

# CHEERS & JEERS

## Clark College, WSUV draw praise; Oregon voters' wisdom questioned

**C**heers: To our two favorite institutions of higher learning.

Clark College is certainly doing its part to provide the local population with the skills necessary to survive the current economic downswing. Fall enrollment at Clark is up more than 6 percent, the biggest increase since the 1970s. Best of all, college officials say the enrollment is widespread, including recent high school graduates, transfers and working adults, plus those in worker retraining programs and professional technical classes.

About six miles up the road, Washington State University Vancouver announced this week that construction will start next summer on two buildings, one to house academic programs and another to serve regional technology firms.

Combined, the two projects — scheduled for completion in 2011 — will bring 71,600 square feet of classroom space and almost \$60 million in overall improvements to the Salmon Creek campus.

**Jeers:** To the voters of Oregon. Now, ordinarily we're perfectly willing to accept the will of the electorate, and Oregonians certainly have a right to turn down a top two primary, which they did Tuesday by an almost 2-to-1 margin. But to paraphrase Jay Leno: "What the heck were you people *thinking?*"

We know Washingtonians and Oregonians are different, but we didn't know it was *this* different. In 2004, Washingtonians approved Initiative 872, which authorized a top two primary, with a whopping 59.8 percent affirmation from voters (59.6 in Clark County). The U.S. Supreme Court even upheld our top two primary. In August, a survey by the secretary of state's office showed 71 percent approval. Then we had a top two primary on Aug. 19, and everyone loved it.

Yet Tuesday, Oregonians turned down Measure 65, convincingly. This means the political parties — and not the people — will continue

to control the primaries in Oregon. Yet another reason to maintain our homesteads over here on the sane side of the river.

**Cheers:** To VaNessa Duplessie and Mike Bomar, two winners when it comes to potential public service but who happened to come out on the losing end in a couple of Tuesday's election races. Duplessie, a north county Democrat, lost to Republican Jaime Herrera in the race for an 18th District state representative post. Bomar, a Hazel Dell independent, lost to incumbent Democrat state Rep. Jim Moeller.

As we noted in previous editorials, both Duplessie and Bomar are young, informed, prepared and enthusiastic.

They're good listeners with collaborative attitudes and the community's best interests at heart. We hope they try again in other races.

**Jeers:** To foot-dragging state federal bureaucrats who continue to ignore increased pollution in the Columbia River. We were glad when Environmental Protection Agency Northwest regional Administrator Elin Miller recently reported that four major contaminants have been targeted for reduction. Two — polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and the pesticide DDT — have been banned from production since the 1970s but still exist in the environment.

But other federal agencies and the state Department of Ecology have been sluggish in recent years in response to growing concerns about the Columbia River's declining water quality. As the report stated, "The problems are too large, widespread and complex to be solved by only one organization." We hope the new administration in Washington, D.C., prioritizes attention to this growing concern.

**Cheers:** To local politicians who seem to have done a fairly good job of picking up their campaign signs around Clark County.

**Jeers:** To owners of the few signs that remain.