

A tip of the hat; a kick in the pants: March 30, 2010

A tip of the hat to SeaPort Airlines, which intends to continue serving Pendleton with three daily flights to and from Portland.

SeaPort's business model, which involves flying nine-seat Swiss-made Pilatus PC-12s, is successful because SeaPort comes closer to filling its aircraft, which helps to pay the bills. Larger airlines that serve small cities use 37-seat and 50-some seat planes that are harder to fill, thus make it more difficult to make money, or just to break even.

As SeaPort has expanded into Arkansas and Kansas in recent months, the lagging economy has helped. Other airlines are unable to pay the bills and are cutting back. SeaPort is filling the void.

Meanwhile, some corporations are selling their jets, which has made it easy for SeaPort to pick up some used Pilatuses as it expands. SeaPort President Rob McKinney said last week when his company began serving Pendleton there were 28 Pilatus PC-12s on the market. Today there are more than 100.

We're pleased with the attention SeaPort has given - and brought to - Pendleton, and we hope Eastern Oregon residents will increasingly patronize the airlines so it can eventually offer four daily flights to and from Portland.

A kick in the pants to truck drivers who urinate into plastic bottles while driving, and then toss them out the window while driving down the highway. On a recent trip on I-84 between Pendleton and Arlington, the angle of the sun was just right to reveal dozens of bottles filled with yellow fluid in the center median and on both shoulders. These "trucker bombs" foul up the landscape, are disgusting and are illegal.

According to the Oregon State Police Web site, this problem is specifically addressed in Oregon law: "Improperly Disposing of Human Waste" is a misdemeanor. A person commits this offense "if the person is operating or riding in a motor vehicle and the person throws, puts or otherwise leaves a container of urine or other human waste on or beside a highway." An offender may be arrested, jailed and fined up to \$250.

A tip of the hat to Oregon Attorney General John Kroger for his wise decision to decline joining other state attorneys general in a lawsuit to overturn the federal health care reform legislation.

Likewise, a kick in the pants for the Washington Attorney General Rob McKenna for joining the lawsuit against the federal law, but that's Washington's problem.

Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the new law on health care, based on purely financial considerations and legal priorities, Kroger made the right decision. A review by the Oregon Department of Justice indicated the health care reform bill is constitutional and challenges to the legislation are without merit. Legal scholars around the nation have expressed similar views. That means Kroger will not waste taxpayer dollars on filing meritless litigation that could lead to a long, protracted process with little or no



chance of success. Historically, opponents of reform have turned to the courts when they have failed to block major legislation. The Social Security Act, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act were all challenged on constitutional grounds and all three of pieces of legislation were ultimately upheld by the courts.

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