For Treasure Valley, it's been like trying to play good basketball with only four players on the floor. The college's other executives are expected to pick up the slack for that missing fifth player.

Beyond staffing, though, the college clearly needs to do better at planning. The accreditation report contained plenty of notes that planning was scattered and ineffective. That means there is no clear road map to Treasure Valley's future. The outside experts noted that it's hard for students, faculty, and the community to follow and to help if they don't know the goal.

Much of the college's plans are written in lofty and general terms. They are loaded

with the special language of the education world, meaning the average person almost has to find a translator to understand. That shouldn't be. The college, for example, needs to be more clear about the most basic goal: The number of students enrolled. That single objective would be easy to grasp and easy to measure, and Dana Young, the college president, does have that ambition.

She is aiming for an increase of 2 percent a year in the equivalent of full time students for the next few years. Young noted on Monday that the total number of students at Treasure Valley is 4,366 — up from 4,009 last year.

Much can flow from promoting and building on her goal. The report notes weaknesses, for instance, in how the college determines whether the education it provides delivers results. The college itself told evaluators that it didn't do well at measuring student learning. When you know how many students you want, the effort to recruit students would be more focused. Evaluators dinged the college for its disjointed recruiting efforts. Those efforts are laudable, but sharp organization to produce results seems needed.

As college administrators, faculty, board members and students work their way through the recommendations, they ought to consider every "concern" listed as an opportunity. The college is and will always be an essential part of Malheur County, to give students an affordable education, to provide a lively campus experience, to shape employees of the future. The evaluation report was costly for the time it took the college to prepare and participate in this grading. That investment shouldn't go on the shelf, but instead be managed to produce the dividends of a growing enrollment, stable staffing, and a financially strong institution. — LZ

Community Voices

Seniors launch new year

Vale Senior Center Inc. wrapped up a busy year with its annual membership meeting Jan. 25 at the Vale Senior Center.

President Barbara Ray presented a review of 2018 activities, and other officers and committee members presented reports.

Election of 2019 officers of the corporation was held, and board of director vacancies were filled.

The center board is looking forward to an eventful 2019 calendar season, with regular activities and the addition of several new ones. Plans call for events Monday through Saturday each week.

The center continues to have lunches on Monday and Wednesday and assists the Meals on Wheels program for the local area. Social senior activities during the

week include a craft day, exercise classes, group card games, jigsaw puzzles, reading books, cribbage, and pinocle parties Friday and some Saturday evenings.

A monthly dance and potluck is held on the third Saturday from 6-9 p.m. with live music by Treasure Valley's own Town & Country Band.

The Senior Center wants to thank the many volunteer hours provided by its members to keep the doors open and social service activities available to all Senior Citizens in Vale and in the Treasure Valley area. Please join with your membership and help support this nonprofit entity in its endeavor to provide healthy community services and fun social activities to its senior members.

Submitted by Betty Duncan, assistant secretary, Vale Senior Center

Build a passionate company culture

By Andrea Testi
For the Enterprise

BUSINESS BEAT

Your business is only as strong as your employees. The secret to continuous success for business is to have passionate workers that are working towards big goals and thinking creatively. When an employee is passionate about what they do, they consistently look for better ways to improve themselves, their role, and the business in general.

Building a passionate work culture takes serious dedication, thoughtful crafting, and ongoing cultivation. A company's culture is reflective of the company's soul. It is embodied in the core mission, values, beliefs, and style of the founder.

Culture is the intangible glue that holds all of the pieces of the company together in a cohesive package. Culture is executed through your policies, practices, and interactions between your employees and customers. It must be something that keeps your team inspired and functioning as efficiently as possible. When it's positive, it can create a nurturing developing workplace and when it's not, it can create a toxic environment.

So then the question

becomes, how do you go about assessing this?

- Observe team interactions — Analyze the dynamics between employees

and notice how they communicate and collaborate with each other. Do they function cohesively? Do they relate on an interpersonal level? How do they treat your customers?

- Gauge leadership — Do you have the ability to be agile and fluid and embrace change? Are you listening with an open mind to employees, suppliers, customers, and members of the community? How do you communicate your values to your employees?

- Measure challenges of the business — Are sales growing or shrinking? What is the one thing your business was worst at last year? Are you learning from mistakes? Are there things that are holding your company back?

Once your assessment is completed, determine what



you want the culture to look like in the future. Review your vision, values and goals to make sure the culture supports them. Develop an action plan on what needs to be improved. Brainstorm changes; making sure to include employees in the planning and in communicating the expected outcomes. Monitor the results to see if they are impacting the company culture in a positive way.

Creating a passionate culture can really affect how a team interacts with each other, building stronger relationships, and a stronger business.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

- Lead by example — Owners need to show employees how they live the organizational culture in all of their actions.

- Hire for attitude - Hiring to create a team with varied skills and interests will create a more unique company culture.

- Create an enjoyable atmosphere - Get creative on ways you can show your team that you appreciate

them. Recognize and reward employees who genuinely embrace the culture.

- Empower your employees - Give your employees a chance to use their initiative, make decisions and own their work. It's hard for someone to get passionate if they don't have the autonomy to grow as a person.

- Provide opportunities for continuous learning — You need to actively encourage learning and think of different ways for employees to share their knowledge - encourage job shadowing of each other. These small things will create conversations and improve awareness of what else is happening in the business. Attending a relevant workshop will help employees feel refreshed and excited to work.

- Keep the lines of communications open — Make sure your team feels they can communicate openly and honestly about problems they are dealing with. This is especially important in small teams where the team morale can be shifted by the attitude of a single person. Communicating consistently with your team will keep you integrated and in tune with the environment of your business.

There are many different

types of business cultures, and the one your business adopts can affect everything from the public's perception of your brand to your employees' job satisfaction.

A strong, inclusive and passionate company culture should be premised upon good communication, a team with varied strengths and personalities, and one where members are happy to work because they are shown their value to the success of the company.

These building blocks will set the stage for creating a great company culture where your employees not only work efficiently but also value the success of the enterprise as much as you do.

Make a passionate workplace culture your priority and prosperity will follow.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS, Annual Rate
\$40 in Malheur County
\$45 outside Malheur County
\$35 Malheur Co. seniors (65+)

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY
Publication No: 0464-7735

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Periodical postage paid
at Vale, Oregon