

Signs, Signs Everywhere thereâ€™s Signs

by Richard_Burton, Publisher

The Bend City Council needs a wake up call. Third Street has become a sea of signs. Street corners are crowded with walking advertisements, folks carrying huge, unsightly signs. Though there are some ordinances in place for pole signs, there are no restrictions placed upon these annoying sign-walkers. Does anyone really read these signs? It seems most passers-by are aghast at the proliferation of signage along Third Street, leaving many of them far too disgusted to read the ads. Balloons and temporary signs thrust into the earth atop ugly stakes have taken on a life of their own, displaying a jumbled tangle of signage in front of local businesses as well as empty lots.

The City of Bend needs to take note of this ever expanding eyesore, enforce the ordinances already in place and pass new city codes to prevent the mass of sign-walkers from completely obliterating the character of Bend. With no restrictions on sign-walkers, this has become an easy, cheap and mobile way to advertise. Like nomadic advertisements, sign-walkers are seen several blocks away from the actual store they are parading for, drawing attention away from the business where they loiter and pace. They are seen taking breaks as well as lunching, sprawled out often times on the property of competition, clogging traffic further as rubber-neckers slow down. A passer-by cannot differentiate between sign-walkers and the homeless, many who are one and the same.

Other cities such as Scottsdale, Glendale and Ahwatukee, Arizona have passed strict codes, enforcing sign ordinances in order to rid the city of unattractive signage. We donâ€™t need this scattered mess of advertisements littering the business district on Third Street, which provides access into Bend, the main road bringing in tourists as well as those just passing through. Is this how Bend wants to be remembered? As that cluttered mess of signs between Sunriver and Redmond? We don't want vacationers headed for sunny California to point to Bend on the map and say, "This city's signs were such a blight. Nice city, pretty landscape, but way too many signs." Bend deserves better! We need serious sign restrictions and we need them now.

To obtain a permit for an outdoor posted sign in Oregon, according to the Oregon Revised Statute, it cost \$125 for 25 square feet or less and \$300 for 26 to 50 square feet. For carried signs, there is no fee and no restriction. This explains all the sign-walkers. The city should examine this problem. Council members need only to take a drive down Third Street to experience the blemished landscape for themselves. A person who violates sign ordinances is subject to civil penalties in the amount of \$500 per day but these are for posted signs only. We need new city ordinances governing sign-walkers with stiff civil penalties. With strict codes in place, Bend's sidewalks, store fronts, and roadsides may clear up in no time, leaving more room to enjoy the true flavor of the city, leaving a better taste in the mouths of all residents and passers-by alike.

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